

## **Oak Park on Upswing: Needs Citizens to Pitch In**

Within the business community of Oak Park, many investments have occurred during the past year or so: the expansions of Maya del Sol, Marion Street Cheese Market, and The Book Table; the opening of three new businesses on Marion Street; the opening of Trattoria 225 and Fitness Formula Club; the re-opening of Cucino Paradiso; and the re-modeling of Papaspiros. Within the next year we should see the much-anticipated Trader Joe's opening, changes at Forest & Lake, the building of the Soho residences, and various Madison, North Avenue, and Harrison Street developments. In addition, many of us are putting in monies to upgrade our commercial buildings to not only create a better place for our employees, but to restore some very attractive historic buildings.

One of the keys in moving our business community along (both retail and commercial), is to have a village board that has the vision and passion to see the value of development, and how that development provides not only better services and lifestyles for our community, but a significant tax base for all.

I want to personally thank the current Village Board of Trustees for their many hours spent in study, planning, listening, and discussing the various options that will be the greatest benefit to our community. With over 30 business building vacancies, the current economic climate, and the shortage of \$1.3 million in tax revenues (versus forecast), we must continue to have a strong, broad-minded, supportive Village Board of Trustees.

As a "large" cheerleader for Oak Park, a board member of the Village Manager Association (VMA), and a local business person, I want to personally encourage many of you who are "on the fence" about local government to participate in our VMA Selection process. Whether you are interested in running for one of the five positions open next year, or are interested in joining the Selection Committee (a group of citizens like yourself who will help interview applicants starting in early September for the open positions, and will choose the best candidates to run for Village President, Clerk, and Trustee with VMA endorsement), you can learn more by coming to our Marion Street Cheese Market Event on Tuesday, August 26th beginning at 7:00 pm. You can also contact Bob Tucker via [www.vma-oakpark.org/selections.html](http://www.vma-oakpark.org/selections.html) or [rvsbtucker@comcast.net](mailto:rvsbtucker@comcast.net).

Volunteering for the VMA Selection process could be a very rewarding experience for you....and also very important for our great community.

Sincerely,

Paul Beckwith  
VMA Board Member  
2007 Dominican "Entrepreneur of the Year"  
President of The Sachem Company