

MARCH/APRIL 2017

OP/FYI

A NEWSLETTER
FROM THE
VILLAGE OF
OAK PARK

VOLUME 29 • ISSUE 3

Board adopts Welcoming Village Ordinance

The Village of Board of Trustees has adopted an ordinance designating the community as a welcoming Village where citizenship or immigration status does not factor into any interaction between individuals and municipal employees.

Working closely with several human rights advocacy groups, the ordinance codifies the longstanding practice among Village employees — including members of the Oak Park Police Department — of not collecting or maintaining information related to the immigration status of Village residents and visitors.

Village officials stressed that the ordinance does not violate federal law, but clarifies communications and enforcement relationships between the Village and the federal government. Officials said the ordinance makes it clear that immigration is a federal issue and does not involve the Village or its employees.

In most respects, the

ordinance means business as usual in Oak Park since the Village has never routinely included questions about citizenship or immigration status in interactions with residents or visitors.

The Welcoming Village ordinance underscores Oak Park's longstanding

commitment to being a welcoming and diverse community.

In 1968, the Village became one of the first municipalities in the country to adopt and enforce a Human Rights Ordinance protecting the rights of individuals within the classes of race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status or disability in the purchasing, leasing, securing a loan, renting or occupying housing or other real estate.

Officials said the new Welcoming Village Ordinance shares the underlying intent of the local Human Rights Ordinance adopted by Oak Park nearly 50 years ago. Both ordinances are about discrimination, they said, and this latest effort confirms that municipal employees will not pre-judge someone's right to be a part of our community.

A copy of the ordinance is posted at www.oak-park.us/welcomingvillage.



"The validity of the Village as an ethnically, racially and religiously diverse Village is built, in part, on the strength of its immigrant communities."

*Oak Park Welcoming Village Ordinance
adopted February 6, 2017*

Earth Fest set for April 22

The Village's eighth annual celebration of green living — Earth Fest — is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sat., April 22 at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. Focusing on green neighborhoods, sustainable lifestyles and best practices, this year's event will include food trucks, vendors and information booths highlighting local environmental organizations and initiatives. Booths for recycling eyeglasses, sun glasses and hearing aids also are planned. In addition, the event will feature tours of the LEED Gold-certified Public Works facility, with a behind-the-scenes look at service delivery and opportunities for children to sit in big trucks and other cool equipment. Visit www.oak-park.us/earthfest for more information.



Earth Hour... Oak Parkers are invited to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour at 8:30 p.m., Sat., March 25, to stand up, take responsibility for and get involved in working toward a sustainable future. Since Earth Hour was launched in 2007, it has become the world's largest voluntary action with people, businesses and governments in countries across every continent coming together to celebrate a commitment to the one thing that unites us all — the planet. For more information, visit www.earthhour.org.

Yard waste collection begins in April

Collection of yard waste will begin April 3. Bundled brush no larger than two feet in diameter and four feet in length and yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, shrubs and vines will be picked up on regular refuse collection days. A green yard waste sticker must be attached to each brush bundle, 32-gallon paper bag and rigid container. Stickers are \$2.50 each. Residents are urged to look for alternatives to bagging yard waste such as mulching mowers, leaf shredders or backyard compost piles. For more information, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Where to Buy Yard Waste Stickers

Dressel's Ace Hardware 1137 Chicago Ave.

Fair Share Finer Foods 6226 Roosevelt Rd.

Jewel Food Stores 438 Madison St., 7036 Roosevelt Rd., 7525 Lake St. (River Forest)

Pete's Fresh Market 259 Lake St.

Schauer Ace Hardware 7449 Madison St. (Forest Park)

Village Hall 123 Madison St.

Walgreens 811 Madison St., 6412 Roosevelt Rd.

Art wanted for 6th annual Sculpture Walk



Artists are being sought to temporarily display their work at the sixth annual Oak Park Sculpture Walk set for May through September. At least 12 works will be part of the outdoor exhibit in the Oak Park Arts District on Harrison Street between Austin Boulevard and Ridgeland Avenue. At the conclusion of the event, the Village may consider purchasing a piece for its permanent collection. Applications may be downloaded at www.oakparkareaartscouncil.org or www.oak-park.us/sculpturewalk. The deadline to apply is March 24. For more information, call 708.358.5692 or email info@oakparkareaartscouncil.org.

Mural artists needed... Twelve artists are being sought to create murals that will continue the transformation of the railroad retaining walls along the Green Line corridor from dull, blank concrete into canvases. Each artist selected receives a stipend for materials prior to beginning the project and another sum upon completion. The deadline to apply for the first six slots is Fri., April 21. The concepts for another six artists will be selected in June. The deadline to apply for the second round will be Mon., June 19. Call 708.358.5692 or email info@oakparkareaartscouncil.org for more information on the application process.

Local groups, volunteers needed for A Day in Our Village

Planning is well underway for the 44th annual *A Day in Our Village*, Oak Park's annual festival celebrating diversity and community involvement, scheduled for Sun., June 4. Local groups wishing to attract clients or new members, and civic-minded volunteers are invited to participate. Last year more than 160 Oak Park organizations set up activity and information booths in Scoville Park at Lake Street and Oak Park Avenue, local restaurants sold food nearby and the Park District of Oak Park sponsored activities in Rehm Park. In addition to participants, volunteers are needed to donate an hour or two of time well before the event, distributing promotional literature and hanging posters around the community. Volunteers also are needed to help on the day of the event. For more information on participating or volunteering to help with the 2017 *A Day in Our Village* celebration, call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.

Composting program offered

The Village offers a residential composting program to help reduce the amount of organic waste like table scraps and food-soiled containers that otherwise would end up in the refuse container. While the program does have an additional cost — \$14.42 per month — neighbors can share a cart. Participants also can use the composting cart for yard waste, eliminating the need to buy bags and stickers for disposal. Call 708.358.5700 or email composting@oak-park.us for more information.

Election News

In-person and online voter registration ends March 7 for the April 4 Consolidated Municipal Election that covers seats on a range of local government bodies, including school boards and the Village Board. Absentee ballot requests may be made from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays at Village Hall, 123 Madison St., or online via the Cook County Clerk's website. In addition, grace period registration also will be available as part of early voting set for 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Saturday, March 20 through April 3 at Village Hall. A wide range of voting information, including sample ballots and other early voting locations, is posted online at www.cookcountyclerk.com.

Metra to close local ticket office

Metra has announced plans to close its ticket office in Oak Park effective Thurs., March 30. Commuters still will be able to purchase tickets using the mobile Ventra app or online via Metra's website, as well as on the train at no additional cost. Officials say the decision to eliminate the ticket agent position in Oak Park is part of efforts to align resources with demand. Despite high ridership by Oak Park residents, Metra officials say historical data showed that ticket sales here are among the lowest at Metra stations with a ticket agent. For more information on the metropolitan commuter rail system, visit metrarail.com.



Comprehensive parking study under way

Public input is being sought to help the Village Board conduct a comprehensive review of Oak Park's wide array of parking rules and regulations. Residents will have multiple opportunities in the coming months to help craft strategies for simplifying a system that many agree has grown out of proportion.

Given that Oak Park was developed in the early 20th century before the numbers of vehicles reached today's levels, parking has long been a scarce resource in the Village, particularly in areas where residential, business and mass transit parking needs overlap.

In order to balance need with supply, available spaces have been managed through parking regulations put in place over the course of decades. The result of this piecemeal approach is a complicated web of rules that includes 120 parking ordinances communicated on more than 10,000 parking signs throughout the Village.

The primary goals of the comprehensive parking study are to create parking ordinances that are simple and user-friendly, to standardize and streamline parking signage throughout the Village and to implement parking technology geared toward customer service and efficiency.

While officials recognize the demands of every constituency can't be completely satisfied, the hope is that a consistent set of Village-wide rules will help cut down on confusion and frustration created by the current system in which regulations can change from one block to the next.

Starting in March, the Village Board will review and evaluate a different parking topic each month during a series of special meetings. The process is expected to conclude in the fall, at which time the Board will consider a comprehensive list of proposed ordinance amendments based on input gathered during the monthly reviews.

Material relevant to the monthly topic at hand will be posted one week prior to each meeting at www.oak-park.us/whatdoyouthink. Residents and business operators are welcome to provide comments, which will be shared with Village trustees prior to each meeting.

Parking signage is the first topic being discussed at the Village Board meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on March 13 at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Officials plan to present sign templates based on a grid design being used by other communities. Details will be available online starting March 6.

Village officials note that individual petitions for new parking regulations will temporarily be put on hold while the comprehensive parking review process unfolds. Residents are still welcome to file petitions, but any hearings will be postponed until after the parking study concludes in September.

For more information on the study, email parking@oak-park.us.

Parking Study Topics (Dates Tentative)

- **March** – Parking signage recommendations
- **April** – Parking on and near Austin Boulevard and Harlem Avenue
- **May** – Parking on and near North Avenue and Roosevelt Road
- **June** – Parking near CTA Blue Line, CTA Green Line and Metra stations
- **July** – Parking on and near Madison Street and Washington Boulevard
- **August** – Parking on or near Chicago Avenue and Division Street
- **September** – Comprehensive ordinance amendments

All meetings will be held at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Visit www.oak-park.us/whatdoyouthink for specific meeting times and dates, to review material and to provide comments related to each topic.

Daylight Saving Time returns

Daylight Saving Time will begin at 2 a.m., Sun., March 12. Clocks should be set ahead one hour. The Oak Park Fire Department recommends using the time change as a convenient reminder to replace the batteries in all smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. More than 90 percent of homes in the United States have smoke detectors, but one-third are estimated to have dead or missing batteries. For more information, call 708.445.3300 or email fire@oak-park.us.

News for pet owners

Renew licenses online... Oak Park pet owners who receive an animal license renewal application in the mail are encouraged to renew online at www.oak-park.us/onlineservices. Pet owners who renew online can delete pets they no longer own and add new ones. Payment is made with a credit card, a receipt sent via email and the actual tag delivered in the U.S. Mail. Pet owners still will have the option of mailing in their payment or coming to Village Hall, 123 Madison St. All dogs and outdoor cats are required to display a current animal license by May 1. The license fee is \$10 for a neutered/spayed dog and all cats, and \$13 for any non-spayed/non-neutered dog. Proof of a current rabies inoculation and spaying/neutering is required for licensing a new pet. For more information call 708.358.5680 or email health@oak-park.us.

Picking up a must... Responsible pet owners agree that picking up after one's dog is the right thing to do. Dog excrement is not only a nuisance, it's unhealthy and against the law. Anyone observing someone not picking up after a dog should call 708.358.5680 or email health@oak-park.us. And be a good neighbor by depositing your pet's waste in your trash bin.

Leash required... All dogs that use any public street, sidewalk, parkway or public area within the Village must be on a leash controlled by the owner. The leash can be no longer than eight feet. For more information call 708.358.5680 or email health@oak-park.us.

Farmers' Market seeking volunteers

Volunteers are now being sought to become Friends of the Oak Park Farmers' Market, with plans well underway for the May 20 opening of the 42nd season. The annual Friends' of the Market recruitment night is scheduled for 7:30 pm., Thurs., May 11 at the main Oak Park Public Library, 834 Lake St. These volunteers become part of this quintessential Village summer experience by helping out at the Commissioners' Booth on Saturday mornings, volunteering at special events and contributing to the smooth running of the market. The market is open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., every Saturday morning, from opening day through October, in the Pilgrim Church parking lot, 460 Lake St. For information on volunteering, email farmersmarket@oak-park.us, call 708.358.5780 or visit www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket.

Bake sale space available...Local not-for-profit organizations seeking fundraising opportunities are urged to consider reserving a space for a bake sale at the Oak Park Farmers' Market. A space is available each Saturday from opening day through October. Download an application via a link at www.oak-park.us/farmersmarket. Applications are accepted through April 14. Call 708.358.5780 or email farmersmarket@oak-park.us for more information.

Park District News

Kids' fest...Join the Park District of Oak Park and the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory for a free family event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sun., March 5 at the Conservatory, 615 Garfield St. Hands-on educational activities and self-guided tours are planned.

Taylor Park meeting...A meeting to gather public input on plans for future improvements to Taylor Park is set for 7 p.m., Wed., March 8 at the Andersen Center, 824 Hayes St. More information is available at www.dpop.org.

Maple Park grand opening...A celebration is set for 10 a.m., Sat., April 8, to introduce the community to the newly renovated Maple Park at 1105 S. Maple Ave. Renovations include a new playground, picnic shelter, climbing boulders, walking paths and baseball fields.

Egg hunts for kids and dogs...Tickets are available for the free annual Egg Hunt & Doggie Egg Scramble set for Sat. April 8 in Maple Park, 1105 S. Maple Ave. Three separate events are set for children – 9 a.m., 10 a.m. and 11 a.m., with groups divided by ages of 3 to 6 and 7 to 10. A special hunt for dogs is set for 10:30 a.m. The outdoor event is rain or shine, so participants are advised to dress for the weather. All dogs must be on a leash no longer than eight feet. Tickets, which must be picked up in advance beginning Sat. March 4, are available at the Ridgeland Common Recreation Complex, 415 Lake St., Gymnastics & Recreation Center, 21 Lake St., Geppetto's Toy Box, 730 Lake St. and the Animal Care League, 1013 Garfield St.

Participants sought for health assessment survey

Anyone who lives, works or attends school in Oak Park and River Forest is invited to take a survey to help to decide future public health priorities, including for behavioral health and developmental disabilities. The survey is an important part of a Community Health Needs Assessment conducted every five years by the Oak Park Department of Public Health Department and its partners the Community Mental Health Board of Oak Park Township, the River Forest Township Mental Health Committee and the Rotary Club of Oak Park and River Forest. The survey should take not more than 20 minutes to complete and all respondents are anonymous. The survey is posted at www.oak-park.us/needsassessment. For more information or answers to questions, call 708.358.5480 or email health@oak-park.us.

Who to Call	
Dial Direct (area code 708)	
Village Hall	oak-park.us
TTY	711
Adjudication	358.5630
Development Customer Services	
358.5420	
Business Services	358.5425
Neighborhood Services	358.5410
Housing	option 1
CDBG	option 2
Property complaints	option 3
Permits & Inspections	358.5430
Planning	358.5440
General questions	option 1
Historic Preservation	option 2
Zoning	option 3
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (nonemergency)	358.5600
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Mayor & Trustees	358.5784
Police (nonemergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	358.7275
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770
EMERGENCIES	911
Park District	www.pdop.org
Administration	725.2017
Customer Service	725.2000
Building & Grounds	725.2050
Business Operations	725.2015
Public Library	www.oppl.org
Main Library	383.8200
Maze Branch	386.4751
Dole Branch	386.9032
School District 97	www.op97.org
Administration	524.3000
School District 200	www.oprfhs.org
Administration	383.0700
Township	www.oakparktownship.org
Senior Services	383.8060
Youth Services	445.2727
General Assistance	383.8005
Assessor Services	383.8005
Mental Health Board	358.8855

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Proposed zoning updates ready for consideration

Proposed updates to the local zoning laws that regulate virtually every aspect of land use in Oak Park may soon go to the Village Board for consideration. The citizen volunteers of the Plan Commission have been working to develop recommendations for changes to the Village's zoning ordinance for nearly two years in an effort to better align local laws with recommendations in *Envision Oak Park*, the community's long-range comprehensive plan adopted in 2014. A wide range of changes have been discussed in multiple Plan Commission meetings since the process began. The process also has included interviews with representatives of Village volunteer boards, commissions and committees, business interests, local activist groups, historic preservationists, real estate agents, developers, architects and neighborhood organizations to ensure varied perspectives were considered. Preliminary changes also were presented to the public for review and input at two open houses. Property owners interested in learning more before the Board considers the recommendations are urged to visit www.oakparkzoning.com, where the draft zoning ordinance is posted along with a wide range of information about the process. Public comments also may be posted on the website. For more information, call 708.358.5440 or email planning@oak-park.us.

Township schedules annual meeting

The Oak Park Township will hold its annual meeting at 6:30 p.m., Tues., April 11 in the Senior Services meeting room, 130 S. Oak Park Ave. The meeting will include a presentation of financial statements as well as a review of fiscal year 2017. Visit www.oakparktownship.org for the agenda and documents related to the meeting. For more information or general questions, call 708.383.8005 or email town@oakparktownship.org.

Recycling opportunities ahead

Shred sensitive papers...Help prevent identity theft by shredding documents containing personal information at a free recycling event scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon, Sat., April 8, at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. Each household is limited to two bags or small boxes. Only items with personal information such as canceled checks, documents containing credit card numbers, social security numbers and medical information will be accepted. Paper materials that can be placed in the recycling cart or bin, such as newspaper, magazines, chipboard or junk mail, will not be accepted.

Recycle old clothing...Safely recycle all types of old clothing and apparel in any condition from 9 a.m. to noon, Sat., April 8, at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. Through a cooperative program with the Epilepsy Foundation, items such as shoes, belts, hats, bags, linens and towels are sent to developing nations to repurpose. The Epilepsy Foundation also offers residential pickup — visit www.epilepsychicago.org or www.donateillinois.org for details.

For more information...on these events or recycling in Oak Park, call 708.358.5781 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

District 200 listening tour continues

A series of community listening sessions by Oak Park and River Forest High School District 200 Superintendent Joylynn Pruitt-Adams, Ed.D, continues in March, as officials strive to learn what the community thinks is being done well and what could be improved. Sessions are set for 6 to 8 p.m., Wed. March 15 at Irving Elementary School, 1125 S. Cuyler Ave., and from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Sat. March 18 at Roosevelt Middle School, 7560 Oak Ave., in River Forest. Attendees are asked to RSVP by March 8 for the Irving session and by March 11 for the Roosevelt session. RSVP by email to ksullivan@oprhhs.org, by telephone to 708.434.3691 or online at <http://bit.ly/2kkgdPS>.

News for Renters

Discrimination complaints...Village Code defends the rights of individuals within the protected classes of race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, gender identity, source of income, military discharge status, gender expression, housing status or disability in the purchasing, leasing, securing a loan, renting or occupying housing or other real estate. Any person otherwise qualified who is denied or discriminated against in these processes should call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us for more information, conciliation or to file a formal, written complaint.

Interest rates on security deposits...Tenants of apartment buildings containing four or more units are entitled to interest on their security deposits. Interest must be paid or applied toward rent within 30 days of the expiration of each 12-month period. The security deposit must have been held for at least six months and the rent must be current to be eligible for interest. Call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us for more information.

Tenant handbook...A free handbook outlining rights, responsibilities and regulations is available online at www.oak-park.us/community or from the Community Relations Department in Village Hall, 123 Madison St. The handbook does not offer legal advice, but does contain helpful hints and tips for positive landlord/tenant relationships. For more information call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.

Dispute resolution...Free mediation services are available to help landlords and tenants resolve issues that may be disrupting quality of life. Participation is voluntary and agreements made are between the two parties and not enforced by the Village. To learn more, call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.



Village Clerk Teresa Powell
Village Manager Cara Pavlicek
Colette Lueck Bob Tucker
Glenin Brewer Adam Salzman
Peter Barber Andrea Button Ott
Trustees

Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb

Oak Park, Illinois
Residential Customer Local

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Standard
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Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272
123 Madison Street
Village Hall



VOP-TV goes beyond cable



Joe Kreml at work.

under the Federal Communication Commission definition, which means a focus on programs and services that are available to or supported by Oak Park taxpayers. But that doesn't mean the information is drab or dry. In fact, VOP-TV programs have won numerous national awards. Program topics range from purely government information like explaining specific municipal programs to coverage of special events, like the annual A Day in Our Village festival and the July 4th parade. But VOP-TV videos also feature recycling tips, public art and special Oak Parkers. Production quality — lighting, sound and editing — are top tier, thanks to the skills of Media Production Manager Joe Kreml, who studied at Chicago's Columbia College. Relying at times on other Communications Department staff for help with script writing and occasional on-camera appearances, Kreml produces, films and edits the videos, many of which feature municipal employees and residents in a wide variety of roles. VOP-TV, which is housed in Village Hall, was set up originally to broadcast Village Board meetings, a role that remains an important function. But even the meetings now are streamed live and archived in a searchable database on the Village website at www.oak-park.us/boardtv. Cable television continues to be an important outlet for VOP-TV programming, which is available to Comcast subscribers on channel 6 and AT&T customers on channel 99. VOP-TV cannot support private events and activities of not-for-profit or political organizations, but training and equipment for individuals who wish to become public access television producers are available through Comcast. Public access programming is broadcast on Comcast channel 19. More information on VOP-TV and other public information programs is posted at www.oak-park.us/publicinformation.

Reduce chances of basement flooding

Property owners can help reduce the chances of backups during heavy rain by disconnecting gutter downspouts from the municipal sewer system. Storm water from roof gutters is not a problem on normal flow days with minimal precipitation. However, during heavy rain events, the main system can become overwhelmed, sometimes causing sewage and storm water to back up into basements. Simply by eliminating water flowing from gutters into the sewer system, property owners can help reduce the chances of a backup from the Village's combined sewer and storm water system. More information on flooding prevention is posted at www.oak-park.us/backup-prevention.

Disconnection Tips

- Extend downspouts at least three feet away from the building foundation
- Direct flow away from building
- Pick a suitable area for water to flow such as a grassy area
- Use a splash block at end of the extension to avoid erosion
- Avoid placing extension across a sidewalk
- Don't flow water onto sidewalks or driveways where it could freeze
- Cap sewer where downspout once connected