

OAK PARK BRANCH

ACORNES OF INFORMATION FOR OAK PARK RESIDENTS



Manager's Monthly Bulletin

Erik Tungate

As we enter a New Year, I would like to thank all of you for your warm wishes and support last year.

In this edition of the newsletter, I would like to talk about some of the more prominent issues we face on the

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Spotlight on City Council

On November 5, 2013, the great City of Oak Park elected its 35th City Council into office. Mayor Marian McClellan retained her position for a second, consecutive term; while two, new officials joined the leadership ranks -

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City Announces Community Conversations

Are you interested in further conversation about Oak Park's strengths, and how to leverage them and build upon them for Oak Park's future? Join the conversation to share your vision for our community.

In January, the City of Oak Park will host stakeholder workshops to discuss the economic viability of our city's commercial corridors. Workshops will take place noon-7 PM on Monday, January 13th and Wednesday, January 22nd in City Council Chambers, located in City Hall at 14000 Oak Park Blvd.

See COMMUNITY on page 2



Habitat for Humanity®
of Oakland County

Habitat Oakland Builds in Oak Park

The goal of Habitat for Humanity of Oakland County is to provide safe, affordable housing for all people in Oakland County. By partnering with families in need, corporate and individual donors, and community volunteers, Habitat Oakland has constructed homes for more than 160 Oakland County families since the affiliate launched in 1994.

Habitat volunteers recently completed home constructions on Kipling St. and Sherman St. in Oak Park. "On behalf of our dedicated volunteers and donors,

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Tax Payment Info

The City of Oak Park will accept winter tax payments through February 14th, 2014, without penalty. The last day to pay 2013 taxes (summer and winter) to Oak Park is February 28th. The treasurer's office is normally closed to the public on Fridays, but because both of these dates fall on Fridays, the office will be open to citizens to take tax payments on February 14th and 28th.

Manager from page 1

cusp of the new budget year, which extends from July 1 to June 30. Each year, City Council welcomes public input on the process beginning in March through May.

We have successfully addressed many issues over the course of the last few years. We achieved a balanced budget with a solid general fund balance and our new city hall building project has been completed on time and under budget. In next year's budget, we will take on our longer term financial obstacles and examine the possibility of adding back public safety officers.

Since the overall taxable value of property in our community appears to be stabilizing, it looks like financial uncertainty may become more predictable. That does not mean, however, that we are out of the woods. With the ballot initiative that eliminates business personal property taxes appearing on the 2014 ballot, we may have to adjust our forecast once again in anticipation of around \$1 million in additional losses in another tax break to businesses. This would be a devastating loss during a time when we are just getting back on our feet.

It is important to point out that we still have not returned many of our laid-off public safety officers to work since early 2012. The good news is that I have been able to hire back four of the fifteen laid-off officers. Since my prime

directive is to keep you safe, I will be doing everything in my power to make sure we have adequate staffing and that our policing methodologies are in line with best practices around the nation. I can speak on behalf of City Council in saying we share the same enthusiasm for this issue.

While it can be daunting to look at the financial obstacles facing local units of government, it is important to remember that we are on the right track. Our newly-established community & economic development function is in full swing and our strategic plan for business development will be completed shortly. We have struggled like many cities. The difference is that we have been proactive, not complacent. My goal for this city is to continue up the path to becoming the premier destination for businesses and families in all of Metropolitan Detroit.

Your support is greatly appreciated. As always, I welcome your feedback and suggestions.

Respectfully,



Erik Tungate
City Manager



Community from page 1

On both days at 6 PM, residents and stakeholders are invited to a presentation by Hamilton Anderson, the consultants hired to lead economic development planning for the City. From noon-6PM each day, the City invites residents and stakeholders to share insights, visions and ideas in one of the public workshops in an open-house format. If neither of the workshop days fits in your schedule, please feel free to share your ideas and feedback at any time with Emily Doerr, Director of Community & Economic Development, at edoerr@ci.oak-park.mi.us.

Habitat Oakland from page 1

I'm pleased to say that two families now have reliable places to call home," commented Kim Howard, Manager of Partnerships for Habitat Oakland.

Habitat Oakland also offers Critical Home Repair (CHR), a program which provides assistance with home improvement tasks that are necessary to ensure the continued safety and wellbeing of the homeowner. "This program is open to anyone who needs it, not just Habitat homeowners," added Ms. Howard. For more information, call (248) 338-1843 or visit the web site at www.habitatoakland.org.

Employee Recognition Patricia Wright & Karen Bryant

The City Manager and City Council recognized Patricia Wright, Administrative Assistant to the City Manager, and Karen Bryant, Administrative Assistant to the Finance Director, for exceptional performances in the months of November and December, respectively. "The contributions of both of these professionals prove that organizational success depends on the quality of its staff," commented City Manager Erik Tungate.

Winter Rules for Safety

Winter is here, there and everywhere! The City of Oak Park's Department of Public Works (DPW) offers the following tips to help you cope with Michigan's longest season. If you have questions, please don't stop the snow plow drivers; call DPW at (248) 691-7497.

- Park cars in the garage or driveway to allow for snow plows.
- Don't allow kids to play in piles left by the snow plow; piles could collapse and cause injury.
- Stand away from snow plows, which generally travel fast (about 22 MPH) and throw heavy snow.
- Shovel driveway snow right after street plows so it's soft enough to move without too much effort.
- Always shovel snow to the sides, not in the streets.

Council from page 1

Council Members Carolyn Burns and Kiesha Speech. Veteran Council Members, Michael Seligson and Paul Levine (whose seats were not up for reelection this year), round out the assembly of five City Council leaders. In honor of the New Year, here is a snapshot of our council members, including their 2014 personal resolutions:

Marian McClellan, Mayor

- City council member (Mayor) since: 2011
- Oak Park resident since: 1967
- Originally from: Northwest Detroit
- Family: Spouse, Keith McClellan; one daughter, one son, * one daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren
- Profession: Retired teacher in Detroit, Warren, Farmington Hills and Ferndale (32 years)
- Oak Park Pride: "Oak Park's greatest treasure is its amazing residents who love their city and who are actively engaged citizens."
- Greatest challenge: "...Dealing with declining revenues, while providing residents with the excellent services we've enjoyed for years."
- Oak Park in 10 Years: "I see a vibrant city attracting visitors from all over Oakland County as we make our business and community development plans a reality."
- New Year's Resolution: To take more exercise classes at the Oak Park Community Center ("...Because if I'm not in a class, I'm not moving!")

*Mayor McClellan's son, Andy Meisner, is the Oakland County Treasurer.



Paul Levine, Mayor Pro Tem

- City council member since: 2007
- Oak Park resident since: 1952
- Originally from: Oak Park
- Family: Spouse (and Oak Park High School sweetheart), Sharon Landau Levine; three daughters and three sons-in-law
- Profession: Marketing consultant and promotional products distributor (30 years)
- Oak Park Pride: Oak Park is a "strong, family-oriented, award-winning community where I grew up and raised my own family."
- Greatest challenge: To enhance and sustain the city's vitality as an attractive destination for future generations of residents
- Oak Park in 10 Years: "I'd like to see Oak Park listed among the 10 best places to live in Michigan."
- New Year's Resolution: To clear out, donate and recycle all the unnecessary storage in the basement



Michael M. Seligson, Council Member

- City council member since: 1991
- Oak Park resident since: 1971
- Originally from: Detroit
- Family: Spouse, Carol; seven children (ages 25-38)
- Profession: Retired from federal government (35 years), Social Security (10 years), U.S. Army civilian (25 years)
- Oak Park Pride: "We pay our bills and provide great services."



- Greatest challenge: Lowering taxes for residents
- Oak Park in 10 Years: "I see Oak Park in Key West, FL. That way we'd have more people spending winters with us!"
- New Year's Resolution: To live long enough to see the Lions in the Super Bowl

Carolyn Burns, Council Member

- City council member since: 2013
- Oak Park resident since: 2000
- Originally from: Detroit
- Family: "Hershey" (cocker spaniel), age 12
- Profession: Chief of Staff for MI State Representative Thomas F. Stallworth III, District 7 (25 years in public service and administration)
- Oak Park Pride: "Residents are engaged, active, outspoken and involved."
- Greatest challenge: Economic growth; ensuring that public safety and city services remain a priority; maintaining fiscal stability despite state tax cuts
- Oak Park in 10 Years: "In 10 years, I would love for the City of Oak Park to be debt-free, increase residency by 25%, boost property values by 50%, perform at 100% satisfaction in public safety and city services, and be home to a thriving list of retailers and manufacturers."
- New Year's Resolution: To make personal health the #1 priority



Kiesha Speech, Council Member

- City council member since: 2013
- Oak Park resident since: 2010
- Originally from: North Carolina/Colorado (military family)
- Family: Twin sister, Kindra, also lives in Michigan
- Profession: District Director for State Representative Rudy Hobbs, Michigan House District 35
- Oak Park Pride: "The citizens and employees make me most proud of Oak Park because they make up and keep up our pride as 'The Family City,' known for great services, safe streets and as a livable community."
- Greatest challenge: To write a new and better chapter for Oak Park; time and the economic climate dictates that change is necessary
- Oak Park in 10 Years: "In 10 years, I'd like to see Oak Park on a few of America's and Michigan's 'Best of...' lists, being recognized for strides we will make in economic development and infrastructure improvements."
- New Year's Resolution: To maintain some "Me-Time" at least once per week, including a little exercise



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Council Members
Michael Seligson
Carolyn Burns
Kiesha Speech
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community happenings

Monday, January 6

City Council Mtg.
7PM @ City Hall

Sunday, January 12

Jackie Davidson Folk Music
Free Concert 2PM @ Library

Monday, January 13

*Community Conversations on
Economic Development*
Noon-6PM @ City Hall

Monday, January 13

*Hamilton Anderson
Economic dev. presentation*
6-7PM @ City Hall

Thursday, January 16

Caring for Your Aging Parent
7PM Free @ Library

Thursday, January 16

DJ WHODAT
6:30PM Free @ Sahara Rest.

Monday, January 20

Martin Luther King Jr Day
City Offices Closed

Tuesday, January 21

City Council Mtg.
7PM @ City Hall

Wednesday, January 22

*Community Conversations on
Economic Development*
Noon-6PM @ City Hall

Wednesday, January 22

*Hamilton Anderson
Economic dev. presentation*
6-7PM @ City Hall

Sunday, January 26

Winterfest 1-3PM
Free @ Community Ctr.

Monday, February 3

City Council Mtg.
7PM @ City Hall

Tuesday, February 4

Women & Investing
7PM Free @ Library

Friday, February 7

Daddy & Daughter Dance
7:30-9PM @ Community Ctr.

Sunday, February 9

*Cellist Fanya Kutik
& Pianist Rachel Kis*
2PM Free @ Library

Thursday, February 13

Leader Dogs of Michigan
6:30PM Free @ Library

Monday, February 17

City Council Mtg.
7PM @ City Hall

Thursday February 20

*The Klaver Brothers
Guitar & Drums*
6:30PM Free @ Library

**Oak Park Library
is now
OPEN SUNDAYS
1-5 PM**

(Except on federal holiday
weekends)

Winterfest 2014



Baby, it's cold outside... but Winterfest 2014 will make you fall in love with a snowy day all over again! On Sunday, January 26, 2014, from 1-3 PM, the City of Oak Park will host the annual Winterfest, which will include fun indoor and outdoor activities at the Oak Park Community Center, located at 14300 Oak Park Blvd. The Oak Park Ice Arena will also be open from 12-3 PM for open skate. Winterfest activities will include: bon fires & s'mores, an ice carving demonstration, ballooning & face-painting, horse-drawn sleigh rides and a petting farm, a family photo booth, live entertainment and refreshments (including chili!). So, bring your family and friends to this free event to share some holiday cheer (and a bowl of chili) and maybe win a raffle prize from the Detroit Red Wings, Tigers or Pistons. We hope to see you there! For more info, call (248) 691-7555 or visit www.ci.oak-park.mi.us/recreation.

He'd like to get his roof fixed She needs a new set of car tires He wants help with his accounts

Reach 20,000 Customers!
The Branch newsletter is the source for news Oak Park residents can use! To reserve business ad space, call (248) 691-7589.

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