

LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees February 2, 2009

Cathy Sweitzer, Observer

President David Pope presided over the meeting which began at 7:39 p.m. The full board, as well as Village Clerk Sandra Sokol, Village Manager Tom Barwin, and Village Attorney Ray Heise attended.

The meeting began with a presentation of findings of the 2008 Community Survey by the National Research Center (NRC). The survey, which was administered by mail in late summer 2008, explored quality of life issues, government services, and community amenities. The findings will be used to help inform planning and budgeting. Responses were compared to similar surveys in 2000 and 2004, as well as to NRC's national database.

The findings revealed areas of strength and weakness in residents' perceptions of their Village. Oak Parkers ranked their community highest in terms acceptance of diversity (99th percentile nationwide); sense of community; good place to live; good place to raise kids, attractive place to live. Areas in which Oak Parkers rated their community below the national average included listening to citizens; the "direction" Oak Park is taking; overall governance; perceived safety after dark; employment opportunities; and shopping. The top five services esteemed by villagers were fire, ambulance, police, recycling and garbage. The five lowest ranking services were land use/planning; economic development; street repairs; building permits; and parking. Villagers' top five concerns were parking, crime, drugs, disorderly youth, and traffic. A complete report of the survey will be available online soon at www.oak-park.us/villagemanager.

Manager Barwin informed the Board that Cook County is anticipating moving the Department of Public Health from its current location at 1010 Lake Street to another spot in the southwest quadrant of the county in the next couple of years. The Board passed a motion for a resolution opposing this move in the hopes of keeping this facility in the Village.

Citizens once again raised concerns about the zoning variance that would allow a proposed Dunkin Donuts on Madison Street to operate a drive thru facility early in the morning and late at night. Issues of light and noise pollution, disturbance of the peace, safety of children, and aesthetics all resurfaced. At special issue were the proposed hours of operation between 4:30 a.m. and 10 p.m. Alan Stefaniak, attorney for the prospective owner, agreed that his client would attempt to honor several requests by local residents, including: reduction of signage size; architectural enhancement of the sides of the building; restricted access to outdoor seating; additional landscaping; reduced volume and limited use of speakers in early morning operations. After much discussion, a neighbor living two houses away from the proposed business said she could live with this plan if the owner would agree to open at 5 a.m. instead of 4:30 a.m. The owner agreed. The Board passed the ordinance issuing a special use permit to Dunkin Donuts, with amendments attached. Nevertheless, some Board

members, including President Pope, expressed concern that permitting the early hour drive thru might be setting an unwise precedent.

The Board also voted to allow the drafting of a new ordinance for the future installation and maintenance of AT&T VRAD boxes. The Village Manager has received several complaints about the current boxes ranging from aesthetic concerns to sight line/visibility issues. The current boxes do, in fact, comply with Illinois sight line standards and Board of Health decibel requirements. The Village cannot block their placement by AT&T, but it can regulate related issues. The new ordinance would deal with future installations, not current boxes. Remounting and relocation of boxes could be as expensive as \$100,000 per unit, a prohibitive expense, Board members seemed to agree.

Several additional agenda items (approximately 9) had to be postponed for future consideration because of the late hour. The meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

(online minutes: www.oak-park.us/about_our_village/board_minutes_2008.htm)