

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
OAK PARK VILLAGE BOARD

Approved Minutes
Saturday, April 19, 2014
Oak Park Township Board Room
105 South Oak Park Avenue
9:00 am-10:30 am

Attendees:

Colette Lueck - Village
Peter Barber – Village
Jim Gates-D97
Denise Sacks - D97
Janet Kelenson – Library
Jeff Weissglass – D200
Clarmarie Keenan-Township
Ade Onayemi – Township
Paul Aeschlman- Parks

Absent:

Steve Gevinson – D200
Victor Guarino-Parks
David Sokol-Library

Others Attending:

Teresa Powell – Village
David Boulanger – Township
Wendy Singer – Township employee

The meeting was called to order at 9:09 am by Colette Lueck.

Structure and Quorum Issues

The Committee discussed its structure and what would constitute a quorum. It was agreed that the group considers this entity a free-standing committee with representatives of the local governing bodies rather than a committee of the Village Board. Members will check with their legal counsel to determine if this understanding is appropriate and what a quorum will be for meetings and report back at the next meeting.

The question was raised about whether members of this committee could send a substitute member of their respective boards if they could not attend. Mr. Weissglass provided a copy of the Intergovernmental Committee's foundational documents (mission, vision, etc.) and it was agreed that the group would review these at the next meeting and update as needed. Mr. Gates and Ms. Powell offered to prepare materials based on the minutes of the initial meetings of the group.

Mr. Barber and Mr. Aeschleman noted that while the group has been a great opportunity to share information, the product of this sharing has been small.

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Approval of Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of February 1, 2014. The minutes were approved.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion: "Are Taxes Too High?"

Ms. Lueck noted that at the last meeting there was a desire to hold a public meeting to educate the public about local taxes and asked the group for their personal and board views on taxes.

Ms. Kelenson noted that Village President Abu-Taleb and Assessor El Saffar held a town hall at the library to gather public feedback. She noted that offsets to taxes include lower commuting costs and access to transit.

Mr. Gates discussed the relationship between village services and taxes. He noted that local Realtors have indicated that demand in the village remains strong, and suggested that real estate experts might be able to educate the public.

Mr. Aeschleman noted the lack of any major commercial base as other communities have while the village provides a broad range of services.

Mr. Weissglass and Ms. Keenan discussed the plight of seniors who may feel priced out of the Village. Ms. Lueck would like to see data to show whether seniors are moving out of the village due to taxes.

Ms. Sacks noted that there is not general agreement on priorities. Mr. Gates noted that all taxes are high, not just property taxes.

Mr. Barber noted that taxes are too high; despite holding the line when middle school bond expires (not reducing levy) to cover other expanding costs, but the future is untenable.

Ms. Lueck noted that a statewide solution is needed for pension issues (police and fire). Mr. Gates noted that D97 is building future pension liability into its plans. Ms. Sacks and Mr. Aeschleman noted the loss of some of the commercial tax base and vacancies. Future large developments may be near, but Ms. Lueck noted that Oak Park lacks large tracts for major commercial development. Mr. Aeschleman pointed out that big box stores are less popular and urban models are being developed.

Ms. Sacks and Mr. Barber noted additional taxes are being directed to economic development.

Ms. Lueck suggested that this group propose a study by their respective boards to determine the impact of a 5% reduction in their levies.

There was discussion of the high school reserve and Mr. Weissglass noted that there were public meetings to address the issue last fall.

There was discussion of whether public discussion should wait until this group presents to its respective boards either individually and in a joint meeting. Members would like to hold a public meeting before the end of summer when several governments' budget cycles will begin.

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Mr. Boulanger noted that the COG had prepared a simple summary of the budgets of each board for discussion, and it was noted that this group reviewed the document with Village CFO Craig Lesner late last year.

Mr. Weissglass suggested that a public meeting include those who support the priorities of each government, in other words, its “fans”, so that all could hear from each group on priorities, but noted that there was minimal interest in the D200 finance forum. If he is to approach his board, he will need a proposal to present. Something will need to be drafted.

Ms. Lueck proposed a joint meeting of all of the boards to receive a high level summary of each budget philosophy, to happen within the next three to four months. Mr. Boulanger proposed that st (CFOs) present to the boards. Ms. Lueck recommended that they only present what has been done, not new proposals for the future.

Mr. Gates recommended a joint meeting, a powerful statement never done before, with 10 minute presentations and separating pension effects. Ms. Lueck suggested use of the pie charts presented at the COG as a simple summary of the details.

Mr. Boulanger also recommended discussion of fixed vs discretionary costs and legal requirements for expenditures. Ms. Sacks provided a copy of the Triton newsletter and pointed to the cover article as a clear and simple explanation of their budget.

Reports from Taxing Bodies

Ms. Powell noted that the Village lobby is no longer suitable for early voting, as a space that can be secured at night is required. She asked again if there might be space available at another governmental or commercial space as an alternative. Only one early voting site is available for most townships; the alternative would be not to have a local early voting site.

Mr. Gates thanked D200 and D90 for their joint efforts with D97 for data equity legislation which will allow schools to share student data for tracking as unit school districts already do.

Ms. Lueck announced the meeting on Tuesday, April 22, of Success of All Youth, a program funded through the Oak Park River Forest Community Foundation’s CommunityWorks program to provide an update to the community on the work of this group.

Mr. Onayemi reported that two advisory referenda were approved for inclusion on the November ballot at the annual meeting of the Township Board.

Ms. Kelenson reported that the library held a retreat which addressed opportunities for government fundraising programs through donations with projects to be announced soon.

Ms. Lueck reported that although the Village Board selected a brown option for energy aggregation, a green option is available through the same vendor for only about a dollar more per kilowatt hour.

Mr. Weissglass noted that the high school board will consider proposals to replace the aging high school pool at a Monday meeting of the Finance Committee and reported that Sophia Lloyd of the Community Foundation will be honored at a May 6 reception prior to her departure from her position.

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Ms. Lueck suggested that the high school consider offering adult education classes as some other districts do and mentioned a popular topic that she thought would attract participants. Mr. Weissglass noted that room for such a program might be limited due to other programs at the high school.

Ms. Powell will circulate a Doodle to determine a date for the next meeting; she will ask the Park District whether they can host.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:

Teresa Powell, Village Clerk