

# LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS™ OAK PARK / RIVER FOREST



## **Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees January 5, 2009**

*Cathy Sweitzer, Observer*

The meeting convened at 7:50 p.m. President David Pope presided with all trustees in attendance, as well as the Village Clerk, Manager and Attorney.

The Board discussed raising the per unit fee for inspection of rental and condominium properties (from \$5 to \$20/rentals; \$3.50 to \$10/condos). Oak Parker Bill Planek of Greenplan Management urged improving communications between owner/managers and the Village as a better alternative and a way to reduce inspection expenses. Daniel Fore, Independent Candidate for Village Trustee, noted that the Village Web site that lists Board meetings has not been working and may have prevented opportunities for public reaction. Village Clerk Sandra Sokol acknowledged that problems with the system are being addressed. In the meantime, the Board of Realtors has been advised and letters to the realtors and to the Building Owners Management Association will be sent.

Similarly the Board discussed an increase in fees for commercial property waste haulers from \$50 to \$1,000. When passed onto the user, the increase comes to about \$13.20 per year, per commercial building. Some discussion of raising the fees on dumpsters, from \$35 to \$50 for the first week of use also arose.

Two representatives from the Farmers' Market, Melissa Wittenberg and Manager Meredith Conn, urged the approval of adding bread to the offerings. They reported a flood of requests for this item and noted that we are currently the only farmers' market in the state not offering bread. A few Board members expressed concern that selling bread could undercut the sales of local bread merchants. President Pope and others thought this could be addressed by allowing local bread purveyors to compete for space at the market. The motion to sell bread was approved with the understanding that prospective bread merchants would be competing on the basis of their product being made "from scratch" and of the highest quality.

Various contracts for landscaping and tree removal were approved but raised a concern from Board Member Greg Marsey about the Village's ability to respond quickly if a tree is infected by Emerald Ash Bore (EAB). A forestry official agreed that a policy should be in place before summer to handle the timely removal of infected trees.

Among the generally hopeful closing remarks of this first meeting of 2009, concerns about the \$83,000 owed by the library for parking lot expenses surfaced anew. Board Member Ray Johnson, disturbed by a recent letter from the Library Board refusing to discuss the matter further, suggested sending two Village Trustees to the next Library Board meeting. President Pope reported that he had been invited to and attended the December Library Board meeting. The Library had engaged an attorney, and President Pope foresees the Village Board may do the same. Mr. Johnson asked if this suggested that litigation might be ensuing; President Pope said it might be so. Mr. Marsey noted that

the Library Board does not feel that the figure was reached equitably. President Pope and Village Manager Tom Barwin strongly disagreed, citing a significant reduction in the Library's original share of expenses already proffered by the Village. President Pope asked Mr. Barwin to provide documentation of these cuts for future reference.

The Board recognized Chief Rick Tanksley for certification as Chief of Police. Illinois is the only state that currently offers the elite certification based on rigorous standards of education, testing and review by one's peers.

President Pope urged all Oak Parkers to visit the "Lincoln: A Man of His Times" exhibit at the Oak Park Public Library. The Library is the only location in Illinois hosting the traveling exhibit that will tour 40 libraries nationwide.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

(Online minutes: [www.oak-park.us/about\\_our\\_village/board\\_minutes\\_2008.htm](http://www.oak-park.us/about_our_village/board_minutes_2008.htm))