

**Official Minutes of the  
Oak Park Board of Education District 97,  
970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Cook County, Illinois  
Meeting December 14, 2013**

SPECIAL MEETING – 8:30 AM

This is a special joint meeting between the Village of Oak Park Board and the District 97 Board of Education and was held at the Village Hall located at 123 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

ROLL CALL

President Spatz called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

Present: Spatz, Gates, Sacks, Felton, O'Connor, Brisben, and Traczyk  
Absent: None  
Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Al Roberts, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Therese O'Neill, Director of Policy, Planning and Communications Chris Jasculca, Director of HR Steve Cummins and Board Secretary Sheryl Marinier

The Village Board in attendance: Village President Anan Abu-Taleb, Bob Tucker, Adam Salzman, Peter Barber, Ray Johnson, Colette Lueck, Glenn Brewer, Village Clerk Theresa Powell, and Village Manager Cara Pavlicek

A moment of silence was held in memory of the Newtown shooting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

PUBLIC  
COMMENT

Village President Abu-Taleb explained that District 97 is working with the Village to help advance the Madison Street plan, but the school district has the sole decision making ability to determine where their administration building will be located. He noted that the elected officials want to be more efficient in managing the tax bills. Abu-Taleb reported that in 1997 an agreement was signed that gave direction to the Madison Street improvements; unfortunately, he believes that this agreement has made it difficult for the Village to revitalize the community. He acknowledged the concerns expressed by the community about building a district administration building behind Village Hall and expressed interest in considering all options.

Amy Williams, an Oak Park resident, noted that it would cost \$263,187 per staff member to provide office space for the school district, which she described as a blatant expense for office space. She noted that everyone is here today because the District seems to have forgotten that the community already expressed concern about building a new facility. She recommended renting space or remodeling the current administration building. She expressed concern about abandoning another Madison Street building and/or moving away from Madison Street. She noted that everyone agrees that building a new facility behind the Village Hall is a fiscally inappropriate decision.

Rick Boultinghouse, an Oak Park resident, expressed concern about the consideration of building behind the Village Hall. He noted that it would cost over \$6,000,000 to build and only \$1,500,000 to rehab the current building. He suggested that the prudent decision would be to remain in the current location. Boultinghouse expressed concern that the Superintendent and the Board are not respectful when discussing the school's air conditioning needs, and he reminded all that the TIF funding is still taxes paid by the community. He shared that the community does not want a new building built, and suggested that the Village and District 97 need to be more open when discussing this project.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

Vikki Peterson, an Oak Park resident, suggested that the community should not blame the current Board for mistakes made in the past, and noted some of the changes made by the Park District that were wasteful. She questioned if our children need garbage cans at the corners, and expressed concern about Village Hall being inconvenient to the residents. She shared several other locations for District 97 to consider as possible sites, and asked everyone to work with the current Board to find a solution.

David Kralik, an Oak Park resident, encouraged the school district to prioritize air conditioning needs over the administration facilities, as that seems to be the will of the people and the most prudent use of funds. He noted that underground parking is the most expensive solution, and he suggested that the most green proposal is to reuse what they already have. He reminded the boards that the Madison Street plan supports bringing life to Madison Street, not the parking lot behind Village Hall. He suggested that facilities could still be shared if the school district is not in the same or adjacent facility.

Mary Rodrigo, an Oak Park resident, shared that she does not support the building behind the Village Hall, and questioned the legality of using the TIF funds to finance a building that is not actually located on Madison Street. She expressed concern about how this project would be helpful to the community.

Zarrin Bulut, an Oak Park resident, complimented Principal Sheila Carter and Hatch School. Bulut noted that she is personally very involved in the district but feels that parents are not respected or heard. She expressed concern that the school district is making large purchases without additional input from parents and teachers. She suggested that everyone work together on behalf of the students.

Chris Williams, an Oak Park resident, thanked all for their service. He referred to the study that was released regarding the building of a new administration building. He explained that in order to move forward with this plan, a variance would need to be granted. He noted that the report assumes the installation of an underground parking area, and he estimated that it would cost about \$6,000,000 for the lot alone. He asked everyone to read the report and consider the amount that it will cost. Williams shared that he finds it difficult to believe that the School Board and Village Board are actually discussing this option. He noted that the residents are very concerned about this building option, but noted that the real issue is the cost.

Galen Gockel, an Oak Park resident, reported that he was a member of the Board of Education in 1971 when the administration building was located in Lowell School. The Board made the decision to sell the school, which generated enough funds to move the administration offices to the current location. He noted that 43 years ago that building was not in good shape, so if a member of the Board says they need a new building, he agrees. He shared some of the history of the Madison Street vision. Gockel noted that although he is not familiar with the history of the studies to date, he does not support the plan to build behind the Village Hall. He expressed concern about placing a very busy public building in a residential area, and suggested a few solutions to the district's needs. He also suggested that the School District give some consideration to renting office space for the administration needs. He noted that the most important thing that every public body needs to focus on is public support and loyalty. He expressed concern that the decision to build the administration building behind Village Hall would erode that loyalty. He suggested that within 60 days, the district reiterate its strong intention to develop their plan for a new building, but not on this site.

Judith Erickson, an Oak Park resident, expressed concern about the process and suggested that there is a better way to make this decision and demonstrate respect to the taxpayers.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT** (Continued)

Barbara Mullarkey, an Oak Park resident, spoke for herself and on behalf of Dia Corack another resident by asking the following questions;

- How will the new administration building affect the education of the children, from special needs, to gifted, and those in between?
- Is the cost of remodeling the current building about \$3,000,000 compared to a new facility at 123 Madison Street at 10,000,000?
- What is the projected increase in taxes for remodeling versus a new building?
- Is it true that Police Chief Tanksley projects a \$350,000 savings when his department joins forces with other neighboring communities for a shared gun range outside of Oak Park and would he have more storage space?
- How do the Village Hall neighbors assess the impact on their neighborhood? Have they been surveyed to share input?
- Based on Oak Park's three "R", reduced, reused, recycle, how much upkeep money has the district spent per year for the last 10 years on their building?
- Didn't proposed underground parking at Scoville Park raise the ire of resident's years ago?
- Is it true that there is consideration for a cul-de-sac on Lombard south of Village Hall? What is the impact on the police and fire departments regarding this idea?
- How is the possible empty District 97 administration building going to affect Madison Street neighbors near it?
- How many times do Village Hall neighbors need to say "no" to similar projects?
- From the initial move of Village Hall to its current location, many residents, including Galen Gokol, have been impacted from losing their homes to demolition, to fighting for less traffic congestion. Isn't it time to allow these neighbors to live in a less stressful neighborhood?

## **TOPIC DISCUSSIONS**

TOPIC  
DISCUSSIONS

### **THE MADISON TIF AND THE LONG-TERM IMPACT TO TIF AND THE PROPERTY TAX LEVY OF ALL LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT**

Craig Lesner came to the podium. He explained the history of the TIF and noted that the TIF currently has about \$7,500,000 in available funds. He suggested alternatives for distribution, and asked if the community can improve on the status quo. It was noted that the spreadsheets shared with the Village Board were revised at the last minute. Discussion about the TIF and options for its use were considered. Interest was expressed in calculating the development opportunities in the pipeline and identifying what some of the partnerships would look like.

President Spatz shared the history of the Madison Street TIF. He noted that the Madison Street Plan clearly identifies the need to consider a civic campus by using the existing surface parking lot and open space. Potential uses specifically included the Park District and District 97. He noted several sites that were considered for the District 97 administration offices between 2006 and 2012; some of these were in partnership with the Park District. In 2013, District 97 hired STR architects who have been doing studies on air conditioning, accessibility and the needs of the administration building.

President Spatz noted that STR estimated that it would cost minimally \$1,800,000, with a recommended cost of \$2,800,000 to \$4,000,000 to complete needed repairs and refurbish the existing administration building. He reported that the current book value of the building is \$0, as it is fully depreciated, and the appraised value of the current administration building is \$450,000. Replacement would cost approximately \$4,500,000 to \$6,000,000. He noted that the facilities condition index ranges from 67 percent to 89 percent - both a "replacement candidate". He noted that the Facilities Advisory Committee (FAC) and STR agree that repairing the building would not be a good use of the taxpayer's money.

## THE MADISON TIF AND THE LONG-TERM IMPACT TO TIF AND THE PROPERTY TAX LEVY OF ALL LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT (Continued)

President Spatz reported that the district's goal is to be cost neutral. The sources of money to offset costs would be the sale of 970 Madison at \$750,000 to \$1,200,000. He explained that the total of all sources over 10 years (NPV) range from \$3,500,000 to \$5,000,000; over 40-years (NPV) – ranges from \$6,200,000 to \$8,200,000. Consolidation of the District 97 warehouse to the Public Works building and sale of the warehouse are possibly other sources of money.

President Spatz noted that there are four major monetary factors; the cost of construction, cost of land, cost of parking and lost District 97 taxes. Non-monetary factors considered are distribution, distraction and time to completion. The risks identified include the inability to sell the current building, contingencies, etc., the impact on the Madison Street Plan and neighborhood, synergies with new building and/or with “campus”, environmental options and a goal of “being green”.

He noted that Village Hall is still being considered because it maximizes taxes for all jurisdictions. The land cost, if any, would benefit Oak Park. The large parcel allows more flexibility for creative parking solutions and possibilities for cost effective geo-thermal. It best meets the 2006 Madison Street plan and best synergies in terms of space use, savings on construction, and on-going operating costs.

President Spatz reported that the Madison Highlands west building is also being considered. It is close to Village Hall, ready to go, and priced in the right range. He shared that this location would need a variance from the Village for non-retail on the first floor. A document was shared that listed all of the options being considered by the district, which included;

- 101 Madison – it has high existing taxes that would be lost to the community
- 541 Madison (warehouse) – disruption, consolidation. It would not meet the current parking requirements. The district would need to relocate the current warehouse facility
- Rebuild on 970 Madison – major disruption and cost
- Off Madison and /or another development
- Potentially renting during a transition period

Village board members shared their opinions which included;

- Concern about redeveloping 970 Madison Street
- Concern about the 38 district employees needing a large expensive office
- Suggestion that curriculum staff might be located in the school buildings
- A lease/rent option was suggested

Additional responses were requested in writing.

In response to the suggestion of locating curriculum staff in the school buildings, it was noted that one of the schools is already over capacity and others are very close. President Spatz noted that there are not four classrooms to spare in any building. Additionally, it was noted that although there are only 38 employees who work in the administration building on a daily basis, the building is extremely public. Trainings and meetings are held in the building on a regular basis. There are always more than 38 people in the building because of staff activities.

Village Manager Cara Pavlicek addressed the 2011-2012 tax year distribution. She explained that District 97 could earmark those funds if a decision on Madison occurs. She suggested the option of asking the other jurisdictions to forgo the payout to stimulate the growth of Madison Street now. The second step is for District 97 to express their interest in development to the Village board. The Village board expressed interest in understanding the implications to the other Oak Park School District – Board Meeting – December 14, 2013

THE MADISON TIF AND THE LONG-TERM IMPACT TO TIF AND THE PROPERTY TAX LEVY OF ALL LOCAL UNITS OF GOVERNMENT (Continued)

taxing bodies. It was agreed that Pavlicek will discuss the distribution with the Council of Governments (COG), and a formal report will be created by the Village in January.

It was noted that the Village board needs to decide what they want to do with the TIF moving forward as that decision will determine the districts direction.

It was noted that the 2013-2018 TIF distribution is still in question. The spreadsheets will be revised before the discussion with the COG.

Pavlicek noted that the collaboration opportunities will remain available. The Village wants to be transparent and will create a good forum on the website for that purpose. She reported that all documents are online.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Traczyk moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into executive session at 10:36 a.m. to discuss (Collective Negotiations, 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2)). Roll call vote.

Ayes: Traczyk, Sacks, Felton, Gates, O’Connor, Brisben, and Spatz  
Nays: None  
Absent: None  
Motion passed.

**OPEN SESSION**

OPEN SESSION

Gates moved, seconded by Sacks, that the Board of Education move into open session at 12:11 p.m. All members of the Board were in agreement.

**ADJOURNMENT**

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to conduct, President Spatz declared the meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, December 17, 2013 beginning at 7 p.m. at the Administration building located at 970 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board Secretary