

Students invited to adopt a firefighter



When the first graders at Longfellow School officially adopted an Oak Park firefighter, little did they know that one of the first lesson's message of get out and stay out would play a key role when a fire swept through an apartment building this fall in east-central Oak Park.

One of the young students who had participated in the Fire Department's *Adopt a Firefighter* program at Longfellow Elementary School told her teacher that she thought of everything the firefighter had taught her as she was running out of the building.

That's why she knew what to do and why she wasn't scared, she confidently told her teacher after the harrowing experience.

With such tangible evidence of the importance of teaching fire safety at an early age, the Oak Park Fire Department hopes to reach even more students with its messages of staying safe in emergencies.

The *Adopt a Firefighter* program lets first grade classrooms adopt an Oak Park firefighter to teach classes about fire safety. The firefighters, who come with personal adoption certificates, then visit the classroom four times throughout the school year.

In addition to get out and stay out, the visits cover a range of potentially life-saving topics, including stop, drop and roll, crawl low under smoke and how to make a 911 emergency call.

Students also get a lesson in "don't fear the gear" so they won't be scared should they encounter a firefighter in full turnout garb during an emergency.

Since firefighters are used to the turnout drill, they sometimes can convince the teacher to try on the gear, an effective way to reassure children that there is a person who can be trusted behind the mask and helmet.

Fire officials say these lessons are important first steps that help students prepare for the more advanced safety trailer program that begins in the second grade.

Since the *Adopt a Firefighter* program began in the spring of 2014, more than 500 Oak Park first grade students have participated in the lessons taught by adopted firefighters.

For more information on the program — or to adopt an Oak Park firefighter — call 708.358.5600 or email fire@oak-park.us.

2016 budget focuses on technology, infrastructure

Technology will play a key role in 2016, as the Village of Oak Park's new fiscal year municipal budget focuses on maintaining service levels, while enhancing the quality of services provided.

New software solutions are planned for 2016 to streamline permitting, inspections and licensing, making it quicker and easier for both individuals and developers to invest in projects that improve the community and increase property values.

Wider applications of geographic information systems (GIS) data also are planned for the year ahead. Working in collaboration with a regional consortium of other governments, the Village is sharing costs and ideas to create new ways to manage service delivery and improve the efficiency of the workers who keep the snow plowed, the water flowing and the trees trimmed.

Technology will help make parking at public garages easier in 2016, too. New equipment set to be installed at the entrance and exits gates will give permit holders access with a smart phone barcode and allow visitors to pay with a credit card at all exits. New weather canopies also are planned to protect the equipment and drivers.

Maintaining and improving vital public infrastructure will continue to be a priority in 2016. This year's budget builds upon the commitment made last year to invest an additional \$20 million over five years in alleys and streets.

Oak Park has more than 600 alleys and 240 lane miles of streets, many in need of major repair. The multiyear commitment to infrastructure

Continued inside

Embracing diversity helps define the character of Oak Park

Oak Park was one of the first municipalities in the country to make diversity a matter of public policy. Following each two-year election cycle since a Diversity Statement was first adopted in 1973, the Village Board demonstrates its support of the high ideals embodied in the statement by reaffirming its content via a formal resolution. With a focus on differences defining much of the current dialogue in the United States and the world, residents are invited to read the words that have helped define Oak Park and consider their broader intent...

Diversity Statement

The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life. Oak Park has committed itself to equality not only because it is legal, but because it is right; not only because equality is ethical, but because it is desirable for us and our children. Ours is a dynamic community that encourages the contributions of all citizens, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, political affiliation, or any of the other distinguishing characteristics that all too often divide people in society.

Oak Park's proud tradition of citizen involvement and accessible local government challenge us to show others how such a community can embrace change while still respecting and preserving the best of the past. Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another. Through interaction, we believe we can reconcile the apparent paradox of appreciating and even celebrating our differences while at the same time developing consensus on a shared vision for the future. Oak Park recognizes that a free, open, and inclusive community is achieved through full and broad participation of all its citizenry. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is represented in decision-making and power is shared collectively.

Oak Park is uniquely equipped to accomplish these objectives, because we affirm all people as members of the human family. We reject the notion of race as a barrier dividing us and we reject prejudicial behavior towards any group of people. We believe residence in this Village should be open to anyone interested in sharing our benefits and responsibilities.

To achieve our goals, the Village of Oak Park must continue to support the Board's fair housing philosophy that has allowed us to live side-by-side and actively seek to foster unity in our community. We believe that mutual understanding among individuals of diverse backgrounds can best be attained with an attitude of reciprocal good will and increased association. The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equal access, full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and equality of opportunity in all Village operating policies. The success of this endeavor prepares us to live and work in the twenty-first century.

It is our intention that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts.

- Adopted in 1973

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Discrimination complaints

Since 1968, Village Code has defended the rights of individuals within the protected classes of race, sex, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, veteran status, sexual orientation, age, marital status, familial status, order of protection status, source of income or disability in the purchasing, leasing, securing a loan, renting or occupying housing or other real estate. Any person otherwise qualified who is denied or discriminated against in these processes should call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us for more information, conciliation or to file a formal, written complaint.

2016 budget focuses on technology, infrastructure

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improvements relies on issuing bonds that can be repaid over the lives of the projects.

Through its legal authority as a home rule government, the Village has continued to lessen the reliance on property taxes by developing a diverse mix of revenue streams. Debt repayment, for example, will be supported by fee schedules established last year for residential garbage and water and sewer services, which, unlike property taxes, are based on use and offer opportunities for individuals and families to reduce what they pay.

Monthly refusing hauling fees will increase \$1.50 to \$21.10 for a 64-gallon cart, and by \$2.50 to \$26.38 for a 96-gallon cart. The cost of green yard waste and pink bulk refuse stickers will go up a nickel each to \$2.45 and \$2.05 each respectively.

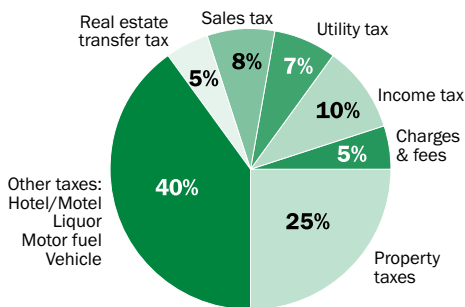
Water and sewer fees are set to rise by 75 cents per 1,000 gallons to a combined monthly rate of \$11.51. In addition to the \$6 million typically paid to Chicago each year for the water Oak Parkers consume, the fees help the Village maintain the system that delivers the water to customers and carries the waste to the regional treatment plants.

The 2016 budget was crafted over several months, with public meetings hosted by the Finance Committee of the Village Board in October followed by reviews by the full Village Board in November. The budget was adopted at a public meeting in December.

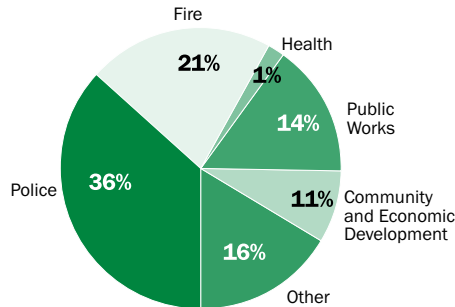
Residents are invited to review the 2016 budget documents, as well as budget summaries from past years at www.oak-park.us/budget-summaries.

2016 Village budget at a glance

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



WHERE THE MONEY GOES



HOW PROPERTY TAXES ARE DISTRIBUTED



Ways to Save

Smaller carts – Oak Parkers who opt for a refuse cart the same size as the recycling container can save \$5.28 per month, or \$15.84 on each quarterly bill under the new rate structure. About a third of residences served by the Village hauling contractor have chosen this option since it was first offered in 2004. Additional recycling bins are available at no cost. Call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us for more information.

Compost – More than 900 Oak Park households are participating in the Village’s composting program *CompostAble*, which reduces the amount of organic waste like table scraps and food-soiled containers that otherwise would end up in the refuse container. While the program does have an additional cost – \$14 per month – neighbors can share a cart. Participants also can use the composting cart for yard waste, eliminating the need to buy bags and stickers for disposal. Call 708.358.5700 or email composting@oak-park.us for more information.



Conserve water – Because Oak Park relies on Lake Michigan water, much of the cost consumers pay is beyond the control of local government. But how much water a household uses can be managed through conservation. Oak Parkers who take steps to use less water can reduce their water and sewer bills. Simple moves like turning off the water while brushing teeth, installing low-flow showerheads and using the quick wash option on a dishwasher can significantly reduce indoor water use. More water conservation tips are posted at www.oak-park.us/conservewater.

Free child safety seat inspections offered by appointment



Firefighter-paramedic Michael Henkelman installs a child safety seat

The Fire Department offers free child safety seat inspections. Parents of young children should email carseat@oak-park.us to schedule an inspection. Parents will need to bring their vehicle owner's manual and car seat manufacturer's manual along with the seat they wish to have inspected. Residents are asked not to come to the Fire Department for an inspection without an appointment. As on-call firefighter/paramedics, the technicians may not be available if an emergency arises.

Citizen volunteers needed

The Village Board is seeking volunteers to serve on the many advisory boards and commissions that help research important issues, gather public input and provide valuable perspectives on a wide range of pending policy decisions. Current needs include a structural engineer or fire safety professional for the Building Codes Advisory Commission and high school juniors or seniors to serve on the Community Relations and Public Art Advisory commissions. Positions also are available on the Community Development Citizens Advisory Committee, Civic Information Systems Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. All Oak Park residents are eligible to participate, including renters and high school students. For more information call 708.358.5670, email clerk@oak-park.us or visit www.oak-park.us/volunteer.

Comprehensive zoning review continues

The first comprehensive review of Village zoning regulations since 2002 continues, as efforts focus on revisions to better align local laws with recommendations in Envision Oak Park, the community's long-range comprehensive plan adopted last year.



Camiros Ltd., a Chicago-based planning and zoning firm, was selected through a competitive process early in 2015 to lead the zoning project. The goal, project planners say, is to help make Oak Park a more sustainable, livable and business-friendly community. The process began with a review of the current zoning

ordinance and land use patterns. In addition, interviews have been conducted with a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives of Village volunteer boards, commissions and committees, business interests, local activist groups, historic preservationists, real estate agents, developers, architects and neighborhood organizations. Several drafts of the recommended changes will be presented to the public through a series of Plan Commission meetings and open houses where residents can learn more about the project and provide input. A proposed Madison Street Zoning District was presented to the Plan Commission in December, with a recommendation to the Village Board planned for the first quarter of this year. A formal public hearing will be held before the Village Board considers revisions to the full zoning code sometime in mid-summer. In the meantime, property owners can learn more about the project and follow its progress via a dedicated website at www.oakparkzoning.com, where presentations and reports are posted and public comments accepted. For more information, call 708.358.5440 or email planning@oak-park.us.

Clip and Save

Who to Call

Dial Direct (area code 708)

Village Hall	oak-park.us
TTY	711
Adjudication	358.5479
Development Customer Services	358.5420
Business Services	358.5425
Neighborhood Services	358.5410
Housing	option 1
CDBG	option 2
Property complaints	option 3
Permits & Inspections	358.5430
Planning	358.5440
General questions	option 1
Historic Preservation	option 2
Zoning	option 3
Finance	358.5460
Utility Billing Inquiries	358.5478
Fire (nonemergency)	358.5600
Human Resources	358.5650
Job Hotline	358.5650
Mayor & Trustees	358.5784
Police (nonemergency)	386.3800
Crime Tip Hotline	434.1636
Public Health	358.5480
Animal Control	358.5680
Public Works	358.5700
Parking	358.7275
Village Clerk	358.5670
Village Manager's Office	358.5770

EMERGENCIES 911

Park District	www.pdop.org
Administration	725.2017
Customer Service	725.2000
Building & Grounds	725.2050
Business Operations	725.2015






Public Library	www.oppl.org
Main Library	383.8200
Maze Branch	386.4751
Dole Branch	386.9032

School District 97	www.op97.org
Administration	524.3000

School District 200	www.oprfs.org
Administration	434.3107

Township	www.oakparktownship.org
Senior Services	383.8060
Youth Services	445.2727
General Assistance	383.8005
Assessor Services	383.8005
Mental Health Board	358.8855

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Plan now for summer construction projects

The winter months are the perfect time to plan for spring or summer remodeling projects, both business and residential. The Development Customer Services Department's one-stop approach means getting answers to all questions at one time. Anyone considering opening a business, designing an addition, finishing a basement, building a new garage or remodeling a kitchen or bath is encouraged to schedule a preliminary construction meeting to discuss the process before finalizing the plans. Staff will explain what is needed for the permit process and can direct you to resources that can provide additional guidance if needed. To schedule a personal appointment, call at 708.358.5434 or email permits@oak-park.us.

Volunteers needed for A Day in Our Village

June may seem like a long way from January, but planning already is well underway for *A Day in Our Village*, Oak Park's annual festival celebrating diversity and community involvement. This year's event is scheduled for Sun., June 5. A variety of volunteers are needed to help promote and staff the event, which includes activity booths representing Oak Park civic, cultural, social service, educational, religious and business organizations, as well as demonstrations, entertainment and food provided by local restaurants. Anyone interested in volunteering — or more information — is urged to call 708.358.5407 or email community@oak-park.us.

Park District unveils new logo

The Park District of Oak Park introduced a new logo to the community in December, updating its look to better represent today's parks, modern facilities and innovative programs. The new logo, an update to the logo that served the organization for more than 50 years, is made up of many parts similar to the Park District, which has many facets working together to provide enjoyment and benefits to the residents of the community. The new logo is being introduced on the Park District's web page, in the program guide and on park signs and campers t-shirts throughout 2016. See the new logo in color at www.pdop.org.



PARK DISTRICT
of OAK PARK

Winterfest features outdoor fun

The Park District's annual celebration of winter is set for 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Sat., Jan. 30, in Taylor Park, 400 W. Division St. Winterfest offers free, old-fashioned outdoor fun, ice skating, music and food. Ice skates may be rented for \$1, but availability will be limited. Visit www.pdop.org for more details.

Conservatory offers antidote to winter blues

If you are suffering from the winter blues, the Oak Park Conservatory, 615 Garfield St. (at East Avenue, just south of I-290) could be just what you need. Visitors can indulge in the oxygen-rich air, while listening to the sounds of birds and waterfalls, and enjoying scents of Azalea, orange blossoms and orchids. Chicagoland Gardening magazine once described the Conservatory as *small but mighty*, a fitting description of this community gem. The Conservatory is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, and 2 to 4 p.m., Mondays. Admission is free, but donations are accepted. For more information, call 708.725.2400.



Register to vote at Village Hall

U.S. citizens with the proper identification can register to vote online at www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections/register2vote or during regular hours at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. Village Hall is open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. Voter registration also is offered at Oak Park Township, 105 S. Oak Park Ave., and the main Oak Park Library, 834 Lake St. Call the library at 708.383.8200 to make sure a registrar is available. Residents who turned 18 years old by Nov. 8 may register now to vote in the March 15 Presidential Primary Election. Call 708.358.5670 or email clerk@oak-park.us for more information.



Vacant building rules streamlined

With the recently approved amendments to the Village's Vacant Building Ordinance, buildings now need remain unoccupied for only six months before they may be classified as vacant. The new, shorter timeline will allow Village staff to act more efficiently to prevent negative impacts on neighboring properties and help prepare these buildings for occupancy. A vacancy determination requires the title holder to register the property, show proof of liability insurance and submit to a thorough interior inspection. Re-inspections continue until all code violations are addressed. Title holders may also appeal the determination to the Village Manager. For more information call 708.358.5410 or email housing@oak-park.us.

Scan with a smartphone
QR app for more
information



Village of Oak Park
Village Hall
123 Madison Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302-4272



Mayor Anan Abu-Taleb

Trustees

Peter Barber
Andrea Ott
Glenn Brewer
Adam Salzman
Collette Lueck
Bob Tucker

Village Clerk Teresa Powell
Village Manager Cara Pavlicek

Residential Customer Local
Oak Park, Illinois

Postal Carrier
Pre-Sort

Permit No. 26
Oak Park, IL
PAID
U.S. Postage
Standard
Presort

Sidewalk shoveling required

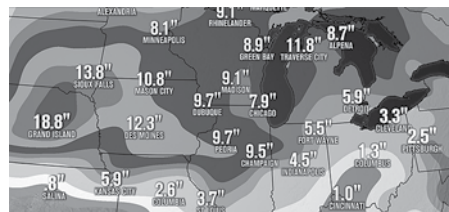
Property owners who shovel their sidewalks are doing more than making it safer for pedestrians of all ages — they also are complying with the law. Village ordinance requires snow and ice to be removed from the public sidewalk within 24 hours following any snow, sleet or freezing rain. Being a good neighbor is important, too, so property owners are urged to help those who may need help clearing a sidewalk. For more information on the shoveling requirement or help resources, call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

Warming centers open

Warming centers are open from 5:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. at West Suburban Medical Center, Erie Street at Austin Boulevard, and from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rush Oak Park Hospital, 500 S. Maple Ave. Hours may be extended when weather conditions warrant. To find out if the warming center is open after hours, call West Suburban Hospital at 708.763.6747 or Rush Oak Park Hospital at 708.660.6000. If transportation is needed, call the Oak Park Police Department's non-emergency number 708.386.3800. Village Hall, 123 Madison St., also is a warming center from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Forecast key to planning parking when it snows

The Village has specific rules that govern parking when it snows — rules that are enforced seven days a week, including holidays. Residents are urged to monitor local forecasts and plan accordingly. When snow exceeds two inches, all parking is prohibited on the main streets posted as snow routes. Parking on other streets is restricted to one side from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in residential areas and from midnight to 8 a.m. in designated commercial districts, the side determined by the odd/even date. To find out if snow-related parking restrictions are in effect, call 708.358.7669 for a recorded message. Cable television subscribers can tune into VOP-TV, broadcast on Comcast channel 6 and AT&T channel 99. Residents who sign up at www.oak-park.us/notifyme will be alerted. Efforts also will be made to post timely information to social media sites www.facebook.com/vopnews and twitter.com/vopnews. The snow emergency parking rules and a list of frequently asked questions also are posted at www.oak-park.us/snow.



Recycle holiday lights

Residents can recycle unwanted holiday lights and extension cords from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. through January at the Public Works Center, 201 South Blvd. Mini, rope, LED, C7 and C9 lights and extension cords will be accepted. Call 708.358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us for details.

Holiday tree recycling

The Village's refuse hauler will collect holiday trees during the weeks of January 4 and 11. Trees will be picked up at regular collection points on regularly scheduled days if they are free of decorations and stands. Only residents with no alley should put trees at the curb. Since all trees collected are mulched at a licensed composting facility and used for soil enrichment, please do not leave them in plastic disposal bags. Wreaths and garlands cannot be collected for recycling because they contain wire — place them in the trash container. For more information, contact the Public Works Department at 708.358.5700 or publicworks@oak-park.us.

