



OAK PARK MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Members of the Council:

Chair Jane Nye

Vice Chair Seema Chandra

JL Diaz

Michelle Santucci

Brian Trushinski

OAK PARK MUNICIPAL ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES

The Oak Park MAC held a meeting on Thursday, March 30, 2023, at 7:00 PM

Oak Park High School, Room G-9

899 Kanan Road, Oak Park, CA 91377

1. **Call to Order of the meeting and Roll Call.** The meeting was called to order by Chair Jane Nye at 7:05 PM. MAC members Seema Chandra, JL Diaz, Michelle Santucci, Brian Trushinski, and OPHS student representative, Catherine Cheng were all present.
2. **Flag Salute.** Brian Trushinski led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **Adoption of the Agenda.** Seema Chandra requested that we move Public Comments to after Comments from Supervisor Gorell. Seema Chandra moved to adopt the agenda as modified. JL Diaz seconded the motion. Motion was approved 5/0.
4. **Approval of the meeting minutes of February 23, 2023.** JL Diaz moved to approve the minutes. Michelle Santucci seconded the motion. Motion was approved 5/0.

5. **Public Safety reports**

Ventura County Sheriff – Senior Deputy Christopher Jones

- Spike in catalytic convert thefts. In one night, there were four stolen and then another two nights later there were another two stolen. Mostly from communal living environments like condo/apartment complexes across from MCMS. Most vehicles have been Toyota Priuses, one was a Honda Accord. Reminder to have a Cat shield installed (70+ rivets prevent thefts). Still working on costs of License Plate readers. Talked to Crime Analysis Unit and in Thousand Oaks, in 6 months, they were able to recover many hundreds of thousand of dollars of stolen merchandise. Thousand Oaks went from 15 readers to 30 cameras. Steven Kozel asked about crime data statistics and more community updates. Sr. Dep. Jones replied that the biggest crime in our area is the crime of opportunity – residents leaving things in their cars, leaving their houses and cars unlocked. Catalytic converter thefts are also significant – everywhere. And mail theft (10+ reports in a month) for identity theft. Denna Parry asked about solicitors – recommendation was to log a 911 call.

Ventura County Fire Department – Battalion Chief Bob Wilshire

- Here in place of Division Chief Jeff Shea. Rains have not caused any problems in Oak Park – we're very lucky. Minor flooding and some downed trees. Other Ventura County communities have not fared as well. We don't want to ignore possible fire concerns with lots of grass & weed growth. Be sure to clear weeds and tall grasses. June 1 inspection deadline by VCFD. Anticipating a later fire season this year because of all the rain. Academy of new recruits should be graduating shortly – will see some new young faces. Rain has caused some challenges in back country roads – remote rescues are more challenging – may see more helicopter responses. Annual K12 school inspection campaign –

and R2 inspection campaign (multi-residency with common exit corridor). Good news - Oak Park has just received a new fire engine – medic engine 36 – new technology makes the fire fighters’ job easier.

Steven Kozel asked if they were aware of a mud slide on Sunnycrest. No call for service was reported. May be a broken sprinkler issue. VCFD will follow-up.

Also, in attendance – Oak Park Fire Station 36

CHP – Officer Ryan Ayers

- Out of Moorpark CHP office. No major issues to report. Updates on ongoing issues – oversize vehicle ordinance was enforced – sedan + trailer w/handicap placard has now been moved. Education + enforcement is effective, especially around Red Oak Elementary School (stop signs are being run). Made eye contact with each driver – each driver stopped. Officer Ayers had a chat with those driving fast.

Handles CA state police work. With uptick in retail theft, CHP is taking on more work to support other public safety resources. Good collaboration with other agencies.

Road rage is one of the biggest spikes in crimes. Result of Covid emotional stress.

Theft from Ventura County Fairgrounds – 4 arrests were made. Supervisor Gorell asked for details, but since it hasn’t been adjudicated, nothing can be said.

April is Distracted Driver Month – zero tolerance, maximum enforcement.

Collaborating with school districts in implementing plans to prepare for emergencies. All agencies will respond.

Recommends license plate readers to be installed in Oak Park. Organized theft taskforce has done 1568 investigations throughout CA 942 arrests, recovered \$300K+ assets, \$30M cost to recover. Seeing a lot of catalytic converter and residential thefts. Be sure to be aware and report any unusual issues.

JL Diaz brought up strange call to OPHS – Jim Moynihan from OPUSD said it was a call from unidentified person saying someone was coming by with a surprise. School on high alert. Parents notified. Note: there are specialized police units investigating.

Michelle Santucci asked if there was a crime statistics database that tracks why crimes occur. Officer Ayers said there may be data kept, but he doesn’t have knowledge of one for our area.

6. Comments from Supervisor Jeff Gorell

Nice opportunity to recognize Chuck Alvarez at the County level on Tues, Mar 28, 2023, at the Board of Supervisors to celebrate his 33 years of public service. Supervisor Gorell noted that many people talked about all the projects that Chuck delivered to the County. Supervisor Gorell and his staff are very grateful for his service to the County of Ventura. Supervisor Gorell said Chuck has a heart for public service, noting that when he asked Chuck what he going to do now that he’s retiring, Chuck said, “I’ll probably take a month off to relax and then volunteer in the community.” Big thank you to Chuck! We’re going to miss Chuck!

Noted that our budget is not balanced, and we continue to dig into reserves where it’s not sustainable. We, collectively, need to decide how to proceed. We do not want to have to raise assessments. We need to identify our priorities and a sustainable, long-term budget and financial plan. We will work with CSA #4 and the MAC, along with residents to set priorities.

County counsel has advised us to not have a single MAC member as the Oversized vehicle liaison. Michelle Santucci has the assignment. We need to have two MAC members on this committee or five MAC members.

Risk is that one person could have a perceived conflict of interest. **Action item** – MAC to deliberate on how to move forward and have a future agenda item to decide next steps.

Be sure to look at Supervisor Gorell's website for weekly updates. Request that the MAC push Oak Park residents to the website.

District Office is moving from Hillcrest to Thousand Oaks Civic Center. This will make reaching Supervisor Gorell more accessible by public transportation, will cut costs, and the new office is co-located with other government official's offices. There is also better parking. Ribbon-cutting ceremony will be on Thursday, May 4, 2023. There will be a grand opening party to get the word out. Supervisor Gorell will pay for this himself.

Public Works has a great portal to submit issues - <https://www.vcpublishworks.org/wsd/customerportal/>

The staff is very responsive to all requests. This also helps with tracking issues and provides a great feedback loop.

If Public Works does not help quickly, the escalation path is via Supervisor Gorell's office. Bookmarks with the link to the Portal were given out to the attendees.

Strategic Planning – they are doing this at the County level, and Supervisor Gorell would like the MAC to do this as well (3-5 years out). Staff will coordinate a Special MAC meeting to focus on strategic planning. They will bring in a facilitator to ensure a great outcome.

Michelle Santucci praised Supervisor Gorell for his ideas – especially for using his website for centralizing all Oak Park information and communication. She noted the VC Public Works Portal is also helpful. Michelle also noted that MAC meetings are not well attended – maybe fewer than 10-15 residents were present. Michelle asked if there were other ways to encourage attendance – The Star or Acorn? Post cards mailed quarterly? Social media alerts? Supervisor Gorell is investigating live streaming and other ways to encourage inputs and attendance. His understanding is that we get more attendance if there are controversial issue. Otherwise, residents are happy and don't see a need to attend.

Janna Orkney asked if there was a timeline to live stream the MAC meetings.

Action Item: add this to a future agenda.

Supervisor Gorell said participation is a challenge to manage the queue. There is no budget, either.

Steve Kozel asked if other MACs use Zoom. Supervisor Gorell said the other MACs do not have remote interactions.

Vice Chair Chandra noted that with Zoom meetings during Covid we did have increased participation.

Deena Parry requested that The Star attend our meetings. Also, appreciated that Dale Thomas is updating the event boards, consistently.

Supervisor Gorell is pushing transparency and accessibility – he held sidewalk office hours earlier today in front of the Oak Park Library to make himself available. This is one way to push the envelope for increased interactions.

Catherine Cheng requested that future events be held not when school is in session, as students wanted to meet with Supervisor Gorell, but needed to attend class. Supervisor Gorell said that he was there during lunch hour and many students stopped by to talk. He would like to be invited to OPHS to speak to students.

Michelle Santucci said her neighbors are happy. She never has received a complaint about Oak Park. There was a great turnout for a hot topic – like fire safety.

7. Public Comments

Janna Orkney – Elected Board member and Vice Chair of Triunfo Water and Sanitation District (TWSD). She would like to talk about getting residents to come to the Oak Park MAC meetings. Request to make the agenda more transparent – interested in license plate readers, zoom meetings, but do not see these items on

the agenda. Would like to tighten up the agenda. Asking Supervisor Gorell to modernize the agendas. Also, could not find the MAC Meeting Minutes on Supervisor Gorell's website.

Michelle Santucci mentioned that Officer Jones brought up the license plate readers and it was not an agenda item.

Deena Parry – Concerned about solicitors and ambulance times. Jane Nye mentioned that the VCFD addressed this in the Feb MAC meeting. Larry Williams responded that response times are constantly monitored. Supervisor Gorell said the County is monitoring response times and the AMR contract is up for renewal, so this is under review.

Steven Kozel – Agreed with Janna Orkney's comments. Would also like more detail and better follow-up with the agendas. Would like more consistency. Carry more business items, forward. Again, request the Nov meeting minutes be posted on Supervisor Gorell's website – Steven will send them to Dale Thomas to post.

8. Presentation by Charles Alvarez, Ventura County Public Works Agency

Chuck requested that we combine his report with Matt's report (see below) – the MAC and Larry Williams agreed to the change.

Good news – Landscape issues due to Woolsey fire damage. We just got the check \$107K on emergency repairs. This is reimbursement from the State and Federal government.

Introduced Matt Kovacevich as the Enhanced Landscape Account Manager – here to present the March report. He works with Ventura County CSA #4 on all parkway areas managed by the County. Did quite a bit of storm damage clean-up, in addition to normal maintenance work. Included photos in his report – trimmed trees, cleaned up mud, managed drought landscape issues. Ensuring drought and fire resiliency.

Vice Chair Chandra asked if the storm damage response came out of our standard budget. Matt responded that it came out of our regular budget.

Eric Steiner asked how often Enhanced Landscape weeds slopes. Matt responded that it is a top priority and an ongoing task.

Deena Parry asked if Round Up is used for week abatement – Matt responded that it is never used.

Regarding Turf Removal project – it is no longer feasible to move forward with 100K sf of turf removal.

Median and irrigation fixes would cost a huge increase over what we originally thought - \$15/sf , not \$3.

New proposal and what they budgeted for is replacing only the turf currently watered by potable water (10K sf) – this would give us 'the biggest bang for our buck.' We would also get a refund for doing turf removal, which gives us \$30K buffer. Kanan and Tamarind and Kanan and Golden Eagle.

Action Item: MAC to discuss new landscape priorities. This needs to be added to a future agenda.

Oak Park monument sign was painted this week and looks great! Will re-plant in front of the sign. Solar lights will also be added to the monument sign.

Recycled Water signed have been ordered and will be installed.

Re-stripping the bike path is a priority and a public safety concern. No budget for this but will need to move things around to get this done.

Chuck is retiring and Chuck introduced George Andreotti who is Valeria Lopez's new manager.

The MAC gave Chuck a gift of a beautiful succulent plant as a thank you for his years of service with the Oak Park MAC!

9. Advisory Matters

- a) Enhanced Landscape Update – Matt Kovacevich
- b) Ventura County Fire Department, Fire Hazard Reduction Program – Larry Williams

10. Information Items

None

11. Council Comments

Catherine Cheng – School dance moved from Feb to Mar – huge success. Had a college fair night where 20 colleges came to speak of applying to colleges and introducing their college and hoping that Juniors apply to their schools. OPHS Mock Trial made County finals and Speech and Debate team is bringing a record number of competitors to the State competition. Band District Festival – mass performance from students in grades 6-12 for the public. Drama and theater students had a fabulous Addams Family performance in March. Election week for ASB school year. Seniors are working on Prom and other graduation events. Elementary school open houses are planned for April. There will be a blood drive on Apr 19 – this will be open to the public, not just students.

Seema Chandra – No updates.

JL Diaz – The Oak Park Fire Safe Council received a grant for \$20K – will go towards operations of the OPFSC, development of the website, publications, etc. Doing a lot of campaigns for Wildfire Property Assessments. The assessment is free. Community Wildfire Plan – now sharing this information.

Michelle Santucci – No updates.

Brian Trushinski – RSRPD Oak Park Committee will meet in April. Property that has overhanging tree limbs, RSRPD now has the funds to trim (may need an encroachment permit).

Eric Steiner's report was reviewed, and Brian asked for Eric's highest priority request – Eric identified Hawthorne between Rockfield and Bowfield.

How do we move forward? MAC should re-prioritize our landscape priorities. Should we trade-off turf removal for Hawthorne.

Motion to recommend that Enhanced Landscape provide design concepts + provide costs.

Irrigation lines must now stay above ground and would need to be screened. Stump grinding.

Motion by Brian, seconded by Michelle Santucci – 4 ayes, 0 – no, 1 abstention by JL Diaz as he is not familiar with the location. Motion passes and there is consensus by the MAC for CSA #4 to discuss design concepts for Hawthorne with Enhanced Landscape at April meeting.

Street sweeping follow-up – the County has a schedule and is posted on Supervisor Gorell's website. Only concern is that the truck goes too fast.

Noted that Welcome to Oak Park gateway sign looks amazing!

Jane Nye – Mar 21 OPUSD update – CA Distinguished School awarded to OHES and Red Oak ES, celebrated 6 OPHS students who are National Merit Scholars, and the elementary schools are being expanded to 4-year-old children – TK (transitional kindergarten) – an additional 130 new students! Still need to finance new classrooms.

TWSD – water restrictions were lifted. Planned outreach to community for the Pure Water Project. For the new Lagoon grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony, TWSD and the JPA will have a booth. No final date, but possibly the end of April. Will provide details as soon as it is finalized.

Worked with Chuck and Valeria on emptying trash cans on Kanan.

Submitted work request via Public Works apps to replace pylons on Kanan and Los Arcos.

12. Written Communications

Received email from Steve Kozel regarding agenda details.

Received email from Janna Orkney regarding agenda details.

13. Future Agenda Items

- License plate reader system and cameras in Apr
- Budget review
 - Apr – Presentation by Fiscal Manager for Public Works to discuss details
 - May – prioritize budget and make recommendations to County for 2024
 - School crossing guards
 - Landscaping
 - VIP
- ❖ [Would like inputs from residents](#)
- MAC Strategy review (3-5 yr plan)
- Update Supervisor Gorell's website and expand communication
- Landscaping priorities in Apr – CSA #4 to work with Enhanced Landscape to provide a recommendation and provide costs
- For landscape action in May
- Lagoon ribbon cutting and booth
- Update on live streaming / Zoom meetings
- Oversized vehicle committee expansion

14. Adjournment

Chair Nye adjourned the meeting at 10:04 PM.

The next MAC meeting will be held at 7:00 PM at OPHS room G-9 on Thursday, April 27, 2023.