

**APPROVED MINUTES - SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
PRESIDENT AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE VILLAGE OF OAK PARK
HELD ON MONDAY, JULY 29, 2013 AT 7:30 P.M.
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF OAK PARK VILLAGE HALL**

I. CALL TO ORDER

President Abu-Taleb called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Trustees Barber, Brewer, Johnson, Lueck, Salzman and Tucker; President Abu-Taleb
ABSENT: None

III. AGENDA APPROVAL

It was moved and seconded to move Item IV, Public Comment behind Item V, Awards. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda for the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved as amended.

V. AWARDS – CITIZEN COMMISSION COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS

Jim Kelly, Chair of the Citizen Involvement Commission, presented the awards to the following recipients:

Outstanding Chairperson: Chris Morris, Historic Preservation Commission
Outstanding Commissioner: Ravi Grivois-Shah, Board of Health
Outstanding Commission: Disability Access Commission; Andrea Ott, Chair

Mr. Kelly recognized the late Robert Schoen, former Zoning Board of Appeals member.

Village Clerk Powell presented Mr. Kelly with a Certificate of Appreciation on behalf of the Citizen Involvement Commission.

Trustee Salzman congratulated the Disability Access Commission on the publication of their *Guide For Residents With Disabilities*.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jan Pate, President and CEO - West Cook YMCA, 617 Washington Boulevard. Ms. Pate discussed healthy living initiatives by the YMCA and their support of improvements on Madison Street that will allow for increased and safer pedestrian and bicycle use.

Tom Wendorf, Board President - Madison Street Theater, 1010 W. Madison. Mr. Wendorf requested the use of TIF funds for a theater remodeling project.

Elizabeth Lippitt, Co-Chair - Oak Park Wild About Wellness, 327 Euclid Avenue. Ms. Lippitt spoke about her organization's support of a Complete Streets project on Madison to improve walkability in the community.

Ron Burke, Executive Director - Active Transportation Alliance, 616 Wenonah. Mr. Burke commented that implementation of the Complete Streets Policy is appropriate for Madison Street given the volume of traffic.

Paul Lippens, Director of Planning - Active Transportation Alliance. Mr. Lippens discussed the safety benefits for pedestrians in relation to a Complete Streets project.

Sally Stovall, Co-Founder - Green Community, 166 N. Humphrey Avenue. Ms. Stovall spoke about the positive experience of walking or biking through Oak Park versus riding in a car but noted that Madison Street is not comparable to the other Village streets.

Ilhan Avcioglu, 530 S. Elmwood. Mr. Avcioglu urged the Board to adopt the Complete Streets Policy, which would create bike lanes, slow down traffic to allow for a more pedestrian friendly environment and assist businesses in attracting more customers.

Ginger Vanderveer, 824 Woodbine Avenue. Ms. Vanderveer was also in favor of Complete Streets and noted that walking around town gives people the opportunity to talk to each other, which creates a better community.

Sara Faust, President - Oak Park Development Corporation. Ms. Faust asked the Board to consider allowing Complete Streets to be another incentive for development, as the new public space will contribute to the open space requirements for new developments and may allow for the most desirable commercial, residential and mixed use along Madison.

VI. DISCUSSION

A. Madison Street Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District

Village Manager Cara Pavlicek noted that this TIF District was created in 1995. In late 2010, the Madison Street Coalition directed the consultant to undertake a planning process.

I. Overview of Steering Committee and Madison Street Coalition

Village Planner Craig Failor stated that the Madison Street Coalition was formed to oversee the Madison Street Plan and review any planned development. During discussion of the streetscape enhancements, a steering committee that included the Madison Street Coalition and additional staff was assembled at the direction of the Village Board.

II. Remarks from Chairman of the Madison Street Coalition Regarding Recommendation

Madison Street Coalition Chair Dennis Marani spoke about meetings held with residents, businesses and other groups, who all supported the enhancement. He urged the Board to move forward.

III. Brief Overview of Options & Recommendation

Mr. Failor gave an overview of the information included in the materials distributed to the Board, noting that there are three alternatives. He added that the fourth alternative is to do nothing.

B. Madison Street TIF District Financial Review

Trustee Brewer asked what the financial implications regarding the TIF funds would be should the Board choose to not move forward with this project.

Chief Financial Officer Craig Lesner stated that if there are surplus funds at the end of the TIF, they are distributed among all the taxing bodies in proportion to their share of the tax rate. The Village's portion would be approximately \$.013 of every dollar distributed. Currently, there is a fund balance of approximately \$7.5 million.

Trustee Salzman commented that of all the options that have been presented, none of them cover the range of what the Village might be able to do with the money. There was nothing in the materials suggesting that streetscaping is the best way to initiate economic development. There was also nothing that suggests a tangible return on investment. He was fully sympathetic to the public policy aims and desires that were expressed tonight, but would have liked an alternative that uses the TIF funds to incite specific development opportunities. This is an opportunity to develop the Village-owned properties on Madison and asked why that alternative is not in front of the Board.

Mr. Failor stated that this report was submitted from the steering committee; their focus was to look specifically at the streetscape.

Mr. Lesner explained the TIF concept and how it works. He also explained the terms of the Intergovernmental Agreement with District 97 regarding reimbursement of Madison Street TIF increments to them by the Village. It is a constraint on resources, as the TIF is taking in money that it's obligated to pay out pursuant to the agreement. He also noted that land value of Village owned property in the TIF District is approximately \$3.7 million.

C. Discussion by the Village Board

Trustee Johnson referred to the Village's significant investment in the Roosevelt Road streetscape and stated that the Berwyn side's considerable development activity has occurred as a result of partnerships and incentives. He expressed concern regarding using these funds on Madison Street without partnerships on major parcels that could drive economic development. The unknown of a major redevelopment of the street in the form of a footprint may not drive that same type of economic development. In addition, this proposal is being looked at without consideration of other factors such as the debt level and pension issues and without that, an informed decision cannot be made.

President Abu-Taleb noted that not knowing what the Village plans to do with Madison Street creates uncertainty for any potential business interested in coming there. Regardless of the TIF, they have to move forward. Also, the agreement with District 97 was a major consideration. He suggested approaching both economic development and streetscape as one project, but focusing on developing a small section of the street, as it is unrealistic to try to develop the entire length of the street from Harlem to Austin.

Trustee Tucker agreed and noted that incentives are one of the reasons those developments succeed in other communities, adding that Oak Park should have that option when approaching potential developers and businesses. He referred to remarks during Public Comment and stated that he is in favor of bike lanes and making the street more pedestrian friendly but the overall road diet and the associated cost is difficult to come to terms with.

Trustee Brewer commented that after reviewing the materials, he didn't find that there is a great return for streetscape. Although appreciative of the fact that some streetscape improvements are needed, he didn't think the entire amount of available funding should be used for that. Trustee Brewer stated that a fourth alternative that takes the position that there will be money set aside for incentives should be added.

Trustee Johnson suggested that the Village address pedestrian safety and look for innovative ways to create safer crossings, especially around schools. Also, they should look for an alternate east-west route to utilize the bike grant. He proposed that an RFP be issued for Oak Park Avenue and Madison and see what types of responses are received in regards to whether or not the Village has to be involved in a partnership or not. This will create certainty and will allow them to pursue modified streetscape enhancements within the available TIF dollars.

Trustee Lueck agreed with issuing an RFP for Oak Park and Madison. She commented that spending TIF money on streetscape does not leave them without incentives, as the Village owns that land. Her view of this project is one of capital improvement as well as a public safety issue, noting that Madison is not easy to cross or drive along and is structurally obsolete, particularly at the east end.

Trustee Barber was in favor of making the street more conducive to shopping and biking. However, he would not support anything that would add to the tax burden. He was interested in incentives that would attract major customer traffic, noting that he was supportive of the business community but the Village does not have the resources to assist every small business that might want to open. He added that there is some benefit to focusing incentives on major opportunities and taking the remainder to do the other things that need to be done in terms of streetscape.

Following further discussion, Village Manager Pavlicek stated that when the Madison Street TIF was created in 1995, the Village was required to create a plan and indicate what they will use the increment for through the public hearing process. This resulted in \$7 million for public improvements, \$8 million for land acquisition, \$7.5 million for site prep, \$3 million for rehab of existing buildings and \$2.5 million for administrative and professional fees. The steering committee's focus was narrowly limited to the expenditures related to public improvements and perhaps building better public infrastructure to increase private investment may not be the best strategy. She added that looking at eligible incentives to capture private investment would fall under the site prep category. However, Madison Street originally housed gas stations, car dealerships and automotive repair shops, so site preparation may be significantly costly, as petroleum products may remain on those sites. Also, the TIF law would require a public hearing to proceed with a plan amendment, and this must be done very methodically and with proper timing. The potential relocation of the District 97 administrative building should be taken into consideration as well.

Trustee Johnson was not in favor of the road diet, as it is not the most appropriate use of their limited dollars and safer street crossing issues can be resolved without it. He was supportive of business development at the vacant Village-owned property and noted that economic development is where the focus should be.

Trustee Brewer agreed that the TIF dollars should be used to promote economic development as much as possible. He recommended a proposal that takes this and streetscaping into consideration.

Trustee Tucker commented that he would like bike lanes incorporated.

Trustee Salzman suggested directing staff to work on an RFP for Oak Park and Madison, perhaps look at an alternate route for the bike lanes, and look into what can be done to enhance public safety. This could be brought back to the Board for further discussion.

Trustee Barber recommended working out a way to begin phasing this in.

President Abu-Taleb commented that he would like to move forward with a sense of urgency and to complete the project within a certain period in time in order to create certainty and an environment to attract those businesses with the proper incentives.

Village Manager Pavlicek noted that staff will look at a possible package or outline of economic development incentives that would be appropriate and provide some parameters. They will also follow up on the bike grant and the feasibility of utilizing the grant in other areas. She also stated that staff will proceed with the RFP on the Madison and Oak Park site. This will be brought back to the Board at a Special Meeting as quickly as possible.

VII. ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:29 P.M. Monday, July 29, 2013.

SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:

Teresa Powell, Village Clerk

By: MaryAnn Schoenneman
Interim Deputy Village Clerk