

**Oak Park Facility Review Committee
January 17, 2024 - Meeting Minutes
Village Hall- Room 101, 6:30PM**

A recording of this meeting is available on the Village of Oak Park Website.

1. **Call to Order:** Co-chair Lueck called the meeting to order at 6:32PM beginning with roll call.

Roll Call: A quorum was present.

Present: Co-chair Colette Lueck, Co-chair Daniel Roush, Lou Garapolo, Dana Wright, Greg Kolar, Jim Madigan, Pastor Kathy Nolte, Ade Onayemi, Rebecca Paulsen, Judy Greffin, Marc Blesoff, and Stephen Morales

Missed Roll Call: Gary Arnold, Thomas Ptacek, and Tom Bassett-Dilley

Absent: Jon Hale

Village Staff: Robert Sproule, Erin Duffy, Susie Trexler, Craig Failor, and Chief Johnson

Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects: Meg Kindelin, Katie McNamee, and Kelsey Kuehn

2. **Agenda Approval**

3. **Approval of Minutes-** December 20, 2023: Motion by Committee member Blesoff, Seconded by Committee member Onayemi. A voice vote was taken and the minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.

4. **New Business:**

- a. Village Hall and Police Department Project Goals

Recap of discussion items identified on December 20, 2023, presented by Co-chair Lueck:

1. The building should exhibit pride of place, be significant, speak to the Village, be welcoming, and identifiable as Village Hall with increased wayfinding efforts.
2. Construction and remodeling should be cost efficient. Residents will be paying attention to how much it costs and how that money is spent.
3. Strong consensus around the new Police Department facility that meets the needs, and space requirements, of modern-day policing. Preference would be a location on the Village Hall site.
4. Committee agrees that modifications to the building should be made under a “lens of inclusion.” Holding the building to a higher standard than ADA compliance. All public spaces in the building need to be welcoming and accessible to all.
5. Everyone recognizes that there needs to be more parking; however, there was a lack of agreement on how many parking spaces and how users would be traveling to Village Hall in 20-30 years.

6. The Committee agrees that there needs to be more space, but they do not have a good idea of how the building would be used in the future. Making it hard to determine how much additional space is needed.
 - a. Village services will always be staff-driven. Many of these services may occur remotely or digitally, but, as a municipality, we are still accountable to the people that elect us. Residents will still require “face time” with staff.
7. There was a considerable amount of discussion around security and safety, but a desire that these two issues be addressed without driving the design of the building.
8. No shared agreement between Committee members on the concept of Net Zero. The Committee does not believe that the direction from the Village Board is sufficient to meet the goals of the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) plan.

Member Marc Blesoff, representing the Aging in Communities Commission, asked for clarification regarding net zero. Co-chair Roush and Member Bassett-Dilley provided a response.

- Co-chair Roush agrees that it is easy to get into the more technical terminology and wants to ensure that the sustainability and security conservations continue as the Committee works to identify how rigorous the preservation standards will be for this building. In some ways, making improvements to the building to make it safer and more sustainable is at odds with the buildings inherent character defining features. In order for the building to function over the next 50 years, it might need a more radical re-thinking.
- Net Zero is a sustainability target that is already identified in the Climate Ready Oak Park (CROP) plan. Member Bassett-Dilley clarifies that Net Zero energy means that the building produces as much energy on site as it uses in the course of a year. Bassett-Dilley does not believe that is an important goal. He believes that meeting the CROP goal of locally-generated renewable energy for all Village facilities by 2030 should be the standard that this building is working towards. This will provide challenges to traditional preservation of the building.

Member Blesoff looks to clarify the term “inclusivity.” With his statement, he wants to ensure that inclusivity implies more than just those with disabilities. For example, age is not a disability. He states that inclusive has to do with equity, cultural differences, and physical differences. He wants to ensure that the Committee does not narrow their definition of inclusivity and keeps a broader definition during their evaluation. Co-chair Lueck responds to her previous statement to include diversity as part of the definition for the phrase “lens of inclusion.”

Member Stephen Morales provides a statement regarding future residents (younger generation) and net zero. He wants to ensure that this Committee does not leave future Village Boards or future residents scrambling to reach net zero or sustainability goals when they have the opportunity to address the issue now.

b. Johnson Lasky Kindelin Architects (JLK) Building Preservation Plan (BPP)

JLK Presentation

JLK is approaching the evaluation of the Village Hall Facility in a three-part process: 1) Look at the building, analyze the historic features, compare historic character defining features with those outlined in the National Register, and prepare a Building Preservation Plan. 2) Programming Analysis and Conceptual Designs. Answer the question- What does the Village want out of the building? 3) Prepare preferred design option and associated cost estimate.

The significance of the Village Hall Facility comes from the symbolism, meaning, and place it holds in the community. It is a symbol of the democracy of the age- 1975. For the National Register purposes- it is significant under Criterion A. This means that the building is important because of its historic associations and its meanings. Originally, the building functioned according to its form; however, right now, it functions differently in terms of entrance, circulation, openness, etc.

The building has been very carefully maintained despite the fact that it functions differently and there have been some modifications. Overall, the building retains a remarkable amount of integrity to its original configuration, its spirit, and its materials. Some of the identifiable differences are the furnishings and light fixtures. Council Chambers has remained nearly as originally designed and has retained the same function.

The four approaches, as recognized by the Secretary of the Interior, for the treatment of historic properties are: preservation, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and restoration. Identifying character defining features, as the first step in the process of choosing a treatment approach, pinpoints the nature of the building and helps the architects ascertain the materials, finishes, and qualities of spaces that express the significance of the building.

The preamble to the Building Preservation Report is that the philosophy of open and transparent government is baked into the architectural philosophy of the building. Those two things are difficult to separate. There are architectural design features that characterize this philosophy including its overall form, materiality, spatial configuration and its circulation patterns. The formal and the symbolic features are intertwined throughout the building.

Character Defining Features:

- At the North façade there is an opening or outward formal expression to the community.
- The report provides an exhaustive list of tangible exterior character defining features; however, to summarize intangible qualities that emerge when analyzing tangible character defining features there are elements and finishes that work together to form an architectural expression. These include:
 - A gesturing out to the community. The “open-donut” shape.
 - An incorporation of public space at the core of the building.

- A sensitive use of scale that does not overcome the neighboring structures.

Member Morales asks a question of JLK regarding the exterior of the building, location of the building along Madison Ave, openness to Madison Ave., and placement of the building on the site in relation to historic preservation. JLK recognizes that the formal front of the building is the Madison Ave. entrance despite the building being “built in the round.” JLK makes mention of the opening to the courtyard off Madison Ave. giving the perception of “arms opening to welcome you to this building.” With that being said, JLK also recognizes that the convenient entrance for those traveling by car is the South entrance of the building off of the parking lot. While JLK cannot replicate the symbolism that the North entrance provides, they can pull people to the courtyard and symbolic entrance through programming in the courtyard and create a welcoming entrance from the parking lot for convenient and safe circulation purposes.

Co-chair Lueck requests the committee consider how the building functioned in 1975 and whether the North entrance off Madison Ave. was utilized at that time. Perhaps function and wayfinding for the building, at that time, allowed for greater passage through the Madison Ave. entrance. Committee member, Pastor Kathy Nolte, comments that while being on the site during election season and utilizing the Madison Ave. entrance shifted her perspective on the meaning and symbolism of the building. She mentions that visitors miss out on that perspective if they are not drawn to the Madison Ave. entrance for any reason.

Member Jim Madigan does not want the committee to assume that the entrance directly off of Madison Ave. ever worked. Village Hall was built on the East side of Oak Park to prop up the area because it was “not vibrant.” It was never a vibrant Madison Ave. with a lot of pedestrian traffic.

Member Marc Blessoff states that the location of the building, on the Southeast side of Oak Park, was the main significance. He believes that JLK needs to factor in to their analysis the fear and fortress qualities of the building that Oak Park needed to consider while choosing the location and placement of this building in the early 1970s.

JLK Presentation

JLK moves on from exterior character defining features, that some might characterize as “fortress-like,” to discuss interior features provide warmth such as the flooring made from natural materials, the wood beams throughout, and the sightlines, visibility, and openness between the first floor and mezzanine level. Once inside the building, it does not feel as enclosed or “fortress-like” as it does from the exterior.

An exhaustive list of interior charter-defining features is available in JLK’s Building Preservation Plan. Since there have not been many modifications to the interior or exterior of the building, charter-defining features exist everywhere throughout as there is a lot of original material for JLK to work with. All of these inherent qualities help to preserve the spirit of the building.

When evaluating a building to create a preservation plan, JLK likes to look at historical pictures, review drawings and elevations, and break the building down into zones. These zones are: Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. Primary zones are areas where the function is significant, the quality of the features is well maintained including large clusters of features, and every effort should be made to maintain these areas.

Member Stephen Morales requests that JLK architects clarify items throughout the remainder of their presentation that may be in danger of preservation due to poor condition.

JLK Presentation

Based on the site plan, the primary zone includes the main footprint of the Village Hall facility, the parking lot and the greenery around it falls under the criterion for a tertiary zone, and JLK has identified a secondary zone in the interstitial space between the building and parking lot where the sloped driveway goes down to the underground parking lot and Police Department sally port. Originally, JLK labeled this interstitial space as a tertiary zone; however, upon further review, they acknowledged that this area does provide for a well utilized entrance to the building.

JLK moves along to the first-floor plan and identifies the open work areas, main entrance area, common hallways, council chambers, and areas with public use as primary zones. The overall form, appearance, and materials in these spaces is pretty significant. While still significant operational areas, offices, conference rooms, and workstations on this level are identified as secondary zones due to the ability to make modifications to these spaces without changing the overall experience of the first floor. There are a few tertiary zones identified on the first floor either because they have already been heavily modified or because they are spaces that require inherent updates over time, such as restrooms.

The mezzanine and lower levels are further characterized due to their private spaces versus the public gather areas available on the first floor and council chambers. The lower level being predominantly labeled as a tertiary zone except for the main lobby area.

Member Rebecca Paulsen mentions that in the presentation from the last meeting, and highlighted in the meeting minutes, was the idea that the basement would not be available for consideration outside of police department programming.

Director Sproule reiterates the goal presented in the last meeting that for the purpose of this exercise the Village would like to review options that allow Police Department programming to remain in the basement. He provides the example of the firing range. A significant investment has been made in the firing range so it behooves the Village to keep that activity in that location. Director Sproule also expands on the idea that if some Police Department programming was able to move to another location that might free up space for training rooms in the basement that might also be able to be utilized by Village Hall. There could be opportunities for shared space in the basement.

Meg Kindelin, from JLK, further comments that tertiary zones are labeled as such because they do not have a lot of historic or architectural significance. Labeling the lower level as a tertiary zone does not necessarily reflect an “anything goes” mentality, it simply means that there is not a lot of preservation significance down there. For example, if walls or ceiling modifications need to take place it is more acceptable, from a preservation standpoint, in a tertiary zone versus a primary zone.

Co-chair Roush adds to the response for member Paulsen’s question that some of the basement is set aside for further Police Department use but there could still be some space in the basement that makes more sense to repurpose.

Architect Meg Kindelin outlined next steps for the historical preservation evaluation. These include:

- Between now and the next meeting, JLK will perform program analysis and create three conceptual layouts.
 - o JLK will tryout different ideas across the schemes and analyze what works and what doesn’t work.
- Once presented, the conceptual schemes are meant to elicit discussion from the committee members. Committee members do not need to coalesce around one of the schemes in whole, but rather are encouraged to discuss parts of each scheme that they like. These schemes will include order of magnitude costs for the committee to consider.
- JLK will then take the information they receive from the committee’s discussion on February 21st and create one final conceptual scheme.

Co-chair Lueck expresses some concern trying to evaluate ideas without having a concept of cost associated with those ideas because one of the Committee’s goals is to keep the project cost effective. JLK responds that they will be able to provide high level costs associated with each scheme as they understand that costs are important to the Committee.

Member Bassett- Dilley believes that the costs between the schemes should not be wildly different if JLK plans to modify a good portion of the building in each scheme. He does make the disclaimer that construction costs versus retrofit scenarios could change operating costs significantly and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Meg Kindelin responds that anything they do will require assumptions regarding baseline changes (windows, insulation, etc.) that will be reflected across all three schemes. Kindelin mentions that you could do an exhaustive MEP study for this building but this evaluation does not include that.

Member Blesoff is interested in JLK’s consideration of changing demographics and population in their evaluation of the current building and preparation of the three schemes. Meg Kindelin responds that planning for office expansion includes a growth factor that is generally provided to them. In this case, FGM has provided a program that JLK will be following that has been approved by the Village Board, already.

Member Morales seeks clarification surrounding the South facing wall of the building and the parking lot being labeled as secondary and tertiary zones, respectively. He inquires whether or not, in terms of expansion, labeling this wall as such makes it less important from the perspective of historic preservation. JLK responds that they labeled this South facing wall as a secondary zone because in recent years, and potentially since 1975, it has gained significance as the main entrance to the building especially for visitors travelling by car. While the South facing wall and parking lot are labeled as secondary and tertiary zones, that is not to say that JLK would suggest significant modifications or additions in these zones that might affect the view of the building from Madison Avenue. Meg Kindelin adds that there is a standard “playbook” for how to add an addition to a historic building. JLK would not suggest an addition that could be seen from any of the main points of view (Madison Avenue or the two sides) of the building. The South facing wall on this building contains character defining features (round windows, etc.) that JLK would not want to block. With that being said, JLK has not been contracted to design a Village Hall museum so there still needs to be some room for modifications in certain zones of the building.

Member Onayemi would like the Committee to stop considering the South entrance as the “back of the building” because from visitors’ perspectives it is the main entrance and front of the building. He believes a lot of thought should go into the modifications for this area because it is used as the main entrance. Meg Kindelin agrees and believes that they need to find a way to unite the South entrance with the entrance off Madison Avenue so that the entrance to this historic building can be celebrated while addressing other key issues on the site such as drop off.

Member Blesoff believes that modifications surrounding drop off at the main entrance should be a priority for JLK as they evaluate the site plan because the building will likely see more and more older people than it has seen in the past. He would like to see drop off addressed as part of this project, as opposed to placed on the back burner to be modified at a later date.

Co-chair Lueck would like JLK to consider that the addition to Village Hall would primarily be used by the Police Department and because of this may require certain design constraints which would likely also require further discussion. Co-chair Roush interjects and states that he does not believe the Police Department addition falls into the scope of JLK’s evaluation. He clarifies that the addition that JLK refers to, throughout the discussion, is meant to take pressure off of Village Hall related activities and space constraints. Co-chair Lueck believes that the driver of the renovation discussion was the Police Department due to inadequate space for modern day policing.

Director Sproule clarifies that there is an acknowledgement by the Village Board that the lack of adequate space for the Police Department will need to be resolved one way or another. The Committee’s evaluation is not meant to be in absence of finding a solution for the Police Department but in addition to finding a solution. The Committee and JLK have been tasked to focus on the Village Hall component of the facility review in an effort to inform the Village Board on the feasibility of renovating the current space to meet the space needs identified by FGM.

Co-chair Lueck argues that an addition might best serve Police Department activities while also being beneficial to Village Hall activities by providing additional space or alleviating space constraints in the current building. Due to these potential impacts on Village Hall, Co-chair Lueck believes that the discussion of an addition should be part of the Committee's evaluation. Member Bassett-Dilley clarifies that if the Police Department stays in the Village Hall building and their current operational structure (Sally Port, ramps, etc.) is required then that will impact any proposed modifications to the South entrance of the building.

Member Wright also requests clarification on the plan for the Police Department following discussions at December's meeting and reviewing the driving factors of the Village Hall evaluation.

Member Blesoff polls the Committee and all Committee members in attendance unanimously agree that the Police Department cannot stay in its current location. Member Blesoff believes that we need to address a solution for the Police Department as a means of protecting the Village Hall facility.

Director Sproule reiterates that the purpose of the Facility Review Committee is to determine if the other needs of the Village Hall facility (outside of the Police Department) can be met within the existing structure while also maintaining the historic integrity of the building. He further acknowledges that the Village Board has already agreed that a standalone building to house some Police Department activities (approx. 35,000 to 40,000 square feet), potentially adjacent to the current Village Hall building, is necessary but separate from the evaluation that the Facility Review Committee has been tasked with. Director Sproule also states that the basement of Village Hall would still be utilized by the Police Department for back-of-house activities such as the firing range, records, and evidence retention. There would be potential for flexible space to be utilized by the Police Department and Village Hall for training activities.

Co-chair Roush emphasizes that his understanding is that the Police Department project is primary and that no one has lost sight of the Police Department needs. He believes that when the Committee has completed their evaluation and coalesced around a scheme, part of the Committee's recommendation to the Village Board could include mention of or illustration of a separate building that meets Police Department needs. Co-chair Roush's understanding is that a new Police Department building is still a primary goal for the Village Board.

Member Greffin inquires whether there is a solution that provides one addition where both Village Hall and Police Department activities could take place. As Member Greffin sees it, one structure could accommodate both sets of activities in the interest of efficiency and costs. Director Sproule agrees that what Member Greffin describes could be a beneficial solution. With that, he states that if space needs exist outside of what the current Village Hall facility can offer, the Committee can communicate that but does not need to concern themselves with what that addition looks like or the specific activities it houses.

Co-chair Lueck reiterates her original suggestion that the Committee recognize that there will be another building that will house the Police Department, and JLK has stated that there are specific standards that should be followed when building an addition on a historic building. Co-chair Lueck asks the Committee to consider the amount of square footage left on the site and whether that would provide enough space for the proposed Police Department addition, parking, and green space.

Member Blesoff believes that there is a symbiotic relationship between the existing Village Hall facility and the proposed Police Department addition that the Committee cannot ignore.

Member Onayemi states that if the Police Department ends up in a different structure, there would be a lot more flexibility for modifications in the area surrounding the South entrance.

Member Madigan asks if the green space is available for development. Co-chair Roush reiterates that development of the green space is not part of the scope of JLK's evaluation, but is perhaps something that the Committee can discuss. Meg Kindelin states that the green space was designed as a buffer between the Village Hall, its parking, and the residential homes to the South. Co-chair Roush refers to the historic drawings that has a dotted line illustration of a future structure located on the green space.

Director Sproule clarifies that, in terms of this exercise, the Committee needs to keep in mind that the basement will still be utilized for Police Department activities, and the balance of the needed space will be in a separate facility either on this site or elsewhere. The Committee needs to account for this throughout their evaluation of the schemes that JLK will present at the next meeting. Director Sproule states that the Committee, again for the purpose of this exercise, needs to be as conservative as possible, and to the best of their ability, accommodate the needs of the Police Department and Village Hall activities within the confines of the existing facility.

Co-chair Lueck redirects the conversation and attempts to summarize and close out the discussion for the evening. Co-chair Roush concludes that the public discourse about the Village Hall building has been characterized as negative, but appreciates the positive perspectives on the building provided by JLK and Committee members. He urges the Committee members and JLK to keep in mind that their sentiment towards the building is not widely shared, and that significant solutions for the building will be required to sway the public perspective.

5. Other/Old Business:

- a. February 21, 2024 at 6:30PM in Village Hall RM 101
- b. March 13, 2024 at 6:30PM in TBD location
 - i. Village staff has taken comments made regarding the location for this meeting into consideration and has plans to announce the decided location at the meeting on February 21, 2024.

6. Public Comment:

- a. Neither in person nor written public comment was received by the Committee.

1. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:28PM. Motion by Committee member Kolar, Seconded by Committee member Greffin. A voice vote was taken and the meeting was adjourned.