

LWV OPRF League of Women Voters 2022 Observer Report -

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Oct 25, 2022 1 hour 52 minutes

Oak Park President and Board of Trustees

Village Board Speaks with Community & Businesses on 24 hour Gas Station Ban

- The Village adopted an Ordinance on 9/19/22 closing all gas stations in Oak Park from 12-5am in an effort to reduce violent crime [22-65]. Currently gas stations are operating overnight as a judge stayed enactment of the ordinance pending resolution of the litigation.
- This hearing is in response to a lawsuit filed against the Village by the collective gas stations. Police Chief Johnson, a lawyer for the gas stations, the gas station owners, and many concerned community members spoke.
- Police Chief Johnson gave a detailed presentation on the violent crime committed at 4 of the 8 gas stations open 24 hours over the last few years, including the murder of Jailyn Logan-Bledsoe at the BP on 100 N. Chicago Ave.
- It is Chief Johnson's opinion that the gas stations should be closed between the hours of 12-5am, that "enough is enough", and that violence will be reduced by closing these locations overnight.
- The attorney representing 7 of the gas stations spoke of the reasons for their lawsuit against the Village.
 1. The Ordinance "treats entities differently," referring to how other businesses are allowed to remain open 24 hours.
 2. The business could go out of business. They could lose 12-35% gross revenue.
 3. Closed gas stations could become a target or opportunity for loitering with an empty store.
 4. The franchise supply agreement requires them to sell gas at all times of the day.

Public Comments

- A representative from the 7-11s in Oak Park said that crime in Oak Park is getting worse, and they are requesting their businesses be added to the Ordinance. He said they are contractually obligated by 7-11 to stay open, but by being added to the Ordinance they could be closed overnight.
- Many community members gave public comment in support of the Ordinance closing gas stations from 12-5am. The number one reason overwhelmingly being violent crime.

- Community members are asking the Board not to prioritize business over safety.

The Board will continue to discuss the Ordinance again at their next scheduled meeting on 11/07/22. They will also be discussing adding the 7-11 businesses to the overnight ban.