

Oak Park, ILLINOIS

#232

OAK PARK 76

Oak Park's TOWN MEETING 76



March 27, 1976
Oak Park River Forest High School
Oak Park, Illinois

**CONSTITUTION
OF THE
UNITED STATES
1787**

We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Preamble

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right to the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment [1791]

The Present Challenges

CULTURAL CHALLENGESCITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In the arena of communal styles exists--Citizen skepticism, laziness and inability to communicate indicate the underlying contradiction of the inability of a responsive government to meet demands for service. This is illustrated by elementary school remap and Dole Branch shut-down consideration.

Guild E

PARTICIPATION VERSUS INDIFFERENCE

In the arena of cultural commonality--Lack of communication, diversity of lifestyles and size and range of physical plant indicate the underlying contradiction of demand for participation versus indifference. This is illustrated by the school integration issue - crisis participation.

Guild B

INVOLVEMENT AND COMMITMENT

In the arena of cultural commonality--Fear of involvement, let leaders make decisions, delegation to inappropriate structures indicate the underlying contradiction of personal refusal to commit self. This is illustrated by lack of attendance at public meetings, i.e. school board, village boards, voting, etc.

Guild B

FRAGMENTED PARTICIPATION

In the arena of cultural commonality--Fear, prejudice and lack of participation indicate the underlying contradiction of appearance of highly organized community without sufficient neighborhood participation in community decisions. This is illustrated by dissension from school board desegregation decision and lack of neighborhood cohesion.

Guild C

CULTURAL CHALLENGES

PASSING ON KNOWLEDGE

In the arena of passing on cultural commonalities--Money, feeling of powerlessness and inadequacy of adult modeling indicate the underlying contradiction of conflicts with regard to priorities. This is illustrated by conflicts over reorganization of schools, money for schools and libraries and vandalism.

Guild E

PUBLIC AWARENESS

In the arena of cultural commonality--Poor communication between organizations and individual, difficulty of determining allocations of money, lack of action on grievances indicate the underlying contradiction of lack of public awareness of existing programs, facilities and actions by community leaders. This is illustrated by people not reading newspapers and not participating in the political structure.

Guild D

IMPERSONALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION

In the arena of culture--Fear, prejudice and lack of reliable sources of knowledge indicate the underlying contradiction of impersonalization of communication. This is illustrated by the controversy surrounding reorganization and racial balance in the schools and friction between renters and owners about village providing parking spaces.

Guild D

MISPERCEPTION OF POSITIVE CHANGE

In the arena of cultural commonality--Misperception by business and citizens indicate the underlying contradiction of fear of racial and economic change. This is illustrated by shops fearful of locating on mall, lack of racial dispersal in apartment buildings and lack of knowledge of the positive change in community.

Guild A

CULTURAL CHALLENGESPERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the arena of cultural commonality--Individuals have too much self-interest and isolation which indicates the underlying contradiction of poor training in social conscience. This is illustrated by people who don't respect personal or property rights of others; people who don't contribute to community life.

CULTURAL COMMONALITY

In the arena of social structures--Segregated housing and fragmented social groups indicate the underlying contradiction of people not participating in organizations that would be informative to them about the needs of the community. This is illustrated by poor participation in neighborhood councils, open town meetings, village meetings, etc.

Guild F

INTERPERSONAL POLITICS

In the arena of cultural commonality--Unemployment, fear for safety, not buying locally and fear of losing one's identity as a church indicate the underlying contradiction of a mobile society which keeps us in impersonal relationships and concerned about personal problems rather than community problems. This is illustrated by Dole Library concerns, school elections, East Chicago Ave. business and residents group to revitalize that area. Senior citizen housing- Mills Towers.

Guild G-4

ECONOMIC CHALLENGESECONOMIC PRIORITIES

In the arena of common distribution--Lack of local control in spending of federal funds, restricted earning power under social security, and inflation indicate the underlying contradiction of the need for establishing economic priorities as they pertain to individual communities. This is illustrated by the waiting list for senior citizen housing, red tape involved in obtaining funds, problems of home upkeep for those on fixed incomes.

Guild A

VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

In the arena of economic--Village management, funding priorities and insufficient self reliance indicate the underlying contradiction of elective officials' not communicating or being responsive to the satisfaction of the citizens. This is illustrated by redistricting, mall decision, HOLE, senior citizen housing without referenda.

Guild A

ABROGATION OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the arena of economic commonality--Money, incentive, and a mobile society indicate the underlying contradiction of abrogation of individual responsibility. This is illustrated by lack of participation in elections, citizen response is usually a reaction--negative, littering and a disregard of laws.

Guild B

CHANGE WITHOUT PAIN

In the arena of production and exchange mech.--Change without pain. Limited selection in the stores, investment reluctance due to the fear of social change, traditional view of power and land scarcity indicate the underlying contradiction of change without pain. This is illustrated by resistance to school reorganization, resistance to high rise, lack of sensitivity of the merchants to the changing clientele, and better use of existing structures.

Guild B

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

IMAGE OF DETERIORATION

In the arena of business and government--Shrinking tax base and need for increased services indicate the underlying contradiction of image of irreversible deterioration in an older, racially changing community. This is illustrated by new businesses not replacing businesses that leave, such as Wards.

Guild E

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

In the arena of public transportation--While there is some interest in it, there does not appear to be a strong demand.

Guild E

COMMUNITY TAX BASE

In the arena of increasing the tax base of the community--Assessment methods, sales and financial institutions indicate the underlying contradiction of economics, community attitudes, and community image. This is illustrated by Harrison Street, Austin Blvd., Chicago/Austin, Madison and Austin.

Guild E

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In the arena of economic commonality--Priority spending, lack of community control, and lack of parking indicate the underlying contradiction of limited community participation in city planning and spending of public money. This is illustrated by teacher cuts, empty stores and having to pay for parking.

Guild D

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the arena of economic development--Fear, apathy, political structure indicate the underlying contradiction of insufficient priority setting. This is illustrated by East Chicago Avenue indecision.

Guild C

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

In the arena of economic commonality--Large and distant control, economic and cultural change indicate the underlying contradiction of lack of good local control, lack of confidence, money and management. This is illustrated by RTA control, democratic county assessor, and East Chicago exodus.

Guild C

POLITICAL CHALLENGESCOMMUNITY DETACHMENT

In the arena of political commonality-- Personal apathy and the inability of Oak Park always to function independently indicate the underlying contradiction of lack of attachment to community and political groups. This is illustrated by the fact that less than 10% of the eligible electorate participated in the school bond voting and out of 8 offices representing geographically 2/3 of Oak Park, there will be no Oak Park resident.

Guild A

HOW DOES DEMOCRACY WORK?

In the arena of political decision making-- Apathy, no public demand, lack of education indicate the underlying contradiction of a democratic process which works at some levels but not all levels, and in our own personal experience we do not see it working. This is illustrated by light attendance at educational and public meetings.

Guild A

A BETTER APPROACH TO AWARENESS: CITIZENS AND COMMUNITY

In the arena of meaningful citizen participation-- Lack of interest, poor transportation facilities, apathy, indicate the underlying contradiction of apathy and misapplication of local services. This is illustrated by the deplorable condition of streets and the lack of citizen participation in local organization.

Guild B

ACCOUNTABILITY, PEOPLE & GOVERNMENT

In the arena of political-- Officials don't listen to people-- Poorly qualified officials--selfish officials and greedy officials indicate the underlying contradiction of lack of accountability. This is illustrated by poor traffic planning (Mall and cul-de-sac confusion) school reorganization, lack of faith in elected officials.

Guild G

POLITICAL CHALLENGESSAFETY IN THE STREETS

In the arena of safety in the streets and participation in government-- Apathy, lack of communications and outside government influences indicate the underlying contradiction of the need for more awareness and inappropriate priorities. This is illustrated by the turnout today (400 of 62,000) and inadequate voting participation.

Guild C

POLITICAL COMMONALITY

In the arena of political commonality-- Improper definitions of problems by local government indicate the underlying contradiction of lack of governmental response and acceptance of individual changing lifestyles. This is illustrated by lack of response to citizen's request to block construction of Stankus building and lack of concern in refuse collection for condominium taxpayers.

Guild F2

INDIVIDUAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

In the arena of individual political participation--No vested interest and no structured channels for immediate individual participation indicate the underlying contradiction of resident mobility and non-participation. This is illustrated by approximately 50% rental units and external employment opportunities.

Guild E

POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the arena of political commonality-- Lack of personal motivation and government response indicate the underlying contradiction of limited communication between people and government. This is illustrated by high density zoning on Lake Street. Seven (7) Trustees making decisions for 65,000.

Guild D

POLITICAL CHALLENGES

UNWILLINGNESS TO RISK

In the arena of political commonality--Citizen indifference, political maneuvering of legislative district, and unwillingness to compromise indicate the underlying contradiction of selfishness, indifference--and if our voices aren't heard at once, we give up--. This is illustrated by cul de sac disagreements, political maneuvering of districts 18, 5, and 21, and littering around high school, parks, vandalism, etc.

Guild B

In the arena of political commonality (1) elementary school board, (2) elderly income--(1) poor communications by elementary school board, (2) inflation crunch of fixed income--(1) The elementary school board, although they appear to try, are not entirely responding to the community needs--more to the dictates of the administration and small groups, i.e. (economic and power) quality education needed, (2) more free activities for elderly--more participation, (1) recent rumors of teacher cuts (40).

*The fate of liberty and democracy
are finally entrusted to the hands of
the American people.*

George Washington, 1791

The people are the only competent
judges of their own welfare.

Josiah Quincy, 1774

The Practical Proposals

CULTURAL PROPOSALS

DECENTRALIZATION OF DECISIONS

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to decentralize the decision-making process, propose to elect Village officials on a geographical basis through research by a task force followed by community education.

Guild C

CITIZEN'S RESEARCH BUREAU

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to improve communications, propose formation of a Citizen's Research Bureau through finding volunteers and cooperation with existing service groups.

Guild C

NEWCOMER/OLDTIMER ARTICLE

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to improve community relations, propose to bridge the gap between long time citizens and newcomers through a weekly feature in the local paper concerning their feelings for Oak Park.

Guild C

TRANSPORTATION AND BABY-SITTING DIRECTORY

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to enable people to attend Village functions, propose that a directory of transportation and baby-sitting resources, both paid and volunteer, available by neighborhood, be compiled and distributed periodically through the Community Relations Commission, which would publicize, update, and advertise the directory through meeting notices, newspaper stories, Churches, etc.

Guild C

CULTURAL PROPOSALS

GRASS ROOTS INVOLVEMENT

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to learn the attitudes of people, to define problems and to make decisions, propose to stimulate grass roots involvement of citizens through establishment of community-wide groups with block-level components.

Guild C

LIFESTYLE COUNSELLING CENTER

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to educate and exchange ideas, cultures, retirement information and basic competencies for living together happily, propose a lifestyle counselling center through various sessions, implemented by local resource people at rotating locations.

Guild C

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to develop a stronger sense of community, propose to better inform and educate the people of Oak Park through neighborhood churches; encouraging churches to be involved in community affairs; strengthening the work of the Community Relations Department; and distributing information packets to new residents.

Guild A

ECONOMIC PROPOSALS

CITIZEN-GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

We, the citizens of Oak Park and River Forest in order to improve village communications propose to revitalize block clubs through (1) election of block chairperson for every block, (2) establish block club area councils, (3) choose representative for each area council, and (4) appoint village coordinator for block clubs and councils.

Guild A

ECONOMIC PLAN

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to establish an economic base to meet the needs of the community, propose that each local governmental unit name members to a joint study committee to develop a 3 to 5 year plan; further, that the committee hold public hearings and an advisory referendum on the proposals of the committee.

Guild A

UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to bring diverse elements of the citizenry together, propose creating and improving neighborhood councils, through (1) study of council activities and structure, (2) create additional councils, (3) personal contacts with the citizenry, (4) combination of neighborhood council and block club activities and structure, and (5) encouragement of governmental responses to these activities.

Guild A

STABILITY WITH DIVERSITY

We, the citizens of Oak Park, in order to encourage cultural diversity and economic stability in our village, propose to live within our means through prohibiting redlining, encourage equity insurance and encourage and participate in governmental responsiveness.

Guild A

POLITICAL PROPOSALS

CITIZEN EDUCATION - MOTIVATION

We the citizens of Oak Park in order to better inform and motivate the citizenry and to effectively use local government, propose to (1) make recommendations to the local news media for complete coverage of issues (2) appoint an ombudsman (3) offer through the lighted school house program courses to produce a better informed citizenry (4) Vitalize and encourage block club participation.

Guild B & F

INFORM THE CITIZEN

We the citizens of Oak Park in order to inform and involve the citizenry propose improved communication through more frequent village newsletters and trustee attendance at area council meetings.

Guild B & F

AWAKEN KNOWLEDGEABLE INVOLVED CITIZENRY

We the citizens of Oak Park in order to achieve informed and involved citizens and responsive government propose that existing neighborhood organizations be worked with (1) Block parties emphasizing Bicentennial and issues (2) Neighborhood councils reaching out to all neighborhood citizens (3) Neighborhood councils communicate to governmental boards.

Guild B & F

COMMUNICATION: INVOLVEMENT KEY

We the citizens of Oak Park, in order to know our rights and responsibilities, propose involvement through working, learning, understanding and sharing the needs of the community.

Guild B & F

The sun never shined on a cause of greater worth. 'Tis not the affair of a city, a county, a province, or a kingdom, but of a continent - of at least one-eighth part of the inhabitable globe. 'Tis not the concern of a day, a year, or an age; posterity are virtually involved in the contest, and will be more or less affected even to the end time by the proceedings now.

Thomas Paine, 1776

All the great civilizations had one thing in common, a positive image of the future infusing the present with purpose and expectation.

Robert Bundy

The New Story

STORY

OAK PARK "PAST"

Our village, now known as Oak Park, was originally named "Ridgeland" as it was a ridge land left from the glacier age. In those days "Ridgeland" had a few business streets that were wooden and shifted following heavy rains. The streets were lighted by arc lights. Often times after rain, villagers needed hip boots to get to the Chicago Northwestern Ridgeland station to go to work in the City of Chicago, as most streets were mud. In those early days, the streets were snow plowed by horse-drawn plows, and water was from private wells and a small reservoir located where Avenue Bank is today.

Arts

Oak Park is the birthplace of Prairie Style Architecture developed by Frank Lloyd Wright and students of his. Ernest Hemingway, Bruce Barton, and Edgar Rice Burroughs are renowned writers from our village's past. Even today we enjoy "Lecture Series" that were started 50 years ago in this rich cultural community.

Education

The education facilities in Oak Park have been top rated over the years, and many business leaders for Chicago businesses have come from Oak Park.

Village

Oak Park was the long-time holder of the "Largest Village in the World" title which only recently was taken over by Skokie in North Chicago.

Oak Park has had the village manager type government for the past 25 years. Prior to that, they were governed by a Board of Trustees and an elected President. Oak Park was written up in "Ladies Home Journal" back in the 30's as the "Finest Suburb" from a worldwide competition of suburbs.

This village of ours, until recently, had the distinction of having no saloons but has always been blessed (if you'll pardon the pun) of having more places of worship per population than other communities of comparable size.

STORY

PRESENT ADJUSTMENTS IN OAK PARK

Since our heritage is so great, we should emulate our forebearers. We must adjust to our new leaders, new educators, new ideas, and the new life-style of open housing, and the high-rise. We hope to keep the good and build for the future.

We have excellent schools, good libraries, and many parks. We are involved in school reorganization and pertinent busing. We know change is painful. We must work to sustain our community forum and bring about better transportation and maintain our present system of libraries. We hope for more recreational land.

The image of Oak Park is in the tree-lined streets, voluntary gardens, the conservatory where we teach conservation to third graders and up.

We are engaging in a struggle for safety in the streets, to curb vandalism, in stopping the litter. We have police and fire protection to ward off vandalism, take care of accident or illness with our indigents and senior citizens. We have the hot line to take care of the drug and emotional problems.

We recognize our interdependence in the urban area. We salute our past and accept the challenge to meet whatever problems arise.

FUTURE

We will continue to be a village where citizen safety, community involvement, independence of thought and equality for everyone is our steady goal.

Oak Parkers shall eat fresh vegetables grown in a community garden, will live on clean streets and breathe fresh air.

The people of Oak Park take greatness of the past to shape their future. The form of Hemingway and design of Frank Lloyd Wright are symbols of the excellence, balance and tested stability Oak Park will continue to promote.

SONG

(To the tune of "Funiculi
Funicula")

VERSE

Oak Park - - its past was filled with many writers, and
architects, the prairie school.
It gives to all the best that life can offer, and something
more, an open door.
To dream that life will richer be for children, our only
goal, our only goal.
That peace and hope and love and understanding will fill
our soul, will fill our soul.

CHORUS

Oak Park, Oak Park, great community
Oak Park, Oak Park, that's the town for me.
The best is there
The people care
It is the only place to be
Looking towards the future in our great community.

OAK PARK SYMBOL



OAK PARK SYMBOL



CHILDREN'S

TOWN MEETING '76

CHILDREN'S SECTION - CHALLENGES

<u>Issues Brainstorm</u>	<u>Challenge Arenas</u>
1. Elderly people who can't take care of themselves.	Caring for people
2. Stealing	
3. Dole branch library closing down	People needing help
4. Original crime	
5. Energy crisis	
6. Pollution	National use of re- sources
7. Busing with schools	
8. People killing others	
9. Tornadoes	
10. Fire	Emergencies
11. Safe street crossing	
12. Schools closing down	
13. High cost of things	
14. More places to play	
15. Airplanes that crash	
16. Noisy parties	
17. Alchohism	
18. Saving fuel	
19. New President	
20. Drugs	
21. Earthquakes	
22. Taking things that don't belong to you	

PROPOSALS WORKSHEET

<u>Challenge</u>	<u>Proposal Responses</u>
National use of Resources	Ride bikes - bake paths Schools closer to home Turn heat down Car pools Walking Use candles Ice boxes Make furnaces work well
People needing help	Civil defense More practice drills- for fire & tornado More instructions on what to do More AA & drug centers More taxes-more services Education to care for self and others
Caring for people	Make nursing homes better for patients Write complaint letters Give information to keep elders involved
	The children of Oak Park propose that everyone should work together to make it an even better place to live by cooperation in national use of resources and helping and caring for people.

SONG

VERSE

Oak Park is great
It should be known
It's plain for all to see
The people share and really care
Whoever you may be

REFRAIN

Oak Park's for all
It's for you and me
So come and see
It's the place to be

VERSE

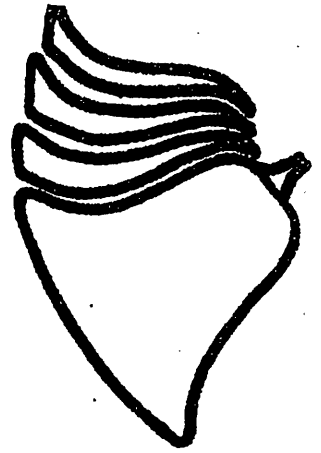
We've parks and schools
and swimming pools
and elders bright and gay
The future is now, it is today
Oak Park will show the way

REFRAIN

Oak Park's for all
It's for you and me
So come and see
It's the place to be

PARTICIPANTS

CHILDREN'S SECTION



Child's Name

Bobby Brown
*Shannon Brown
Jimmy Harper
Debbie Harper
*Susan Ames
*Marjorie Ames
xAmy Knowlton
Chris Van Dreele
Anna Van Dreele
Gal Clements
Lois Clements
Jinny Dawd
Rodger Shoup
xJudy Shoup
Beth Grahm
Kathey Grahm
Michael Grahm
Kevin Doyle
Collin Doyle
Beth Cannon
Alex Perasall
Heniretta Perasall
Elizabeth Tardy
Carol Nott
Cheri Lozeau
Mary Janette
Adam Janette
Ellen Janette
Rachel Owings
Evan Taylor
Jim Patinka
Doug Patinka
Jill Ryan
Jimmy Solvick
*Mary Sorver
John Janette
Mike Ryan
Peter Ryan
Patrica Tako
Paul Osenar
Andy Osenar
Alex Osenar
Maureen Collins
Lisa Collins
Sean Collins
Danial Addington

Child's Name

Elizabeth Horn
Ross Brown
Jeff Illian
Wendy Illian
Randy Illian

* - helping as staff
x - both staff and participant

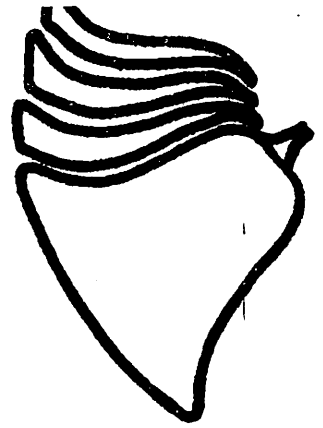


OAK PARK

COMES TO

TOWN MEETING '76

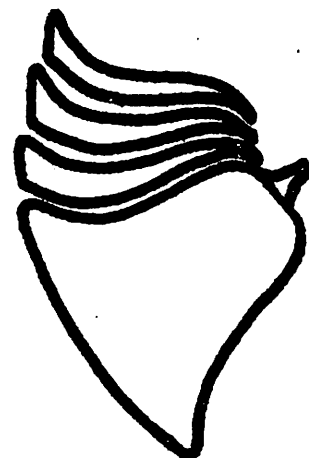
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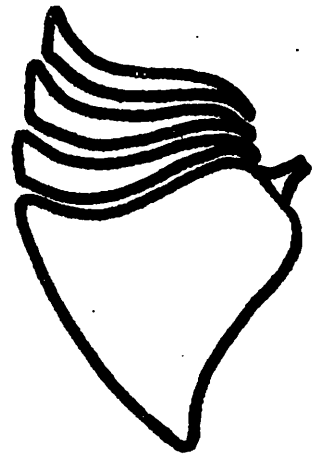
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Joan O'Malley
Trudy Doyle
David A. Schweig

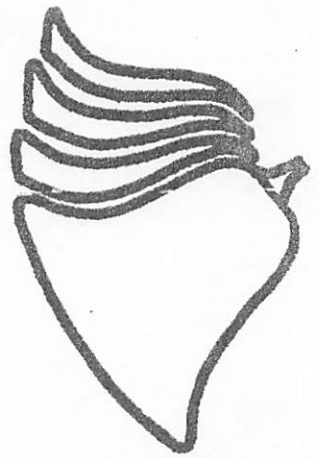
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