

Oak Park

Special Edition City Magazine - 2021

City Magazine

City Veteran Reflections

New Businesses in Oak Park

Utility Updates

Pet Rules





Message From City Manager Erik Tungate

Resilience. Oak Park has a history of weathering both literal and figurative storms. In the 75 years since the City's incorporation, Oak Park has confronted economic, political, and social challenges that have rendered less stable communities out of existence. Yet, Oak Park always bounces back.

Sadly, we must now add health crisis to that list of unforeseeable tests. The COVID-19 epidemic ravaged the globe, our own Oak Park community included. We've had to change the way we live day-to-day. And worse, we've lost people we love to the virus.

Yet, the pandemic also forced us to care a little deeper for each other. You wear a mask, for instance, to protect others; others wear masks to protect you. We're discovering new ways to stay connected, comfort each other, and maintain self-care.

Right now, we're having optimistic discussions about FDA-approved vaccines, at-home COVID testing kits, and other countries that have progressed to detecting zero, new virus cases. However, we're not yet out of the woods.

We must remain vigilant about maintaining our collective safety by wearing masks outside of our homes, social-distancing, and frequently washing our hands until everyone – including our most vulnerable populations – can be inoculated. If our own history tells us anything, we know our Oak Park community will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever.

In recognition of the City of Oak Park's 75th anniversary this past October, this resilience-themed issue of the Oak Park Magazine explores our community's past, our present-day achievements, and our shared vision for a prosperous future.

As we move forward in 2021, let us be reminded of our community's hearty spirit and history of revival. I pray that you and your family have a happy and healthy New Year.

Sincerely,

Erik Tungate, City Manager, City of Oak Park

Friendly reminder: Although the Municipal Complex is temporarily closed to the public (with the exception of Public Safety), you can still do business with the City through email and phone, and pay bills using U.S. mail, the dropbox outside City Hall, and online services through the City's website at www.oakparkmi.gov. Please keep in mind that the City does not charge an online fee to make payments using a direct link to your bank account. Please stay connected with the City for updates through our website, Facebook pages, OPTV15 and 16, and Community eBlasts.

CITY OF OAK PARK

MAYOR
Marian McClellan

MAYOR PRO TEM
Carolyn Burns

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Solomon Radner
Julie Edgar
Shaun Whitehead

CITY MANAGER
Erik Tungate

CITY OF OAK PARK
14000 Oak Park Blvd.
Oak Park, MI 48237
(248) 691-7400
www.OakParkMI.gov

The Oak Park City Magazine
is published by:

The Communications and
Public Information Department

(248) 691-7589
efreeman@oakparkmi.gov

FOLLOW US ON:



@CityOfOakPark

© 2021, City of Oak Park



City Magazine

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>2 MESSAGE FROM
City Manager Erik Tungate</p> <p>4 FEATURE STORY
Reflections on the “Family City”</p> <p>6 COMMUNITY
Happenings Around Our Community</p> <p>8 PUBLIC WORKS
Mission Complete</p> <p>10 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Oak Park Thrives</p> <p>11 CITY CLERK
Oak Park Makes History</p> | <p>12 TECHNICAL & PLANNING
Ordinance Updates</p> <p>13 LIBRARY
Open for Curbside</p> <p>14 PUBLIC SAFETY
Serving Our Community</p> <p>15 RECREATION
Plenty of Virtual & Outdoor Activities</p> <p>16 THANK YOU
Thank You To Our Sponsors
and A Special Volunteer</p> |
|---|---|



Reflections on the “Family City”



For several decades following Oak Park’s incorporation in 1945, the city was widely referred to as a “bedroom community” – mostly populated by residents who maintained homes within the city limits but worked in Detroit and other nearby communities. But something began to change about 8 years ago when the City’s focus expanded to include economic development.

“City Council adopted a new motto in 2015: Community, Culture, Commerce,” Mayor Marian McClellan shared. “No matter how much we grow and change, however, community will always be our first priority. Community means people first.”

The following article summarizes interviews with three of the City of Oak Park’s longest-serving employees, who shared their professional journeys with the City, as well as their perspectives on growth and community in Oak Park.

KEVIN YEE
Assistant City Manager,
Public Works Director, and City Engineer
23 years

- 1998:** Assistant City Engineer
- 2001:** City Engineer with professional engineering license
- 2004:** Public Works Director and City Engineer
- 2013:** Assistant City Manager, Public Works Director and City Engineer

“It’s not very common to hold all three positions,” City Manager Erik Tungate commented. “But Assistant City Manager Yee earns every leadership position he holds with his outstanding technical knowledge and ability to manage daily operations with effectiveness and efficiency on a daily basis.”

Yee believes strongly in technical training and education. He holds an S-1 license, the highest license in water system operations. “Since I became DPW Director, we’ve progressed from zero to five, additional S-1 license holders,” he said. He earned a degree in Civil Engineering from Michigan State University and a Master’s degree in Business Administration from Walsh College.

“When I first arrived at Oak Park Public Works, we had major infrastructure issues throughout the City,” Yee recalled. “We had hazardous gravel roads, inadequate catch basins, and a water system in dire need of cleaning and repair. The health and safety of our residents was then and will always be our first priority.” He instituted video assessments, hydrant flushing, and valve replacement programs, and worked to achieve a voter-approved road bond to leverage with several federal grants.

“We invested many years in overhauling the City’s maintenance programs to improve current systems,” he said. “One of the proudest moments of my career, however, was coming in on time and under budget on

the municipal complex project.” Yee led the construction project resulting in new City Hall, Public Safety, and Library buildings. The Gerald T. Naftaly Municipal Complex opened to the public in 2013.

“Since the early 2000s, we’ve also been able to prioritize aesthetics,” he said. Over the years, Yee worked with other City departments to acquire more than \$8 million in grants on behalf of the City for improvement and installation projects, such as city-limit asphalt, traffic safety elements, parks, street island landscapes, welcome signage, and the City’s coveted bridge sign spanning across Interstate 696 at Coolidge Rd. “We’ve been contacted by a number of other communities throughout the region seeking our guidance on bridge sign branding,” he added.

“We’re creating an environment that attracts residents and businesses. I’d love to see viable restaurants and a walkable community along the 9 Mile corridor where people choose to go and stay for a while,” he added. “I’ve always enjoyed seeing things improve. When I leave Oak Park one day, I’ll know I contributed to the City’s progress.”

Robert Barrett

Technical and Planning Director

25 years

1996: Engineering Technician
2007: Technical and Planning Deputy Director and Engineering Supervisor
2009: Building Maintenance Division Supervisor
2012: Technical and Planning Services Director

Technical and Planning Services Director Robert Barrett first arrived in Oak Park simply looking for a job. Yet, he assumed a role as an engineering technician and launched a career. “Twenty-five years ago, Oak Park announced the City was testing engineers,” Director Barrett said. “I understood then that Oak Park had high standards and could offer me a long, stable career.”

“Director Barrett’s role requires a high level of technical skill, as well as a heavy dose of customer service competency,” City Manager Tungate stated. “He consistently over-delivers in both areas. I’m proud to say he’s one of the most reasonable and consistent leaders on the City’s management team.”

Like Assistant City Manager Yee, Director Barrett cited the importance of the municipal

complex project to his tenure with the City. “Serving on the new City Hall construction team was one of the highlights of my career,” he said. “We were extremely conscientious about saving the City money.”

Several years ago, Director Barrett attended the Michigan Public Service Institute, which established his commitment to ethics. “The City experienced extreme financial hardship in 2010, following the Great Recession, which left us with a number of layoffs and cutbacks,” Director Barrett said. “I volunteered to supervise the water department for a year.”

Over the years, Director Barrett has directed numerous projects, including video sewer cleaning, hydrant painting, refined sidewalk replacement, joint sealing, and LED street light conversion. He is also head of Code Enforcement. “When City Manager Tungate arrived, he believed that Code Enforcement’s roots in the City were the foundation of a great community,” Director Barrett said. Code Enforcement enforces ordinances related to animals, junk cars, grass and weeds, trash, property maintenance, blight, and nuisances. “We’re basically stewards of community form and order,” he added.

Director Barrett worked alongside Assistant City Manager Yee 20 years ago in establishing the foundation of processes and systems, which the City builds upon today. “I’ll always cherish the opportunity I’ve had to – literally – evolve engineering from scratch in the City of Oak Park,” Director Barrett said. “I’ll always be very proud of that.”

Steve Cooper

Public Safety Director

31 years

1990: Public Safety Officer
1992: Field Training Officer
1996-2006: Special Response Team
1998: Detective
2000: Patrol Sergeant
2002: Patrol Lieutenant
2004: Lieutenant Commanding Officer of Investigative Bureau
2006: Public Safety Deputy Director (FBI National Academy graduate)
2011: Interim Public Safety Director
2012: Public Safety Director

“Thirty years may seem like a long time, but it’s uncommon to move through the ranks and earn promotions as swiftly as

Director Cooper,” City Manager Erik Tungate said.

If it were not for a mutually impressive first interview, results may have been different. “Originally, I thought I would go to Detroit for ‘big city’ policing,” Director Cooper explained. “However, I discovered in my Oak Park interview that public safety was more than policing. I very quickly learned to enjoy the variety.” Oak Park was one of the first communities in the nation to establish a public safety model in 1954, which requires that officers receive cross-training in police, fire, and emergency medical services.

“Every day is an adventure,” he said. “In this line of work, you never know what you’ll encounter.” Director Cooper has witnessed and spearheaded several significant changes during his career in Oak Park.

Last year, he addressed citizens during a peaceful Black Lives Matter rally held at the Coolidge and 9 Mile Rd. intersection. “This was a first in Oak Park,” he said. “And, I was proud to be asked to speak. There’s not one officer in Oak Park Public Safety who was not disgusted by the actions of the officer who killed Mr. Floyd. I had to let community members know that we’re with them.” George Floyd was an African American man killed in May 2020, when a Minneapolis police officer choked him to death with a knee on his neck. Floyd’s death sparked racial justice movements all over the world.

Director Cooper recalled a lack of diversity in the department when he arrived in 1990. He was one of only two African Americans serving on a force of 70 officers. Today, more than 10% of Oak Park Public Safety officers are African American, including the leadership team; and although there were no women on the force in 1990, there are now two female command officers. “It’s one thing to have diversity, but to have inclusive leadership is significant,” Director Cooper said. “I’m very proud of our present-day recruiting efforts and look forward to diversifying even further in the near future.”

“Director Cooper’s leadership is unparalleled,” City Manager Erik Tungate commented. “It’s unmistakable that the department’s continued success is due in large part to Director Cooper’s consistent management and consummate vision.” In 2016, Director Cooper was chosen Administrator of the Year by the Police Officers Association of Michigan (POAM).



Happenings Around Our Community

Hunger Action Day

Forgotten Harvest is one of our community's greatest assets and strongest partners. The Oak Park-based nonprofit is committed to fighting hunger and food insecurity in southeastern Michigan. Since spring 2020, Forgotten Harvest has held a weekly, drive-up pantry at the City's municipal complex to provide families and individuals in need with food assistance. On September 10th 2020, Forgotten Harvest hosted a special drive-up event in recognition of Hunger Action Day during which 566 individual cars (which included 2,018 adults and 808 children) received 75-pound boxes of fresh foods. The goal of the event was to provide relief for families negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Other wonderful volunteers joined Forgotten Harvest on that special day of service, including the Detroit Pistons, Blue Cross Blue Shield, United Dairy Association of Michigan (UDIM), and Reverie. Forgotten Harvest continues offering drive-through pantries on Wednesdays from 9 a.m.–noon (or while supplies last) in the Recreation parking lot, located at 14300 Oak Park Blvd. You do not need to pre-register to receive food assistance.

Fresh, Local and Safe

The Oak Park Farmers Market had another successful season in 2020, despite limits imposed by the global health crisis. Thanks to the City's great partnership with Oak Park High School, the market set up every Wednesday through September 30th in the school parking lot on Oak Park Blvd.

The City took precautions to make the recurring event safe for shoppers, vendors, and visitors. In accordance with Michigan Law, the Farmers Market provided sanitation stations and followed strict protocols regarding the use of face masks and social distancing. One good thing we learned is that masks can't hide a genuine smile!



Very special thanks to our wonderful 2020 sponsors of the Oak Park Farmers Market!

- Humana Inc.
- Beaumont
- Joyful Tots Childcare & Learning Center
- Built by Intrust Homes
- Oak Park High School

Local Nobel Laureate

Paul R. Milgrom, a 1966 graduate of Oak Park High School, was awarded a 2020 Nobel Prize in Economic Science. In 1954, his family moved to a house on Sussex. Friends remember him as brilliant and friendly. He graduated



from the University of Michigan with a bachelor's degree in Math. After studying business at Stanford University, he discovered his passion for research and went on to win many prestigious awards. Well done, Paul!

Wellness Challenge

Each year, Oak Park employees participate (compete!) in a wellness challenge designed to encourage healthy lifestyles. Employee teams initiated the 2020 challenge with a weigh-in, followed by a number of pop-up challenges to earn points, such as counting daily steps, following coaching plans, and completing annual health assessments. From the six, employee teams competing in the 2020 wellness challenge, we congratulate our winning team – Dave Decoster, Laurie Stasiak, Dana Hecker, Maureen Bergman, and Joseph Jenkins for making the most progress on their health journeys! Special shout-outs to top performers from each of the other teams: Jennifer Wilson, Shawn Tetler, Lisa Vecchio, Devin Benson and David Pitts. Onward to a healthy 2021!

Bridges

Everybody needs a helping hand sometimes. Here are some local organizations that may help your family with utility bills:

OLHSA-Oakland

196 Cesar Chavez, Pontiac
(248) 542-5860
<https://www.olhsa.org/complete-services>

Salvation Army

3015 N. Main, Royal Oak
(248) 585-5600
<https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/royaloak/>

The Heat and Water Fund (THAW)

535 Griswold St. Ste. 200, Detroit
(800) 866-8429
<https://thawfund.org/programs/>

DHS – Madison Heights

30755 Montpelier, Madison Heights
(248) 542-5860
https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-71547_5531_62127---,00.html

WRAP Program

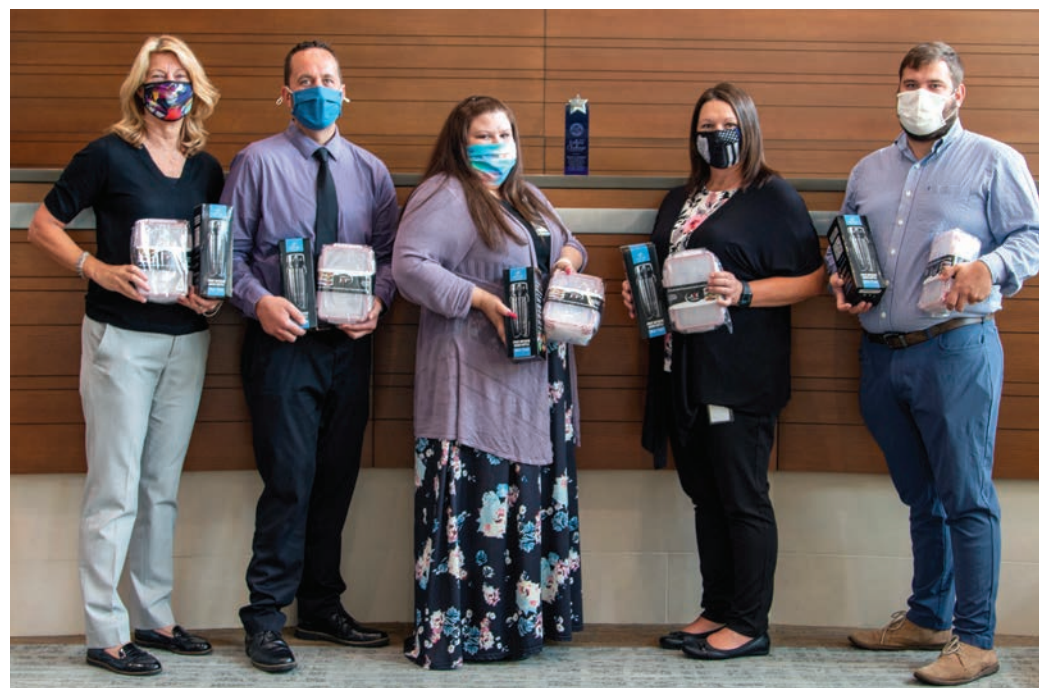
(313) 386-9727
<https://www.waynometro.org/WRAP/>

Detroit Water Project

<https://www.detroitwaterproject.org/>

Oakland County Community & Home Improvement

(248) 858-0730
<https://www.oakgov.com/covid/grants/Pages/rent-mortgage-utility-relief.aspx>





Mission: Complete

In 2018, Michigan municipalities were given 20 years to comply with a state mandate to replace residential lead service lines as a health and safety precaution. The City of Oak Park completed the task within two years of the directive.

“We prioritize our residents’ needs relative to every project we undertake, so it made sense to focus on completing the replacement project as quickly as possible,” Department of Public Works (DPW) Director Kevin Yee said.

Water service lines run from water mains to residential meters and are all underground, with the exception of the last few inches that rise above ground to connect to the meters.

Back in October 2019, the City hosted an Open House at City Hall to provide residents with information about the replacement project. About 430 people attended the event, where residents set appointments for in-home inspections and Oakland County representatives distributed free water filters provided by the State of Michigan.

“We performed more than 2,000 inspections, which resulted in more than 130 pipe replacements between November 2019 and April 2020,” Director Yee added. “I’m very happy to report that the City’s service line system meets the state’s safety standards.”

Utility Update

The City of Oak Park held several, virtual Town Hall meetings in the summer of

2020 to provide residential and business utility customers with details regarding changes to utility bills (often referred to as “water” bills) – specifically related to stormwater rates.

The most significant change to the utility bill is that stormwater treatment costs are now displayed as an individual line item. Prior to July 2020, utility bills included line-item charges for the meter, water consumption, sewer usage and garbage & rubbish; and stormwater charges were included in the sewer usage charge.

“The change came as a surprise to many residents, who wondered if the charge was something new,” City Manager Erik Tungate commented. “It’s not new. It’s only broken out now as a result of a lawsuit against the City.”

In 2019, the City of Oak Park settled a class-action lawsuit filed by Royal Oak-based law firm Kickham Hanley P.L.L.C. on behalf of Oak Park water customers. The lawsuit challenged the City’s approach to how the cost of stormwater treatment is distributed to customers. As a result of the settlement, utility bills now reflect each property’s unique contribution to stormwater runoff into the sewer system. According to the Detroit Free Press, Detroit, Royal Oak, Ferndale, Birmingham, and the

townships of Bloomfield, Waterford and Brighton have also been represented by the same law firm in similar lawsuits.

Stormwater originates from rainfall and melting snow and ice. Stormwater that does not evaporate can either soak into the ground, accumulate on land surfaces (which can cause flooding), or run off into the sewer system. Water and sewage charges cover sanitary use from inside the structure, e.g., water that leaves your home or building through sink drains and toilets, while stormwater charges are based on the amount of water the property owner's land discharges into the sewer system.

The stormwater rate depends on property size and how much of that property is occupied by pervious and impervious surfaces. Pervious surfaces, such as grass and dirt, allow rainwater to seep into the soil, while rainwater on impervious surfaces – such as cement or asphalt driveways, parking lots, and rooftops – runs off into the sewer system.

"There's a misconception out there about who absorbs the heaviest cost of stormwater runoff," said DPW Director Kevin Yee. "The City of Oak Park currently occupies the most land in the city, including our parks, buildings, and vacant properties from tax foreclosures, which means we've incurred the largest increase in stormwater charges."

The City's portion is paid out of the General Fund with no additional cost to utility



customers. All revenue collected from customers for water, sewer, and stormwater charges sustain an Enterprise Fund, which designates the funds only for use on direct costs related to the water and sewer system. The change in utility billing methodology does not result in increased revenue for the City of Oak Park.

"Most Oak Park residential customers have noticed an overall bill decrease because the sewer charge is reduced, while some others experienced a slight increase depending on the size and configuration of their property," Assistant City Manager Yee added. "Most business property owners experienced a bill increase because they generally have more impervious surfaces."

A video presentation on stormwater billing changes, along with answers to frequently-asked questions, are located on the City's website at www.oakparkmi.gov/stormwater.php. For additional questions about your utility bill, please call (248) 691-7470 or send an email to kvandewalle@oakparkmi.gov.

Water Main Health

The City of Oak Park completed an Asset Management Program (AMP) in 2018 that revealed some startling facts about the City's water and sewer system. Of the 102 miles of water mains in the City, more than 70% (or 72 miles) have been identified as significantly deteriorated or unserviceable. The total cost to update the water mains in current dollars exceeds \$84 million.

"Much of our water and sewer system is more than 50 years old," City Manager Erik Tungate stated. "Like most communities in southeastern Michigan, our water-sewer infrastructure is showing serious signs of decline."

The City also completed a sewer assessment the following fall, utilizing funds from the State of Michigan Stormwater, Asset Management and Wastewater (SAW) Grant Program, which reviewed and rated 46% (or 68 miles) of the City's 113 miles of combined sewer pipe (not including the sewers between catch basin structures). Greater than 60% rated a 4 ("failure likely in the foreseeable future") or 5 ("marginal functionality with failure

imminent"). The assessments were conducted by OHM Advisors.

"We have lined about two miles since the AMP completion, since it is much less expensive to line a sewer pipe than to cut open and replace it," Assistant City Manager and City Engineer Kevin Yee commented. "We have the advantage of televising these lines to watch them carefully and monitor their condition." The current cost to update the worst-rated sewers is approximately \$20 million.

According to Assistant City Manager Yee, there are several, potential consequences to having an aged water and sewer infrastructure. "More frequently, the Public Works department has been called upon to repair water main breaks in all parts of the City," he added. "But that's not necessarily even the worst that could happen."

When a water main breaks, it can cause reduced water pressure and/or the temporary appearance of minerals and sediments in tap water. Although there is no cause for concern and the water is still safe to use, the City advises users to run cold water in the bathtub or utility sink until any discoloration subsides, which should typically clear up in about 10-15 minutes. A water main disruption can also result in a sewer back-up and subsequent structural flooding.

A more critical consequence of an aged system, however, is the potential for sinkhole formation. "Right now, Oak Park averages about 25 to 30 water main breaks per year," Assistant City Manager Yee said. "We are at serious potential risk for sinkholes that may lead to property damage and/or injuries. This has already occurred in other communities, such as Southfield in 2016 and Bloomfield Hills in 2018."

According to the AMP assessments, the City will also require \$600,000 in manhole repairs over the next five years, and no less than \$500,000 in maintenance funds for the storm sewer system, pump stations, reservoir, and elevated tank.

Note: At press time, Oak Park City Council was considering a strategic approach to addressing the City's water and sewer infrastructure challenges, including alternative funding options.

Oak Park Thrives!



Let's Go Kroger-ing!

Oak Park struck some major community development high notes in 2020. One such chord was the completion of the Kroger building project. The Kroger Corporation invested \$21 million dollars in the construction of a new, 91,860 sq. ft. grocery store, which opened to the public on Friday, November 6th, 2020, at

26200 Greenfield Road. The new marketplace offers a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, gluten-free products, and Kosher and natural foods, as well as online ordering and parking lot pick-up services. So far, the Kroger location has employed approximately 250 associates.

Bollinger Motors

In August 2020, Oak Park also welcomed to the business community Bollinger Motors, a manufacturer of electric, four-wheel drive trucks, when founder and CEO Robert Bollinger relocated headquarters from Ferndale. Bollinger launched his company in New York City in 2014 to produce electric off-road vehicles. He relocated operations to Michigan in 2018 and, in his search for space to expand, settled in Oak Park over the summer.

"It couldn't have come at a better time," Bollinger commented (according to Mltechnews.com). "We were bursting at the seams with new engineers, putting desks out in the shop at the old building; it was especially difficult to keep everyone more than six feet apart." The Oak Park site is more than four times the size of the company's previous space, and it will serve as the company's primary base of operations.



Oak Park Makes History

Historical Elections

Thank you, Oak Park Residents!

Oak Park voters turned out in historic numbers to approve millage renewals for the Library, Recreation, and Public Safety during the August 2020 Primary Election. Each millage was initially passed by residents in 2010 for a 10-year period. Renewal of these millages does not increase taxes for residents and provides continued funding for operations, programming, and personnel costs in all three departments.

Oak Park continued to make history in the November 2020 Presidential Election with an unprecedented 13,196 absentee ballots submitted, accounting for 73% of total voter turnout. In comparison, only 27% of absentee ballots contributed to the total vote in 2016.

"The increase in absentee voting was primarily due to the threat of COVID-19," Director of Elections Lisa Vecchio commented. "Although we took great safety precautions at each of the

16 voting precincts in the city, a large number of voters were able to take advantage of the safest option." Last year, Michigan voters passed proposal 18-3, which added no-reason absentee voting to the state constitution making it easier for anyone to request an absentee ballot. "This was arguably the smoothest presidential election in the city's history," Vecchio added.

Welcome, Representative Weiss!

Former Oak Park City Council Member **Regina Weiss** succeeded in her election to the Michigan House of Representatives this past November. In January 2021, she headed to Lansing to represent Michigan's 27th District, which includes Oak Park, Berkley, Ferndale, Huntington Woods, Pleasant Ridge, and Royal Oak Township.

"I feel quite confident that Regina Weiss will continue to serve her hometown well in her new position," Mayor Marian McClellan commented. "Oak Park is extremely fortunate to have her leadership." Weiss was elected to Oak Park City Council in 2017, where, during her three-year term, she helped initiate the City's Traffic Safety Board. She began her first, two-year term in Lansing on January 1, 2021.



Ordinance Updates

Code Updates

Oak Park City Council recently adopted changes to existing ordinances involving outdoor burning and domestic pets. For full details on the summaries below, go to the Technical and Planning Department page on the City's website at www.OakParkMI.gov, send an email to rbarrett@oakparkmi.gov, or call (248) 691-7450.

Outdoor Fireplaces

Who doesn't love to cozy up to a warm and hypnotic backyard fireplace with hot cocoa? Lucky for us, City Council modified a 1975 open burn ordinance, which now allows residents to use outdoor fireplaces with certain restrictions to ensure safety. Outdoor fireplaces must be free standing and off the ground, with a mesh cover to contain sparks. They cannot sit under trees or electric lines, and there must be a water resource nearby. Don't forget to stock up on marshmallows!

Pets

Domestic pet ordinances provide owners with standards to better protect their pets from harmful elements and their neighbors from excessive nighttime barking. One change now requires owners to provide pets with adequate, outdoor shelter as described in the ordinance, as well as the use of tethers at a minimum length of ten feet. Owners also must bring all dogs inside between midnight and 7 a.m. every day, as well as during times the National Weather Service issues warnings of storms or excessive hot or cold temperatures. The ordinance also requires a judicial hearing before an animal can be deemed dangerous and removed from the home. Finally, licensing fees will be waived for guide or leader dogs, Public Safety dogs and temporary foster dogs and cats. Please be mindful that the City of Oak Park complies with State of Michigan law which requires a kennel license for any home that exceeds possession



of three cats or dogs in any combination, including foster animals. Other issues covered in the Domestic Pets Ordinance include, Custody of Animals, Humane Acquisition, Animal Behavior Governing, New Animal License Fee Exemptions, Kennel Licenses, and Violations. Visit the Technical and Planning page on the website for more details.

Chicken Pilot Program

If you love fresh eggs, this pilot may be for you. The City of Oak Park recently initiated a trial program allowing households to maintain a maximum of three hens (female chickens). Chickens may be kept as family pets or to lay eggs for personal consumption only. Residents wishing to participate in the program must meet the following qualifications:



- Live in a single-family, detached home
- House chickens in a fully confined or fenced enclosure in the rear yard of the home
- Obtain permission in writing from all residential neighbors adjacent to the home
- Complete a permit application from the Technical and Planning Department
- Schedule an inspection with the Department of Technical and planning within 30 days of permit issuance

During the pilot, a maximum of five, non-transferable permits will be issued to qualified applicants on a first come, first serve basis for a period of one year. If the program is successful, the program will become permanent and more permits will be issued. To obtain a printable permit application or to view the chicken breed chart and coop samples, go to the Technical and Planning page on the City's website.



Open For Curbside

To maintain the health and safety of our patrons and staff during the pandemic, the Oak Park Public Library is closed to the public until further notice. However, residents can still check out library material using curbside pickup by calling (248) 691-7480. During the pandemic shutdown, the Library offers virtual activities for all age groups, such as a recorded story time. Please stay tuned to the Library's Facebook page to learn more about fun and educational events.

New Library Board Members

The City of Oak Park is pleased to welcome three new volunteers to the Oak Park Public

Library Board: **Al Elvin**, **Noson Daitchman**, and **Kenneth Sherman**. All Board and Commission members, including the Library Board, are populated with Oak Park residents with an interest and passion for serving their community. Please check the City's website at www.oakparkmi.gov to review vacancies and City Council's approval timeline. We need your voice!

Library's Exotic Zoo

The zoo came to us! This past summer, Exotic Zoo owner Javon Stacks treated the City of Oak Park to a beautiful showcase of exotic animals. Both Children and adults marveled at the animals featured during the



show, which included Major (tortoise), Mr. Jenkins (ring-tailed lemur), Luna (Eurasian eagle owl), Marvin (African crested porcupine), Nairobi (Siberian lynx), Summer (reticulated python), Isabella (baboon), Darwin Jr. (kangaroo), Petey (arctic fox), Beefy (alligator), and Wilbur (miniature pig).



S.W.A.T.

Oak Park Public Safety Officer **Donald Hoffman** recently earned an additional title. He currently serves as a Field Training Officer and Evidence Technician. In 2020, Officer Hoffman was also chosen to serve on Oakland County's Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team.

"The entire department is proud of Officer Hoffman's achievement," Public Safety Director Steve Cooper said. "He's accomplished a lot during his nearly eight years in Oak Park," Oakland County SWAT is a regional program, which deputizes local police officers to serve on the county SWAT Team in addition to their local role and responsibilities. In 1989, Oak Park supported its own, local SWAT Team, which was disbanded in 2008 due to budget constraints.

The Oakland County SWAT Team handles barricade gunman, active shooters, high-risk warrant service, and narcotics work. "Oakland County SWAT drives an extremely selective process with exceptional agility requirements," Director Cooper added. "As a former member of the U.S. military and a highly trained Public Safety Officer, Hoffman is exceedingly qualified to serve in both roles simultaneously."

Traffic Safety Board

Oak Park City Council established a Traffic Safety Board in 2019 to study and recommend traffic and safety measures and programs designed to enhance traffic safety in the city.

The board recently published an eight-question survey for Oak Park residents, to seek help in setting the board's priorities and sharing

observations about traffic concerns in the community, such as speeding, dangers to pedestrians, and high-traffic volumes. The questionnaire is located on the City's website through a search for Oak Park Traffic Safety Board Survey. There is no current expiration date for the survey and responses are encouraged.

The Traffic Safety Board meets monthly on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. For location (or video conferencing information), visit the City's Public Notices webpage.



Plenty of Virtual & Outdoor Activities

The Recreation Department has been hard at work developing programs and activities you can still enjoy during the current pandemic shutdown. Please feel free to call the office with questions or to register for activities at (248) 691-7555. Like our Facebook page for even more updates at [www.Facebook.com/OakParkRecreation](https://www.facebook.com/OakParkRecreation).

New Name — Same Great Up-To-Date Info!

In the Oak Park community, we revere our seniors as precious treasure, which is why

the City of Oak Park offers special programs and services just for them! In December 2020, the Recreation Department began offering a monthly publication with activities and news for our senior residents in the new Senior Scoop newsletter.

We'll continue to announce senior-focused programs through our other communication channels — including the City's Facebook pages, the Community eBlast, and Comcast cable stations 15 and 16. However, we know some of our seniors would rather read about opportunities in a traditional newsletter, so

each month, the Senior Scoop newsletter will be available for pickup in a special mailbox in the Recreation entryway, located at 14300 Oak Park Blvd. (on the west side of the Community Center).

Senior Scoop shares details about special events and more, such as virtual classes and drive-in activities; links to your favorite museums, theater performances, and cooking demonstrations; recipes, puzzles, and fun facts; and transportation updates. If you have suggestions about what you'd like to see in the newsletter, contact Maralee at Mrosemond@oakparkmi.gov or (248) 691-2357. Let's bring back the FUN in 2021!

Transportation

In related news, Oak Park City Council recently renewed the Municipal Credit and Community Credit Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation Contract for 2021 so that our popular SMART Senior Bus continues to take our seniors to stores, medical and pharmacy visits, personal appointments, banking trips and more. We run two buses for seniors age 50+ and residents with disabilities Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4 p.m. Regular weekly trips include Kroger, Meijer, Walmart, Target and more. Please call (248) 691-7555 to learn more.



ECRWSSD DM
POSTAL CUSTOMER
OAK PARK, MICHIGAN 48237

THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS!

During these difficult times, the support from our sponsors is exemplary! Of their own volition and genuine interest for the well-being of the residents of Oak Park and its surrounding neighbors, they have continued to financially support some of our programs. We would like to thank and acknowledge the following business for their significant contributions for our events in 2020:

- Humana Inc
- Built by Intrust Homes
- Beaumont
- Oak Park High School and School District
- Joyful Tots Childcare and Learning Center

We would also like to acknowledge our **“Drive Through The Boo” Sponsors** for their support and participation in this event. They did not want the children of Oak Park to miss out on this time honored FUN event!

- Monaghan’s Towing
- Revolution Martial Arts
- J & D Auto Service
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc
- DAE Fleet Service
- Scheer’s Ace Hardware and Supply
- Lee Beauty
- RealTeam Real Estate

THANK YOU TO A SPECIAL VOLUNTEER!



The Oak Park Recreation Department would like to take this opportunity to thank **Ms. Jean Jones** for all she does to support our programs. Jean was instrumental in the Tuesday prep for the Oak Park Farmers Market. She was the friendly face you saw each and every Wednesday giving out information, interacting with the children and being the BEST good will ambassador the market could ever ask for! Jean also worked tirelessly on helping put together our Drive Through The Boo event. We appreciate Jean’s support, participation and genuine investment in our community programs.