



Village Manager's Report
Week ending April 26, 2013

Meetings scheduled for next week:

- April 29:
 - Village Board Exec Session, 6:30 p.m., room 130
 - Village Board Special Meeting, 7:30 p.m., room 201
- April 30:
 - Chairs of Advisory Boards & Commissions, 7 p.m., room 101
- May 1:
 - Citizen Involvement Commission, 7 p.m., room 101
 - Public Art Advisory Commission, 7 p.m., room 102
 - Zoning Board of Appeals, 7 p.m., room 201
- May 2:
 - Plan Commission, 7 p.m., room 201
 - Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., room 215
- May 3:
 - No scheduled meetings
- May 4:
 - Ethnic Fest Parade, 10 a.m., Julian Middle School

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

- May 6: Village Board – Swearing In reception, 7:00 p.m., room 101, followed by Village Board Swearing in, 7:30 p.m., room 201
- June 2: Board Outreach Event - Day in our Village, 11 a.m. – 6 p.m., Scoville Park
- July 4: Parade, 10 a.m. (Ridgeland/Jackson)

Funds for flood recovery being monitored – Staff is closely monitoring efforts to gain access to federal financial relief for residents affected by flooding from last week's heavy rainfall. Cook County, which has the lead regional role in the formal disaster declaration process, is concentrating its efforts on those communities that sustained more severe and widespread damage than did Oak Park. The Village's eligibility for federal disaster funds has not yet been determined, but information will be provided should the situation change.

Grants remain for sewer backup protection systems – Staff estimates that funds for about 25 projects remain in the Sewer Backup Protection Grant Program. Work eligible for funding through the program includes installing an overhead sewer system or a backflow prevention system. Homeowners may qualify for a grant of 50 percent of the total cost of sewer backup prevention improvements, up to a maximum of \$3,500. Details on the program, including the application materials, are posted at www.oak-park.us/sewergrant. You also may refer residents to the Housing & CDBG Division at 708.358.5410 or e-mail housing@oak-park.us.

Building & Property Standards Department update – Permit activity continued to grow in the first quarter of 2013. The overall volume for building, electrical, mechanical and plumbing permits was up about 4 percent this year as compared to the same period in 2012. Permit revenue for the quarter was up about 16 percent over last year as well. The plan review queue dropped to 30 applications, with 12 cases overdue an average of 14 days each. Building permits were issued in March for renovations to the Park District's Ridgeland Common facility and to Chase Bank, 1048 Lake St. A plan review application was reviewed and approved for restarting construction on 10 townhomes in the SoHo Development at South Boulevard and Home Avenue. [Click here to review the reports](#) for January, February and March, 2013.

Last push for Nicor Community Challenge – Tues., April 30 is the last day for Oak Park to reach its goal in the [Nicor Community Challenge](#), a friendly competition between Oak Park and Evanston that will award up to \$25,000 for a local energy conservation project. The West Cook YMCA, Oak Park's recipient, currently is in line to receive \$22,000. Local residents and businesses still have time to sign up for one of six Nicor Gas energy efficiency programs and add another \$3,000 to the grant. Each new registration adds \$50 toward the final prize. Enrolling in Energy Buzz, which allows participants to track energy use and earn points that can be redeemed for coupons and incentives at local businesses, is one way residents can join the challenge and help Oak Park reach its goal. An online Nicor account number is needed to access Energy Buzz and be counted toward the challenge. Anyone with questions is asked to contact Morgan Chee, CNT Energy Outreach Coordinator, at 773.321.2665 or at mchee@cntenergy.org. The prize is scheduled to be presented by Nicor Gas at 8 a.m., May 17, at the West Cook YMCA, 255 S. Marion St. As of Thursday, Evanston had earned just a little more than \$15,000.

Web site focus groups – Initial response to the new web site design and architecture was positive at a series of controlled usability testing sessions held at the library Wednesday. Participants had an opportunity to try out the new site, ask questions and make suggestions. The sessions were managed by a professional facilitator from [Breakthrough Technologies](#), the web site development vendor. Group participants were sent on a *scavenger hunt* designed by the facilitator to test information organization and assess how different types of users approached the site. A wide range of volunteers were involved, including one former trustee and a frequent oakpark.com commentator. Participants also included twitter and IBM employees, some IT pros, seniors and teenagers. A detailed report on the sessions and its participants will be provided by Breakthrough.

Housing collaborative an award finalists – The West Cook County Housing Collaborative was named a finalist for [Urban Land Institute \(ULI\) Chicago Vision](#)

[Award](#). The awards, which define the standard for real estate development in the Chicagoland area, recognize the full development process – construction, economic viability, marketing, management and design. They also promote best practices in development by identifying projects and programs that exemplify the ULI's policy and practice areas. Winners will be announced at a special event scheduled for June 5 at the Bridgeport Art Center in Chicago. More details will be provided as we discuss attendance of Village representatives.

Ridgeland to reopen – Our engineers say the contractor is optimistic that Ridgeland Avenue would reopen to traffic at South Boulevard on Friday. The project, which is the first phase of a water main replacement under Ridgeland Common, has been hampered by what has become the wettest April on record. Short-term, individual lane closures on Ridgeland at various times are likely throughout much of the remainder of both the Village water main project and the Park District's work on Ridgeland Common.

Oak Park detour to begin – As the Ridgeland detour ends, a detour is scheduled to begin by Monday rush hour for southbound traffic on Oak Park Avenue at North Boulevard. One lane of northbound traffic will be open, and access to the Avenue Garage and Green Line el stop will not be affected. However, southbound CTA and PACE buses will be detoured east at Lake Street to Euclid Avenue, then west on South Boulevard back to Oak Park Avenue. Barring weather delays, the Oak Park Avenue detour is expected to be in place for about a week. The work is part of a project to replace water and sewer mains on North Boulevard between Oak Park and Kenilworth avenues.

Public Works activities – The Water & Sewer Division repaired a second water main break in as many weeks at 400 Lake Street. A sewer lateral at 608 S. East Ave. also was repaired. The Forestry Division began spring parkway tree planting, with about 100 trees scheduled to be planted at various locations throughout the Village. In-house parkway tree pruning continued between Chicago Avenue and Division Street, with crews working from Ridgeland Avenue toward East Avenue.

Earth Month activities – Saturday's fourth annual Earth Fest brought about 800 visitors to the Public Works Center. In addition to being a zero-waste event, this year's fest offered residents the opportunity to drop off items that are not part of the regular recycling program, including blue jeans, glasses, hearing aids, prescription medication, compact florescent light bulbs (CFLs), cell phones, rechargeable batteries and corks. The Public Works Center also hosted an open house where visitors could learn more about the department, kids could explore the equipment and parents could meet the men and women who provide essential services. Lots of photos are posted on the Village's facebook page – [click here to view](#).

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