I. CALL TO ORDER

President Abu-Taleb called the meeting to order at 6:34 P.M.

II. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Trustees Brewer, Lueck, Ott and Salzman; President Abu-Taleb
ABSENT: Trustees Barber and Tucker

III. CONSIDERATION OF MOTION TO ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS
LITIGATION, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND REVIEW OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES IN
ROOM 130

It was moved by Trustee Brewer and seconded by Trustee Ott to enter into Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/(c)(11) – litigation; 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(2) – collective bargaining; and 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(21) – approval of minutes of meetings lawfully closed under the Open Meetings Act, in Room 130.

The roll call on the vote was as follows:
AYES: Trustees Brewer, Lueck, Ott and Salzman; President Abu-Taleb
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Trustees Barber and Tucker
The motion was approved.

IV. RETURN TO OPEN MEETING AT 8:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PRESENT: Trustees Barber, Brewer, Lueck, Ott and Salzman; President Abu-Taleb
ABSENT: Trustees Barber and Tucker

The Special Meeting reconvened at 8:00 P.M.

V. AGENDA APPROVAL

It was moved by Trustee Brewer and seconded by Trustee Ott to approve the agenda for the meeting. A voice vote was taken and the agenda was approved as presented.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Cuneen, 616 S. Harvey, representing Seven Generations Ahead. Mr. Cuneen stated that the Board’s decision to default to brown energy relinquished Oak Park's role as a green energy leader and was a blow to the community's forward-thinking leading-edge status. Choosing 100 percent renewable energy would have given residents a choice as well as reflect the Village's commitment to a fiscally wise, green and healthy energy future.
Celia Doyle, 165 N. Taylor. Miss Doyle, a 7th grade student at Percy Julian Middle School, asked that the Board continue to approve policies that will benefit young people with a bright and healthy future.

Ana Garcia Doyle, 165 N. Taylor, representing D97 Zero Waste Schools parent volunteers. Ms. Doyle thanked the Board for allowing informed citizens the choice of green energy and noted that the decision for brown energy as the default choice was not well supported. She urged residents to opt out to the green plan and asked the Board to adhere to the recommendations of staff, their consultant, the Environment and Energy Commission and residents.

McLouis Robinet, 214 S. Elmwood Ave. Mr. Robinet gave statistics regarding costs per kilowatt hour, adding that this issue is not just about numbers.

Nick Bridge, 1123 N. Kenilworth, representing the Environment and Energy Commission. Mr. Bridge noted that the major value of contracting for green power has been to maintain the demand for wind power. Because of the action taken last week, the only way the Village can contribute is by residents taking the time to sign up for the green option. He also spoke about former Sustainability Manager K.C. Doyle’s contributions and urged the Board to fill that position, which is currently vacant.

Erica Cuneen, 616 S. Harvey, representing Beyond Properties Realty. Ms. Cuneen stated that the Board's decision not to commit to 100 percent renewable energy undermines Oak Park's position as a regional leader and undercuts previous positive attention enhancing the Village’s appeal to potential Oak Parkers. The resulting negative high profile media attention from this does not help attract renters, homeowners and investors to Oak Park.

Gail Moran, 906 N. Taylor. Ms. Moran expressed her disagreement with the selection of a brown energy provider. She commended Village staff for finding a green provider, adding that she did sign up with that provider and gave instructions regarding the process.

James Dickert, 303 N. Oak Park Ave., #1C. Mr. Dickert noted that Oak Park was recognized for choosing green energy in a time when the world was desperate for solutions and governments were not acting. He expressed disappointment that the current Board has disregarded that action.

Bridgett Baron, 128 Francisco Terrace. Ms. Baron stated that her family has made many personal decisions in order to be green which were not determined by the Village Board. She expressed appreciation that they chose the least costly supplier as the default, as cost may be a factor to some residents whereas others may choose the more costly green option.

Jim Kelly, 1043 S. Harvey. Mr. Kelly spoke about the process he experienced in opting out to green energy, noting that it may only be done by phone. He encouraged others to opt out as well.

Pat McAnany, 732 S. East Ave. Mr. McAnany stated that there should have been more publicity regarding the aggregation prior to the Board’s decision.

Doug Burke, 910 Hayes. Mr. Burke indicated that Oak Park's social awareness and forward thinking were what brought him to the Village in 1988. With climate change currently a huge moral issue around the world, he was shocked that the Board decided to revert back to brown energy.
Adrian Fisher, 1031 S. Home, representing Oak Park Friends Meeting. Ms. Fisher, a sustainability professional, commended former Sustainability Manager K.C. Doyle. She noted that Oak Park was at the forefront of driving work to help the environment. It is a moral obligation to do whatever can be done to support sustainability.

Gordon Brumwell on behalf of Ginger Brown Vanderveer, 824 Woodbine. Mr. Brumwell stated that Ms. Vanderveer moved to Oak Park because of their environmental policies. She is willing to pay more for green energy in order for her children to have a safer planet on which to raise their children.

Linda Vasquez, 936 N. Humphrey Ave. Ms. Vasquez noted that the high taxes and other expenses required to live in the Village are outweighed by its leadership regarding environmental issues. She was distressed by the Board’s choice of brown energy; she would gladly pay more for green, as that is one of the reasons she lives in Oak Park.

John Troelstrup, 125 Francisco Terrace. Mr. Troelstrup disagreed with the Board’s decision; however, he respected their responsibility executed in debating it and bringing it about.

Doug Wyman, 1042 S. Scoville. Mr. Wyman, a senior, stated that $4 per month for green energy would not be a huge expense for him or other seniors. He added that his generation was responsible for diversity in the Village and electing Boards that would make decisions that were not only for the good of Oak Park but also for the good of the world. He asked that the Board rescind this decision.

Sheri Ard, 1439 N. Harlem. Ms. Ard noted that people in Oak Park want things that are pure for the environment and for their bodies. The decision made by the Board is not worth the difference in cost for green energy; residents would be willing to cut costs elsewhere.

Rev. Alan Taylor, 634 S. Cuyler, representing Unity Temple Congregation. Rev. Taylor was one of 17 religious leaders that signed a letter expressing disappointment in the decision that was made. He added that a core value of his congregation is caring for the earth.

Leah Fowler, 531 S. Grove Ave., representing First United Church. Ms. Fowler stated that an important part of this community has been its commitment to green lifestyles. The chance to opt in to green energy is going to be lost on many people; drastic measures needed to be taken to make it easier for people so more can participate towards having a better environment.

Krista Johnsen-Mikos, 1139 S. Lombard Ave. Ms. Johnsen-Mikos, a sustainability teacher at DePaul University, stated that the extra cost for green energy is not worth losing Oak Park’s green community and sustainability reputation. She spoke about the irreversible damage to the environment that has already affected the climate and urged residents to support sustainability.

Rebecca Keller, 306 S. Oak Park Ave. Ms. Keller was shocked and disappointed by the Board’s decision and that it is counterintuitive to what Oak Park should be, always has been and likes to think of itself as.

Ilhan Avcioglu, 530 S. Elmwood Ave. Mr. Avcioglu was extremely disappointed at the short-sited decision made by the Board. He believed that most people in the Village would be willing to spend an extra $4 or $5 per month to have the green option and hoped it's not too late to reverse this decision.
President Abu-Taleb spoke about how the Board came to their decision and suggested that this incident be a learning experience for the community and opportunity for education regarding sustainability. He announced that it is too late to reverse their decision, as the energy has already been contracted for. Staff will be working to educate residents with PR and a marketing campaign. He noted that he and other Board members are opting for green and are still committed to green energy and sustainability.

VII. MANAGER’S REPORT

A. Electric Aggregation Status Report

Village Manager Cara Pavlicek announced on behalf of Trustee Tucker that he was out of state and could not attend the meeting.

She stated that staff was able to successfully ask the new supplier, Constellation, to provide information about a green option in their notice regarding the aggregation program. This rate is lower than what the Village received through the competitive bidding process. However, residents do have the option to opt out from both Com Ed and Constellation and choose any green power offered through the Illinois Commerce Commission. There are currently some prices lower than the 7.5 cents that Constellation is offering for green. Village staff will begin distributing information through social media and handout materials to avoid confusion and help residents make an educated choice.

Village Manager Pavlicek added that traditionally, a high number of residents in comparable municipalities do not opt in. Therefore, public support is needed between now and the May 8 opt in – opt out deadline. Staff will also be working with several green-minded organizations in the community that have been proactive on this issue to help utilize their networks of residents to communicate this information.

She addressed the feedback from residents regarding the opt in process; unfortunately state law requires this be done by telephone or mail. In the coming months, the Board and staff will continue to look at ways to be responsive to all of the concerns they are hearing.

Trustee Lueck thanked Village Manager Pavlicek and her staff for the work they have done since the last meeting. As a result, residents now have the option of a green energy choice that is significantly less than the option they were looking at on April 11.

Trustee Salzman gave a summary of how the process this year led to the Board’s decision. He clarified that with Com Ed’s anticipated rate increase for transmission, the difference in residents’ bills would be more towards $15 to $20 per month, not $4 or $5. There was a lack of competitive bids; the Board had to make a decision or forfeit participating in aggregation entirely. He and his colleagues voted for the lowest price option, which was not ideal. Had Constellation offered a more cost-effective green option as part of their bid, he suspected the Board would have voted for it. He noted that this contract runs from May 2014 through May of 2015 and will be revisited then.

There was a brief discussion regarding plans on how the green option will be publicized.
ADJOURN

It was moved by Trustee Salzman and seconded by Trustee Ott to adjourn. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 P.M. Monday, April 21, 2014.

SUBMITTED AND RECORDED IN THE OFFICE OF:

By: MaryAnn Schoenneman
Deputy Village Clerk

Teresa Powell, Village Clerk