



# PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

**PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK  
Committee of the Whole Meeting  
John Hedges Administrative Center  
218 Madison Street, Oak Park, Illinois 60302**

**Thursday, March 7, 2024, 7:30pm**

## **AGENDA**

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

**II. Public Comment**

*Each person is limited to three minutes. The Board may set a limit on the total amount of time allocated to public comments.*

**III. Administration and Finance Committee – Commissioner Wick**

- A. FOPCON Annual Update
- B. Oak Park Conservatory Annual Report\*

**IV. Parks and Planning Committee – Commissioner Worley-Hood**

- A. Cheney Mansion Tuckpointing Contract Update\*
- B. Dole Center Window Replacement Contract Update\*
- C. Conservatory Historic Vestibule Restoration Contract Update\*

**V. Recreation and Facility Program Committee – Commissioner Lentz**

**VI. New Business**

**VII. Closed Session**

Motion to convene into closed session for the discussion of performance of a specific employee of the Park District.

**VIII. Adjournment**

\* Indicates information attached.

\*\* Indicates information to be provided before or at the meeting.

Update/Presentation indicates verbal report provided at meeting no materials attached.

The Park District of Oak Park welcomes the opportunity to assist residents and visitors with disabilities. If you need special accommodations for this meeting, please call (708) 725-2017 or via email at [Edith.Wood@pdop.org](mailto:Edith.Wood@pdop.org).

*In partnership with the community, we enrich lives by providing meaningful experiences through programs, parks, and facilities.*



# **Oak Park Conservatory Annual Report**

**Park District of Oak Park**

218 Madison Street ▪ Oak Park, Illinois 60302 ▪ ph: (708) 725-2000 ▪ fx: (708) 383-5702 ▪ [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)

# Memo

To: David Wick, Chair, Administration and Finance Committee  
Board of Park Commissioners

From: Patti Staley, Director of Horticulture/Oak Park Conservatory

CC: Jan Arnold, Executive Director

Date: February 22, 2023

Re: Oak Park Conservatory Annual Report

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## Statement

The Oak Park Conservatory has prepared the 2023 Facility Operations Report for the Oak Park Conservatory. During 2023, the Conservatory made many great strides in our parks and in our conservatory.

## Discussion

The 2023 Facility Operations Report for the Oak Park Conservatory highlights the strengths of the Conservatory's operations. This report is a synopsis of planning and significant changes that occurred in operations for the Conservatory and the parks. Impact of data presented in the report also demonstrates future growth and innovations with respect to revenue generation, expenses, education program offerings, visitation, and collaborations.

## Recommendation

The 2023 Facility Operations Report for the Oak Park Conservatory helps to demonstrate the value of the facility to the Park District of Oak Park system, the Village of Oak Park, and surrounding communities. Patti Staley will be present at the March 7, Committee of the Whole, to present a summarized version of the report and to answer any questions the Board may have.



**FACILITY OPERATIONS REPORT**

**January to December 2023**

**DRAFT**

**Prepared by:**

Patti Staley

Director of Horticulture/Conservatory Operations

Park District of Oak Park

February 2024

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## INTRODUCTION

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During 2023, the Conservatory served the community through our special events, programs, and plant sales. The Conservatory was open for 310 days in 2023. Conservatory staff focused on providing the utmost excellence in customer service to our patrons. The Conservatory and parks continue to be a respite for the public as well as bringing community together through nature.

With great sadness, the Conservatory and the public said goodbye to our long-lived Amazon parrot, George on August 26, 2023. George brought great joy to thousands of visitors, especially children. George was donated to the Oak Park Conservatory in the 1990's. While the true age of George was not known, avian veterinarians considered him to be a geriatric bird and one of the oldest in the Chicago area. The Conservatory honored George through inviting visitors to share their stories, pictures, and drawings after his passing.

In our parks, tree care was transitioned under the Conservatory's umbrella. Staff focused on trainings such as becoming familiar with ARC GIS, our management software for trees, and tree care techniques. Looking forward to 2024, additional trainings for staff are planned including arborist certification and safety training on chainsaw and chipper applications. Staff continue to focus landscape management efforts on highly visible areas in our parks. In 2023, a new horticulture supervisor directed staff in the management of our parks landscaped areas while the expertise of a native maintenance contractor managed the parks natural areas. Over 1,100 native plants and perennials were planted in higher impact areas to build healthy plant communities.

The Conservatory welcomed a new full-time union member in 2023, replacing a tenured employee. Shading and repair of Conservatory glass were outsourced to a professional greenhouse company. At the beginning of 2023, automation of all three showrooms with a new north side ventilation system was completed, after the restoration work was completed in the end of 2022. New side ventilation was added in the Tropical Room and was tied into the Conservatory's Micro Grow greenhouse automation system.

As the Conservatory celebrates its 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2024, staff are focused on maintaining and restoring this historical gem much loved by the community, while providing rich experiences and a place for our visitors to connect with nature. Restoration of the historic doorway entrance in the Tropical Room is planned alongside a capital campaign to be run by FOPCON. The Plant Help Desk at the Conservatory will return to give our community a place to ask plant questions and to learn and grow. We look forward to serving our community in the next year at the Conservatory and in our parks.

## VISITATION

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### Visitor Statistics

The Oak Park Conservatory welcomed 34,565 visitors in 2023. Visitor count has been on the rise since the pandemic in 2020. Our visitor count in 2023 increased 6% over 2022. Compared to prior to the pandemic (2019), the visitor count in 2023 was still down by 25%.

Conservatory staff and FOPCON work together to attract visitors from near and far to the Conservatory. The Conservatory was featured several times in the media this year, which helps bring awareness of this free facility to the public.

Special events have continued growing in 2023. A third night was added to the Conservatory's Candlelight Walk to accommodate sold-out nights. Additional weekends are being looked at for 2024 to accommodate wait lists for this annual holiday program. Fright at Night continues to be a popular event, in its 14<sup>th</sup> year. The Winter Seed Exchange, a free community event in its second year during the month of January, had 103 visitors. Plans to expand this event to accommodate its growing interest are underway for 2024.

FOPCON's annual plant sale, which moved online during the pandemic in 2020, is no longer reflected in our annual visitor count. The Spring Plant Sale historically contributed to a higher visitor count in May prior to 2020 over the 3-day period it was held. In addition, FOPCON's free adult lectures continue to be offered virtually versus in person prior to the pandemic. Virtual lectures have proven to be a welcomed convenience for patrons to attend, resulting in attendance of 60-100 people virtually as opposed to 25-30 people in person prior to the pandemic. FOPCON's virtual lectures are captured through our nature and gardening program participants in Amilia.

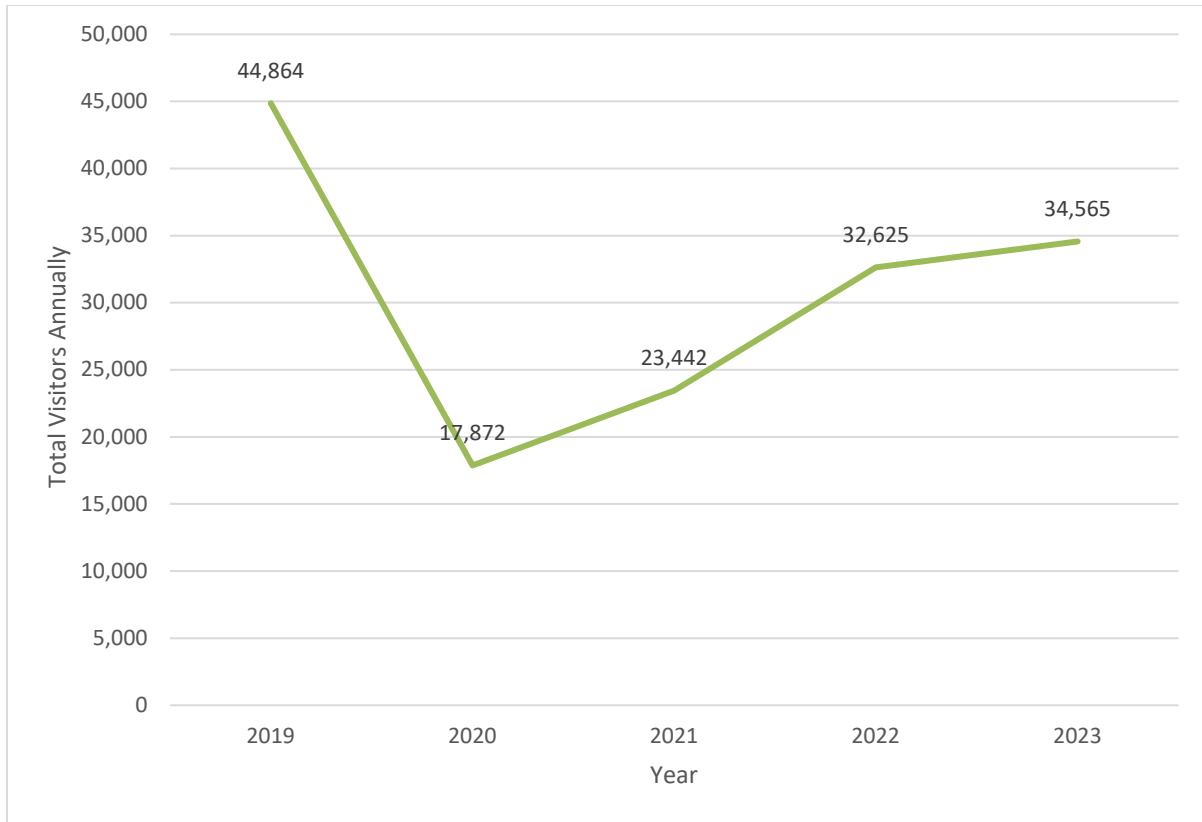
Reflecting on the years that had the highest visitor count at the Conservatory (2016-2019), that may have been a result of the addition of the Elsie Jacobsen Discovery Garden, opening late 2015. The first three years the garden was open, the summer months were some of our highest visitor counts in history. The garden was in its 8<sup>th</sup> full season in 2023 and while still a busy spot for children wanting to get their feet wet and explore the gardens, fewer visitors are seen as opposed to the first few years of opening, as to be expected. The Friends free Discovery Garden Exploration Time (DGET) program, held in the summer months, saw the highest count of visitors on those days that DGET was held in 2023 because of increased marketing efforts and word of mouth. Looking to the future, programming in the garden will be essential to its continued success engaging our visitors.

The Conservatory is open every day of the week except for Mondays and certain holidays. In 2023, the Conservatory was open to the public for 310 days. Fridays through Sundays continue to be our busiest days followed by days that FOPCON hosts free children's programming such as Story Time, Toddler Exploration Time, and Discovery Garden Exploration Time.

Year	Yearly Totals	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2018	45,026	2,410	2,055	4,038	3,660	5,145	4,894	4,541	3,893	4,557	2,977	3,762	3,094
2019	44,864	2,751	2,876	3,836	3,858	4,593	4,331	5,111	4,270	3,381	3,958	2,913	2,986
2020	17,872	3,061	3,523	3,630	0	0	76	2,104	2,450	998	1,492	438	100
2021	23,442	392	1,679	2,597	2,803	2,308	2,606	2,001	1,832	1,247	2,223	1,520	2,234
2022	32,625	1,556	2,255	3,311	2,755	2,254	2,825	3,443	3,372	2,463	3,498	2,694	2,199
2023	34,565	2,413	2,584	3,633	3,376	3,094	3,986	3,359	3,159	2,796	2,175	2,113	1,876







## FINANCIAL REPORT

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### Expenses Categories

The majority of the Conservatory's expenses are wages. Wages ran slightly lower than budget expectations for 2023 due to two vacant full-time positions for several months in the first quarter of the year. Part-time positions were filled most of the time during the year. In 2023, the Conservatory added two additional part-time IMRF Landscape Specialist positions to replace two seasonal positions to assist better with spring and fall cleanup and dormant winter pruning.

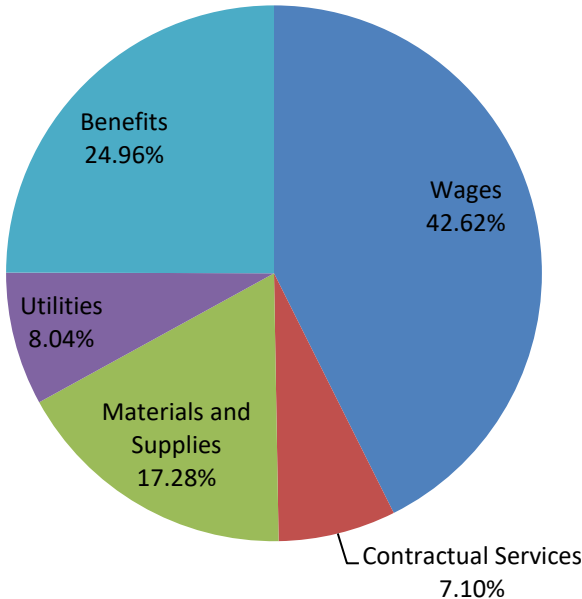
Contractual services were less than budgeted. Contractual services include monthly pest control, cleaning contract, alarm service, and miscellaneous repairs. This budget fluctuates from year to year based on repairs as needed.

Materials and supplies were below budget expectations yet increased 12% over 2022. The rising cost of goods and increase in sales from our plant markets has contributed to the rising costs of materials and supplies.

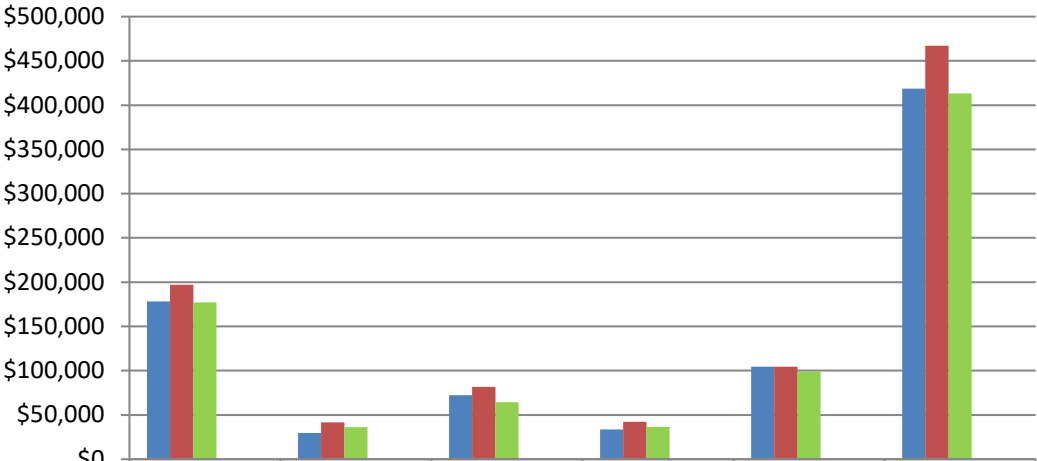
Utilities were down slightly from 2022 and below budgeted expectations. With installation of a drip irrigation system to grow certain crops, this has decreased water usage at the Conservatory.

Employee Health Insurance transfers ran in line with budgeted expectations because this is a direct transfer of funds that does not fluctuate throughout the year.

## 2023 Conservatory Expenses by Category



## Conservatory Expenses



	Wages	Contractual Services	Materials and Supplies	Utilities	Benefits	Total
2023 Actual	\$178,399	\$29,721	\$72,330	\$33,642	\$104,454	\$418,546
2023 Budget	\$197,042	\$41,529	\$81,807	\$42,250	\$104,454	\$467,082
2022 Actual	\$176,984	\$36,097	\$64,507	\$36,600	\$99,000	\$413,188
2023 Actual vs Budget	-9.46%	-28.43%	-11.58%	-20.37%	0.00%	-10.4%
2023 Actual vs 2022 Actual	0.80%	-17.66%	12.13%	-8.08%	5.51%	1.3%

## Revenue Sources

One of the main sources of revenue at the Conservatory is rentals. Rental revenue for 2023 returned to slightly above 2019 levels. The previous year in 2022, rental revenue was the highest on record at the Conservatory with over \$78,000 in revenue. Like the District's other historic properties, Cheney Mansion and Pleasant Home, 2022 experienced a large influx of rental customers coming out of the pandemic.

Birthday parties for children and private birthday rentals for adults were the largest bookings for rentals in 2023 followed by baby showers, weddings, memorials, and graduations. Saturday afternoons and evenings are the most popular rental times followed by Sunday afternoons. The average length for rentals in 2023 was 4 hours. Most rentals at the Conservatory book on average less than 3 months in advance, unlike Cheney Mansion and Pleasant Home.

Photo permits are also a small part of rental revenue. The Conservatory issued 22 photo permits to photographers. Photo permits are issued to not conflict with our daily visitors' enjoyment of the Conservatory and our private rentals.

35 children's birthday party packages were booked in 2023. Competition for the Rubinstein Room for private rental bookings impacts the amount of children's birthday party packages that can be booked.

The second largest source of revenue at the Conservatory has become the gift shop, despite the physical gift shop closing on March 20, 2020, due to the pandemic. The gift shop space has been converted to the receptionist office and an online order pick up holding area for our popular plant sales. The Conservatory has shifted all gift shop revenue to a combination of online and in-person plant sales. Throughout the year, the Conservatory hosts a range of specialty plant sales for the public, often coupled with free nature and gardening lectures. In addition, the Conservatory has a plant cart in the lobby selling various plants grown at the Conservatory throughout the year. The following is a list of plant markets and their revenue.

**Valentine's Market, \$3,350**

**Fall Mum & Bulb Sale, \$9,202**

**Mother's Day Teacup Garden Kits, \$1,225**

**Winter Greens Market, \$27,718**

**Pollinator Perennial Sale, \$2,940**

**Plant Cart Sales, \$ 8,202**

**Succulent & Cacti Sale, \$1,100**

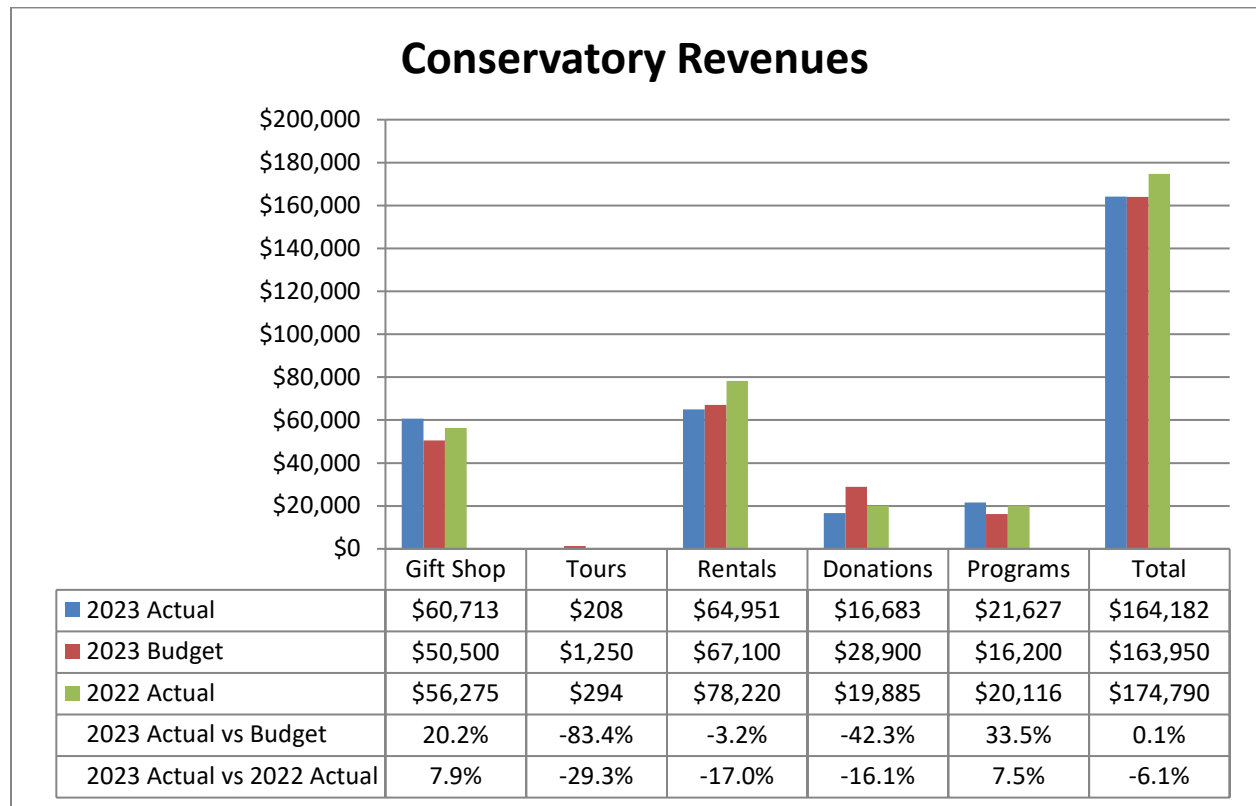
**Winter Seed Sale & Misc., \$6,771**

In addition to their source of revenue, plant sales attract new visitors to the Conservatory looking for a local source of plants. Holding these sales scattered throughout the year helps to keep our visitors engaged year-round with the Conservatory. The pollinator plant sale helps to promote using beneficial plants not only in our parks but also in home gardens to support pollinators. Proceeds from this sale cover the cost of over 1,100 native plants and perennials planted in our parks by Conservatory staff in 2023. For the fourth year, Dombrowski's Christmas Tree Farm sold trees out of the Rehm Pool parking lot while the Conservatory sold wreaths, garland, swags, winter container arrangements, and fresh cut greens to coincide with the Christmas tree sales.

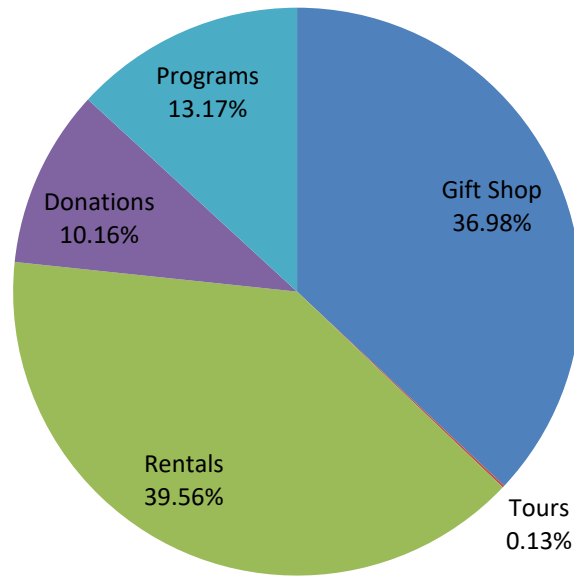
Donations ran below budgeted expectations. FOPCON contributions are a portion of this budget line. 12% of FOPCON’s revenue dedicated to the Conservatory is a part of this budget. While the monies from the budget are earmarked for the Conservatory in FOPCON’s budget, the money has not been requested for a special project at this time. This budget line also includes donations at the door which ran slightly above budgeted expectations. The Daffodil Memorial program had two donations with \$500 in revenue in 2023. The Adopt a Parrot program had eight adoptions with \$520 in revenue.

Tours at the Conservatory are coordinated and facilitated by FOPCON staff and volunteers. Historically, tour revenue has been paid directly to the Park District. In 2023, the decision to move monies generated from tours to FOPCON was implemented. FOPCON holds a strong tour program that is offered to those of all ages and abilities. In 2023, 53 docent-led tours were offered to 1,061 people.

Programs saw an increase in budgeted expectations due to an increase in special event attendance. Most events such as Fright at Night and Candlelight Walk were nearly sold out. Additional programs were added to include take and make type programs centered around the Winter Greens Market. FOPCON’s Uncorked is included in the budget line. This ticketed event is collected by the Park District with funds given back to FOPCON.



## 2023 Conservatory Revenues by Category



### COLLABORATIONS

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#### Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (Friends or FOPCON)

The primary collaboration for the Oak Park Conservatory is its partnership with the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory. For the past 36 years, the Friends have been promoting the Conservatory and supporting programs through their educational outreach, volunteer coordination, and direct financial support. During 2023, the Friends continued to make great strides connecting with and expanding their donor contributions as well as providing programming and volunteer support at the Conservatory. The Friends' annual plant sale was conducted at the Conservatory by the Park District & FOPCON. Conservatory staff grew over 9,578 plants for sale with help of volunteers. Sales included 621 orders, grossing \$50,050 in revenue with a \$34,248 net.

#### Friends Cash Contributions

Friends provided direct financial contributions to the Conservatory during 2023. In addition to the financial contributions in 2023, the Friends have earmarked 12% of their revenue for the Conservatory as part of their PACT agreement with the park district (FOPCON's fiscal year runs October 1st – September 30<sup>th</sup>). \$17,041 from revenue generated through FOPCON has been dedicated in FOPCON's budget for park district to request for special projects that benefit the Conservatory in the future. No requests have been made at this time.

Financial contributions that were made in 2023 included:

- \$1,878.50 Fall Fest Sponsorship
- \$3,079 Mediterranean Room planters & plants (part of \$7,000 grant from 2022 for showrooms)
- \$2,832 direct reimbursement cost for beneficial bio controls for plant sale growing
- \$4,526 for 50% of the shared cost of the copier lease agreement for fiscal years 2022 & 2023

### Friends Volunteer Contributions

Friends provided over 4,447 volunteer hours in the areas of plant care, education, special events, operations, and committee work, the equivalent of almost 2 ½ FTEs. This was an increase of 21% over 2022. There was an increase in docents in 2023 due to the demand for tours returning to a pre-covid level that contributed to the increase in volunteer hours.

### Friends Partnership

The Director of Horticulture, Friends Executive Director, Friends President, and office staff work closely together to support each entity's strategic and departmental goals. The two partners worked closely together in 2023 to identify areas to serve the public in person and through continued successful virtual nature and gardening lectures. This is a partnership that can offer so much to the public through dedicated staff and volunteers. Volunteers are the key to supporting many of our programs. May 1st, 2022, the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory and the Park District of Oak Park renewed a three-year PACT agreement. The main updates occur under Section 8 which identifies a percentage of the funds raised by FOPCON to support the Conservatory beginning in fiscal year 2023 (October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023). . Fall Fest sponsorship is not included in the 12% monies identified for the Conservatory but was a separate request that was approved in 2023 by FOPCON. The PACT agreement also includes a commitment from FOPCON to support capital campaigns that benefit the Conservatory. Looking forward to 2024, FOPCON will be helping to run a capital campaign for the restoration of the Historic Door entrance in the Tropical Room with support from the park district.

## **PROGRAMS & SPECIAL EVENTS**

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In 2023, the Conservatory and FOPCON hosted virtual programming and in-person events and programming to serve our public and attract new visitors to the Conservatory. Over 3,800 program registrations were processed for Conservatory programs through Amilia. New programs were added to include a new natural area guided tour at the Taylor Park Wetland. In 2024, four new free natural areas guided tours are planned with ESAC docents to help bring recognition to these special habitats in our parks. A new Bilingual Story Time was offered once a month, which continues to grow. The following is the number of participants that took part in our registered and drop-in programs and special events in 2023:

- KidsFest 432
- Story Time – over 600
- Toddler Exploration Time – 447
- Discovery Garden Exploration Time – 639
- Uncorked – 381
- Spring and Fall Plant and Tools Exchange – 88
- Fall Fest – estimated 1,000
- Fright at Night – 764
- Candlelight Walk – 469
- Over 150 letters to Santa
- 9 Free nature and gardening programs -632
- 2 Take and Make Winter Wreaths & Containers fee-based programs - 35
- Quick Sketch Garden Design for 25 homes served
- 53 Tours with over 1,000 people

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

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Staff at the Oak Park Conservatory focus on providing a memorable experience for visitors in our parks and at the Conservatory. Our role is two-fold, overseeing operations at the Conservatory and the landscape management & trees in our 25 parks and facilities. Each staff member understands and practices the customer service standards of the Park District of Oak Park and does their best to make each visitor's time at the Conservatory a memorable experience. Sustainability is one of our key values that staff help to lead the charge on for our District.

The Conservatory is staffed by a series of full, part-time, and seasonal employees including: four full-time employees: Director of Horticulture, Horticulture Supervisor, Greenhouse Supervisor, and Landscape Technician; and part-time employees: one Receptionist, one Rental & Facility Coordinator, four IMRF Landscape Specialists, one Bird & Fish Caretaker, and two Rental Attendants. During the summer months, the Conservatory employed two additional seasonal staff used to assist the regular full and part-time staff with landscape maintenance needs in the parks. In 2023, two additional part-time IMRF positions in place of two seasonal positions were added to better support the beginning of the spring season as well as late fall cleanup in the parks and dormant winter pruning.

Each employee during 2023 either received or maintained their CPR/AED and First Aid certifications, alongside other mandated trainings including PDRMA's sexual harassment training

and mandated reporter training. Conservatory Director and Supervisors also participate as members of the Sustainability Committee, Innovation Committee, DEI Committee, and Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee.

Following are staff development and achievement highlights from 2023:

- Conservatory Director (Patti Staley)
  - Oversaw operations of Conservatory & Landscape Park Maintenance in our parks
  - Oversaw landscape maintenance at the district's natural areas: Lindberg, Austin Gardens, Field Park, and Taylor wetland performed by staff in house
  - Collaborated weekly with the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory on special events and programming
  - Managed fiscal year 2023 Conservatory Budget
  - Organized and implemented special events at the Conservatory including Fall Fest, Fright at Night, Candlelight Walk, Winter Greens Market, Valentine Market, Succulent & Cacti Sale, and the Mum & Bulb Sale
  - PDOP liaison to the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee
  - Committee chair of the staff Sustainability Committee
- Horticulture Supervisor (Jen Suszek)
  - Oversaw landscape maintenance of all park and facility planting beds and tree care
  - Oversaw the Memorial Tree Program
  - Assisted in overseeing special Conservatory events
  - Obtained Illinois Pesticide Applicators License
  - Obtained 10-Hour OSHA training
  - Attended PDRMA Help, Essentials of Human Resources
  - Member of the PDOP Sustainability Committee
- Greenhouse Supervisor (Dusan Lepojevic)
  - Oversaw care of the Conservatory collection and production greenhouses
  - Assisted overseeing special events at the Conservatory
  - Assisted in overseeing plant markets at the Conservatory
  - Oversaw plant care volunteers
  - Oversaw the Cheney Gardens volunteer group growing 464 lbs. of produce donated to local food bank



- Member of the DEI Committee
- Conservatory Technician (Sean Larsen)
  - Obtained Illinois Pesticide Applicators License
  - Cared for our parks' natural areas and landscapes
  - Obtained CDL license
  - Assisted in fall tree planting in our parks
  - Member of the Innovation Committee
- Landscape Technicians (Jacy Highbarger and Dean Horkavy)
  - Cared for our parks' natural areas and landscapes
  - Assisted with weekend watering and care of the Conservatory collection
  - Assisted with the Winter Greens Market and special events
  - Participated in employee trainings including tree care and pruning
- Customer service: Receptionist (Melanie Holmes) and Rental & Facility Coordinator (Heather Jensen)
  - Maintained daily visitor log
  - Coordinated and oversaw 61 rentals, 35 birthday parties, and 22 photography permits
  - Oversaw Adopt a Parrot & Daffodil Memorial Program
  - Greeted over 34,000 visitors at the Conservatory
- Bird & Animal Caretaker (Chris Denne)
  - Maintained clean and healthy living environment for birds and other animals in the Conservatory
  - Advised on the purchase of appropriate bird and fish feed, as well as toys
  - Helped to create a memorial for the public for George, the parrot

## **FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

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The following facility improvements were completed at the Oak Park Conservatory in 2023:

- Automation of the Tropical Room north side vent, making this house a fully automated house.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

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The following sustainability achievements occurred at the Oak Park Conservatory in 2023:

- Solar Production: 24,200 MWh, which is equivalent to planting 290 trees. The Conservatory solar field provides about 28% of the building's electrical usage
- FOPCON volunteers weekly sanitized plastic plant containers for reuse
- FOPCON hosted two seasonal plant and tool exchanges with a collection for plastic containers that are sanitized and reused at the Conservatory
- Grew and installed over 1,100 natives and perennials to build healthy plant communities in our parks
- Gave out 200 milkweed seedlings to the community during National Pollinator Week
- Installation of drip irrigation system for growing mums & poinsettias
- Sustainability committee members provided staff 4 sustainability lunch and learns
- Replaced 15% single-use plastic pots to Cow Pots (100% renewable & recyclable USDA certified biodegradable pot) for the FOPCON plant sale

## **INNOVATIONS**

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The following new events, programs, practices, and innovations occurred at the Oak Park Conservatory in 2023:

- Cheney Mansion garden volunteer group donated 452 hours of time and 464 pounds of produce to the local food pantry
- Tree Care for the district's trees moved under the management of the Conservatory department
- Trained staff on Arc GIS
- The Conservatory's pollinator plant sale was held in June. Over 1,100 pollinator plants were grown at the Conservatory for sale and our parks. Sales from the pollinator plant sale offset total costs for natives and perennials plants that are being planted across our parks this year.

- Adopt a Parrot program launched
- New Conservatory website designed by the Marketing Department
- Ventilation system improved in the showrooms as part of the capital north wall restoration project
- New Free Winter Seed Exchange Community event
- Over 1,000 daffodils planted in the parks

## **LOOKING FORWARD – 2024**

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In 2024, the Conservatory will be celebrating its 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. Implementation of innovations and sustainability initiatives is well underway and expected to have a positive impact on how we serve the community.

The following are projects, initiatives, and procedural improvements that the Oak Park Conservatory will be investigating, evaluating, and implementing in 2024:

- New team member to become ISA certified arborist
- Offer four tours of our parks' natural areas by trained docents from the Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee
- Historic Home and Garden Tour relaunch
- Expanded take and make type programs around the Winter Greens Market
- Reinstallation of the Plant Help Desk weekly at the Conservatory
- Increase volunteer hours by 10% offering two new volunteer opportunities
- Redesign and installation of the plantings at Cheney Gardens Southeast property
- Offering Oak Park Conservatory branded merchandise to visitors to increase the visibility of the Conservatory
- Restoration of the Historic Door Entrance in the Tropical Room and portico in the Desert Room



# **Cheney Mansion Tuckpointing Contract Update**

**Park District of Oak Park**

218 Madison Street ▪ Oak Park, Illinois 60302 ▪ ph: (708) 725-2000 ▪ fx: (708) 383-5702 ▪ [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)

# Memo

To: Jake Worley-Hood, Chair, Parks and Planning Committee  
Board of Park Commissioners

From: Chris Lindgren, Superintendent of Parks & Planning

CC: Jan Arnold, Executive Director

Date: February 26, 2024

Re: Cheney Mansion Tuckpointing Contract

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## Statement

Cheney Mansion, designed in 1913 by Charles E. White, Jr., has been a historical property of the Park District of Oak Park (PDOP) since 1975. The mansion is a unique venue for recreation programs, special activities and community events for the enjoyment of Oak Park residents and a distinctive locale for private meetings and celebrations. The greenhouse was built in 1914 and renovated in 2014.

## Discussion

In 2017, PDOP engaged Rocco Castellano Design Studio (RCDS) to assist with the historic property facility assessments. This report is a document to help the District in planning for infrastructural needs at our historic properties in our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Staff identified tuckpointing as a need in our 2024 CIP with work needed on all sides of the home. Also, some fencing work is needed on the alley to repair the failing wood panels and concrete posts. This will also be bid out this spring.

Staff put together bidding specifications and went out to bid on January 30th, 2024. A non-mandatory pre-bid meeting was held on February 8 & 9 with eight contractors in attendance. Public bids were received on February 23 by five different firms with amounts varying from \$148,500 to \$499,110. Staff are reviewing the bidding documents and will check references on the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

The current Capital Improvement Plan has \$200,000 for the work in 2024.

## Recommendation

The Parks and Planning Committee will bring a recommendation to the Park Board of Commissioners for a contract approval at the March 21 Regular Board Meeting.



# **Dole Center Window Replacement Contract Update**

**Park District of Oak Park**

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## Statement

Dole Learning Center was built in 1926, and donated to the Village of Oak Park (VOP) in 1939, by Andrew and Mary Dole, who also owned Cheney Mansion. The Village used it as a library branch for several decades and added recreational programming in the late 1970s. Dole Center underwent a major renovation in 2002, which made the building ADA accessible. On June 1, 2019, the Park District of Oak Park became the owners of the Dole Center located at 255 Augusta Street. The Park District and Oak Park Public Library have an intergovernmental agreement for the Library's usage of the facility. When the Park District took over the Dole Center, there was significant deferred maintenance and we have committed capital funding to address these maintenance issues for the long term. In 2022, we performed tuckpointing and flashing repairs to the center on two façade's and budgeted for the other 2 façade's in 2024.

## Discussion

The Park District has allocated \$350,000 in our 2024 CIP for repairs and upgrades to the Dole Center. Staff have compiled a prioritized list and a schedule for the work needed; part of the list of repairs requires tuck-pointing to be completed on the building along with window replacement. Window size, shape, color, mullions to match existing windows with new windows meeting Energy Star requirements with an alternate price for triple glazed. This project went out to bid on January 31, 2024, with a pre-bid meeting held on February 13th. Four firms attended the non-mandatory pre-bid meeting and one bid was received on February 22nd, 2024. McCann Windows was the sole bidder at \$247,000 for the window replacement which is within our budgeted amount. Staff are checking on references for McCann Windows.

## Recommendation

The Parks and Planning Committee will bring a recommendation to the Park Board of Commissioners for a contract approval at the March 21 Regular Board Meeting.



# **Conservatory Historic Vestibule Restoration Contract Update**

**Park District of Oak Park**

218 Madison Street ▪ Oak Park, Illinois 60302 ▪ ph: (708) 725-2000 ▪ fx: (708) 383-5702 ▪ [www.pdop.org](http://www.pdop.org)



# Memo

To: Jake Worley-Hood, Chair, Parks and Planning Committee  
Board of Park Commissioners

From: Chris Lindgren, Superintendent of Parks & Planning

CC: Jan Arnold, Executive Director

Date: February 26, 2024

Re: Oak Park Conservatory Historic Vestibule Restoration Contract Update



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## Statement

In 1970, a drive to preserve the Conservatory occurred to save this unique resource due to significant facility needs. In 1986, the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON) were incorporated to provide fundraising, educational programs, and other volunteer support. In June of 2000, the Conservatory Center addition was opened to provide expanded space and facilities for educational programming, operations, and public events. In 2004, the Oak Park Conservatory was designated an Oak Park landmark, and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005.

## Discussion

This Nationally Historic Conservatory is showing its age and is due for repairs to the north historic vestibule. The metal framing and doors are failing and leaking badly and not able to be repaired. Any of the existing materials will be salvaged and restored if possible and new components will be made to match original details. The north wall and vents were replaced/repared in 2022.

The Park District engaged Prospiant earlier this year to review the greenhouse and provide bid specs and drawings for recommended repairs. This firm specializes in historic greenhouses and has the experience required for making these specific repairs needed to ensure structural and operational guidelines are met.

The District went out to bid on January 30, 2024. We held a non-mandatory pre-bid meeting on February 13 with two firms in attendance. The bid opening was on February 21 with only one bid. The bidder was Prospiant, Inc. with whom we have successful experience with on the previous North Wall Restoration Project in 2022. Their bid total for the work is \$225,000, which falls into our budgeted amount. There is \$180,000 budgeted in the Museum Fund and \$280,000 in our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for this work.

## Recommendation

The Parks and Planning Committee will bring a recommendation to the Park Board of Commissioners for a contract approval at the March 21 Regular Board Meeting.