



**Village Manager's Report
Week ending Feb. 1, 2013**

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- February 4:
 - Village Board Executive Session, 6:30 p.m., room 130
 - Village Board Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201

- February 5:
 - Environmental & Energy Commission, 7 p.m., room 130

- February 6:
 - Citizen Involvement Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
 - Public Art Advisory Commission, 7 p.m., room 102

- February 7:
 - Village Board Finance Committee Meeting, 7 p.m., room 101
 - Plan Commission, 7 p.m., room 201
 - Citizen Information Commission Special Mtg., 7 p.m., room 130

Save the date reminders (see calendar for all future meetings):

- February 9: WCMC Legislative Breakfast, 9 a.m., Rosewood Restaurant, 9421 W. Higgins Road, Rosemont
- February 11: Village Board Finance Committee Meeting, 7 p.m., room 101
- February 12: Village Board Special Meeting Performance Management, 7 p.m., room 101
- February 18: Village Hall Closed
- February 19: Village Board Regular Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201

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New power lines for Arts District – ComEd will be addressing the outage concerns raised by businesses in the [Oak Park Arts District](#) beginning Feb. 11 when installation of new power lines is expected to get underway. Utility poles were to be delivered to the area this week for the work that will take place in the alleys between Harvey and Lombard streets, from Madison to Harrison streets. Residents were notified of the work in early January, but ComEd is not anticipating any outages until they switch the power from the old lines to the new lines they will be installing. The outages necessary during the switch should be of short duration.

Grove Apartments update – RC Management Services Corporation (RCMSC) was to begin accepting pre-applications for residency at the Grove Apartments on Fri., Feb. 1. Grove Apartments is the former Comcast building at Madison Street and Grove Avenue that is being redeveloped into 51, one-bedroom units of affordable housing by [Interfaith Housing Development Corporation of Chicago](#) and the [Oak Park Housing Authority](#). The building is expected to open for occupancy on approximately Oct. 1. Pre-application forms will be available at www.oakparkha.org and at the office of RCMSC, 21 South Blvd. Preference will be given to applicants who are legal residents of Oak Park, work in Oak Park 20 hours or more per week or have been hired to work in Oak Park 20 hours or more per week. Applicants who both live and work in Oak Park or are hired to work in Oak Park will receive a higher preference.

Foreclosure grants sought for housing collaborative – [IFF](#), on behalf of the [West Cook County Housing Collaborative](#), is applying for approximately \$10 million in funds to support the multi-family and single-family strategies implemented within the past year. The Attorney General's office released a request for proposals on Dec. 21, for funds available through the [National Foreclosure Settlement Award](#). As a result of this settlement, Illinois received more than \$100 million for grants to reduce the impact of the foreclosure crisis. Up to \$70 million of these funds will be used to expand and connect proven housing counseling and revitalization strategies in hardest hit geographic areas throughout Illinois. IFF will propose flexibility in the use of funds so both a single-family and multi-family strategy can be used wherever opportunities are presented and where it makes sense depending on the municipality. Funds will be used to acquire, rehab and sell foreclosed or distressed single-family and multi-family properties. The Collaborative's primary goal is to stabilize the housing market impacted by the foreclosure crisis. The Collaborative will partner with the [West Cook Homeownership Center](#).

Public Works activities – The Water & Sewer Division repaired a water main break at 728 N. Austin Boulevard and water service leaks at Marion and Lake streets and 943 N. East Ave. Parkway tree pruning continued between South Boulevard and Chicago Avenue, with the Forestry Division working west from Austin and Winkler Tree Service, the private contractor, working east from Harlem Avenue. Snow accumulation of slightly more than an inch on Jan. 25 and freezing rain on Jan. 27 had the Streets Division doing something they haven't had to do very much this winter – plowing and salting. Crews also were on the streets Jan. 30 spreading salt, as the record high temperatures dropped and the rain changed to light snow. School crosswalks also were cleared and salted early Jan. 31.

Mini-mural artist selections begin – The search has begun for the next 15 artists to paint murals on the railroad retaining walls along the Green Line corridor. As you recall, the community mini-mural project was launched in 2010 to promote creative expression and provide an enriching visual experience for residents and visitors alike. Murals already have been painted on the railroad embankments along North and South boulevards at Oak Park Avenue near the Green Line station, as well as both east and west of Marion Street. Murals also have been installed on South Boulevard, east of Taylor Street. Each artist receives \$500 for materials prior to beginning the project and another \$500 upon completion. Deadline to apply for the first round is 5 p.m., Tues., April 30. Seven artists will be notified by Friday, May 10, with the goal of having their murals on the walls by A Day in Our Village, on Sun., June 2. The

concepts of another eight artists will be selected in early June. Deadline to apply for the second round is 5 p.m., Fri., May 31. The winning concepts will be selected by a panel of judges from the Village's [Public Arts Advisory Commission](#), [Oak Park Area Arts Council](#) and the local arts community. If you know of any citizens or businesses interested in sponsoring a mini mural, please have them contact the Arts Council at 708.358.5690 or e-mail info@oakparkareaartscouncil.org. If you would like to view a short, entertaining VOP-TV video on the project, [just click here](#).

Sewer backup protection grant program update – The Housing Division is getting ready for an influx of applications for the Sewer Backup Protection Grant Program, as the February newsletter announcing it reaches residents over the next few days. About 70 households were assisted through the program last year when it was first introduced. As 2012 funding was exhausted, 20 applicants from last year were placed first in line for this year's program funding. In addition to the carry over applicants, staff anticipates being able to fund another 30-plus projects in 2013. The program pays up to 50 percent of the project's cost up to a maximum of \$3,500 each. Eligible work includes installing an overhead sewer system or a backflow prevention system. Details on the program, including the application materials, are posted at www.oak-park.us/sewergrant.

Early childhood screenings – [School District 97](#) will be offering free mini-screenings for Oak Park three and four year old children from 8:15 to 9:45 a.m., Wed., Feb. 6, at [Whittier Elementary School](#), 715 N. Harvey Ave. The district's special services department will assess vision, hearing and other areas for indications of health or developmental concerns. If you know of anyone for whom this information might be important, please have them call 708.524.3131 for more information or to schedule a screening.

Earth Fest seeking sponsors – As preparations begin for the third annual [Earth Fest](#), organizers have begun seeking sponsors to help defray costs of the popular event. Sponsors not only receive special recognition in event promotional materials, they also help move the community toward the important goal of living sustainably. This year's event is scheduled for Sat., April 20, in the Public Works Center. Among the events highlights will be organic farmers, eco-friendly landscapers, local chefs and restaurants, games and activities for children, items for sale, and entertainment. In addition, recycling booths will be available for eyeglasses, sun glasses, hearing aids, unused medications, rechargeable batteries, cell phones and old blue jeans. Sponsorships range from \$125 to \$1,000. If you know of any potential sponsors, please urge them to call 708.358.5778 or e-mail sustainability@oak-park.us. The sponsorship form is posted at www.oak-park.us/earthfest.

Building & Property Standards Department update – Permit activity continued its seasonal slowdown in December. However, the number of Category 3 plan review applications remained high. The backlog of plan reviews dropped to 38 cases with 20 cases overdue an average of 11 days each. Building permits were issued to complete the renovation of the multi-family residential structure located at 111 Garfield St. [Click here to read the full December BPS report](#).

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