



**Village of Oak Park Board of Trustees
May 16, 2011**

Amy Little, Observer

Trustees in attendance were: Adam Salzman, Ray Johnson, Glenn Brewer, John Hedges, Collette Lueck, Bob Tucker, and President David Pope.

David Pope announced that Oak Park had written a letter to Springfield regarding redistricting, to ask that the legislators not "Balkanize" Oak Park into multiple districts. There was an appreciation for Dick Martens, attorney for Oak Park, who served for 38 years. The non-agenda public commentary included several speakers from IMPACT, an ad hoc group devoted to addressing the drug and alcohol problem at the high school. IMPACT believes that every part of the community has to work together to address the problem. One of the things the village of Oak Park can do is review the drug and alcohol laws to make the local laws less punitive, and to create a method for local adjudication.

The Housing Programs Advisory Committee is working with five communities on the west side to develop affordable housing strategies. Oak Park, Berwyn, Bellwood, Forest Park, and Maywood compose the West Cook Housing Collaborative. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) will at no cost perform a housing analysis for the five communities around transit-oriented development and other assets.

The meeting was very well attended due to the second item on the agenda, consideration of the Plan Commission's findings and recommendations for the Comcast Building to convert the building to become "low income" apartment housing with 51 residential units and commercial on the first floor. The Comcast Building is located at 820-832 Madison Street and 436 South Grove. Catholic Charities and the Oak Park Housing Authority are partners. The income ceiling would be \$26,300 per year. Oak Park Housing Authority will be the manager of the building. It will pay property taxes, and will be LEED certified. The project will require no funding from Oak Park. Its priority will be to house people who already live and/or work in Oak Park, and it will set aside housing for people with disabilities.

The Plan Commission recommended 6 to 2 in favor of the project. There was public comment where three people spoke in favor and three opposed the project. In general the opposition spoke about their dislike of concentrating "low income" people in one location, that it would replace the YMCA's SRO population. Lack of parking spaces was raised, and a solution was recommended in the form of a cul de sac on Grove rather than an open street, to provide more parking.

People who spoke in favor reminded the village that OPRF High School graduates about 70 people each year with disabilities who would qualify for living in the building. The trustees were more concerned with how likely the manager would be to fill the commercial spaces, in order to meet the property tax obligations. The trustees suggested a parking study needs to be done for the project: a large parking structure is planned at the corner of Madison and Oak Park Avenue, but a cul de sac will be investigated as well.

The Forestry Commission is being combined with the Community Design Commission, so as to promote forestry in good design throughout the community. Tom Phillion will chair the commission. This combination was a suggestion by the Citizen Involvement Commission to streamline commissions in Oak Park.