

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR RESCHEDULED MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK**

MEETING DATE: December 15, 2025

MEETING LOCATION: City Hall
1707 St Johns Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035

I. Call to Order

At 8:03 PM, Mayor Rotering called the meeting to order and asked for a roll call:

II. Roll Call

Present: Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia (Remote), Lidawer, Blumberg

Absent: None

Staff Present: City Manager Neukirch, Director of Public Works Bannon, Community Development Director Fontane, Assistant City Manager Jason, Assistant City Manager Taub, Deputy Fire Chief Brennan, Deputy Finance Director Lukasik, Commander Curran, Communications Manager Bennett, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska

Also Present: Corporation Counsel Elrod

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council Held on November 24, 2025

B. Approval of the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Regular Meeting of the City Council on November 24, 2025

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council Held on November 24, 2025. Councilmember Blumberg seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Lidawer
SECONDER:	Councilmember Blumberg
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

V. Approval of Warrant List

- A. Warrant List and Wire Transfers from November 14, 2025 to December 03, 2025.
Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve the Warrant List. Councilmember Lidawer seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Blumberg
SECONDER:	Councilmember Lidawer
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

VI. Report of Mayor

Mayor Rotering provided remarks of grief following the tragic shootings this past weekend at Brown University in Rhode Island and Bondi Beach in Australia. She requested a moment of silence.

A. Appointments

Mayor Rotering noted that the City has 17 Advisory Groups, Boards and Commissions. She explained that the slate of Advisors will be presented as part of tonight's omnibus agenda as items 8 and 9. She thanked everyone who has volunteered to serve the community.

B. Other Business

Mayor Rotering provided comments on her trip to New Orleans to accept an award on behalf of the City of Highland Park at the North American Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism.

Mayor Rotering provided information as to collection boxes that are available at City Hall and the Public Services Center for unopened and unexpired food and household essential items. She provided information regarding the coat drive that is taking place as the Fire Department. She also provided information on this year's Shop with a Cop Drive.

VII. Business from the Council

Councilmember Center, echoed by the full Council, thanked Public Works Director Bannon and staff regarding the snow operations that were provided by the Public Works team.

VIII. Business from City Staff

City Manager Neukirch provided a year-end report on City staff's 2025 major projects. She noted that a presentation will be given on the 2026 major projects in January . She also reviewed the City's Snow & Ice Control Plan.

IX. Business from the Public (Individuals wishing to be heard regarding items not listed on this agenda)

Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska provided opening remarks for Business from the Public.

Carl Lambrecht, Highland Park resident, noted that tonight is the second day of Hanukkah and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

X. Omnibus

Mayor Rotering noted that items 3, 4, 6, 8, & 9 were being pulled from omnibus vote consideration.

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve items 1-2, 5, 7, and 10-28 by omnibus vote consideration. Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Lidawer
SECONDER:	Councilmember Bruckman
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

Administration

1. Adoption of a Resolution (R150-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving a Third Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement with Scott Levenfeld”.
2. Adoption of an Ordinance (O64-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Amending Section 38.005 of "The Highland Park Code of 1968", as Amended, Regarding Hearing Officers”.
5. Adoption of a Resolution (R151-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution entering into a Food & Beverage Interior Improvement Grant for Bandido Inc. d/b/a Tamales Mexican Joint (493 Central Ave)”.
7. Adoption of an Ordinance (O65-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Approving the Compensation Plan for City Employees During the Periods of January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025 and January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026”.

10. Adoption of a Resolution (R152-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving an Addendum to the Agreement with Special Project Staffing by Salem, Inc. d/b/a The Salem Group, of Chicago, Illinois, for Temporary Personnel Services”.
11. Adoption of a Resolution (R153-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Repealing Resolution No. R121-2025 and Approving the Regular Committee of the Whole and City Council Meeting Schedule for 2026”.

Finance

12. Adoption of an Ordinance (O66-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Providing for the Levy of Taxes for the City of Highland Park, a Home Rule Municipality, County of Lake, State of Illinois, for Tax Year 2025 and Collected in Fiscal Year 2026”.
13. Adoption of a Resolution (R154-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the City’s Liability, Property, and Workers Compensation Insurance Package for the Policy Period of January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2026”.
14. Adoption of a Resolution (R155-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Adopting and Approving Amended Agreements Related to 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plans with Consultants”.
15. Adoption of an Ordinance (O67-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of “The Highland Park Code of 1968,” as amended, Regarding Low- and Moderate-Income Rates”.

Public Works

16. Adoption of a Resolution (R156-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Municipal Partner Initiative (MPI) Contract for Custodial Services to Advanced Cleaning Systems, Co. of East Dundee, Illinois”.
17. Adoption of a Resolution (R157-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Award of the 2026 Unit Price Water Treatment Chemicals Purchase Contracts to Carus LLC., of Peru, Illinois; Hawkins Inc., of Roseville, Minnesota; and Univar Solutions USA, LLC., of Tempe, Arizona”.
18. Adoption of a Resolution (R158-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the City’s General Liability, Automobile, and Umbrella Insurance for Vendor-owned Buses Used for Public Transit within the City for the Policy Period of January 1, 2026 to January 1, 2027”.
19. Adoption of a Resolution (R159-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Purchase of a Model 900 Sewer Freightliner through the Sourcewell Purchasing Cooperative”.

Community Development

20. Adoption of an Ordinance (O68-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Development (250 Skokie Valley Road)”.
21. Adoption of a Resolution (R160-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving a Development Agreement (250 Skokie Valley Road)”.
22. Adoption of an Ordinance (O69-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Waiving the Formal Bidding Requirements of the City’s Purchasing Manual and Approving a Renewal of an Agreement for the Provision of Elevator Plan Review and Inspection Services”.
23. Adoption of a Resolution (R161-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving an Elevator Safety Program Agreement with the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal”.
24. Adoption of a Resolution (R162-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Authorizing A Professional Services Agreement for Structural Plan Review and Inspection Services”.
25. Adoption of a Resolution (R163-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving a Plat of Consolidation (932 and 942 Deerfield Road)”.
26. Adoption of an Ordinance (O70-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Development (932 and 942 Deerfield Road)”.

Public Safety

27. Adoption of a Resolution (R164-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Purchase of Vehicles from Sutton Ford, of Matteson, Illinois”.
28. Adoption of a Resolution (R165-2025) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Waiving the Formal Bidding Requirements of the City's Purchasing Manual and Ratifying the Procurement of Vehicle Repair Services for a Fire Engine”.

XI. Items Removed From Omnibus Vote Consideration

3. Adoption of a Resolution (R166-2025) titled, “A Resolution entering into an Exterior Improvement Grant for Matchmaker Bookshop LLC (1891 Second St)”.

Councilmember Lidawer stated that she is supportive of the Exterior Grants program and is thrilled about this particular one. She noted there are guidelines that are provided to the businesses but for this particular request, there was no competitive bidding for the project. She stated that the City should not be encouraging businesses to apply for grants if guidelines are not being followed. She requested more information as to whether the business owner would go out and get competitive bids now or not.

City Manager Neukirch noted that the requirements for applicants require they obtain at least two bids. She explained that this business is doing a substantial amount of work beyond the scope of eligible incentive items. She noted that and their contractor began work before the application was submitted and believed ~~folded~~ completing all one under one –additional grant work into the total project contract would be cheaperless expensive. She noted that the guidelines are being communicated to all businesses, with the understanding that the competitive bidding requirement was not complied with by this business.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve a Resolution Entering into an Exterior Improvement Grant for Matchmaker Bookshop LLC (1891 Second Street). Councilmember Center seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Blumberg
SECONDER:	Councilmember Center
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

4. Adoption of a Resolution (R167-2025) titled, “A Resolution entering into an Exterior Improvement Grant for CRG Ravinia LLC (565 Roger Williams Ave)”.
6. Adoption of a Resolution (R168-2025) titled, “A Resolution entering into a Food & Beverage Interior Improvement Grant for CRG RAVINIA LLC (565 Roger Williams)”.

Councilmember Bruckman requested information as to a status update regarding the CRG proposal.

City Manager Neukirch provided an update. She explained that the grant funds sought are reimbursable after all work was completed, and funds would not be issued at the onset of the execution of the lease, and would only be for the location on Roger Williams.

The Council and City Manager Neukirch discussed the funds being directly tied to CRG, the balance of the fund historically, the parameters as to how the funds can be issued to a business, concerns about holding the funds for a particular business that would not allow other businesses funding opportunities, and how the funds are fungible. They discussed concerns about providing funds to private entities and how CRG was willing to come to Highland Park prior to the knowledge that funds were available. They discussed their excitement surrounding this project and anticipation of an opening date.

Councilmember Tapia moved to approve a Resolution Entering Into an Exterior Improvement Grant for CRG Ravinia LLC and a Resolution Entering Into a Food & Beverage Interior Improvement Grant for CRG Ravinia (565 Roger Williams).

Councilmember Center seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed (4 - 3).

MOVER:	Councilmember Tapia
SECONDER:	Councilmember Center
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Ross, Tapia
NAYS:	Councilmembers Bruckman, Lidawer, Blumberg

8. Adoption of an Ordinance (O71-2025) titled, "An Ordinance Waiving Enforcement of Sections 33.001 and 33.005 of "The Highland Park Code of 1968," as amended, Concerning Appointments to Various Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Groups
 Councilmember Lidawer voiced her appreciation for the volunteers wanting to participate and for the Council and staff's work to put together appointments. She noted that there are parameters in place as indicated by the City Code and she would not support this item.

Mayor Rotering noted that the City is following the parameters and in minor situations there are exceptions being made to allow for an extra year for a Chair or Vice Chair.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve an Ordinance Waiving Enforcement of Sections 33.001 and 33.005 of "The Highland Park Code of 1968", as Amended, Concerning Appointments to Various Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Groups. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (6 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Blumberg
SECONDER:	Councilmember Ross
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Blumberg
NAYS:	None
PRESENT:	Councilmember Lidawer

9. City Advisory Group, Board, and Commission Appointments, Reappointments for Scheduled Vacancies and Appointments to Chair and Vice Chair with Terms beginning in 2026

Mayor Rotering presented the slate of volunteers for the City's 17 Boards, Commissions and Advisory Groups.

A majority of the Council was in consensus with the recommendations.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve the City's Advisory Group, Board and Commission Appointments, Reappointments for Scheduled Vacancies and Appointments to Chair and Vice Chair with Terms beginning in 2026.

Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (6 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Blumberg
SECONDER:	Councilmember Bruckman
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Blumberg
NAYS:	None
PRESENT:	Councilmember Lidawer

XII. Other Business

A. Adoption of a Resolution (R169-2025) titled, “Resolution Approving Plat of Resubdivision (1632, 1640, and 1646 Second Street)”.

B. Adoption of an Ordinance (O72-2025) titled, “An Ordinance Granting a Special Use Permit for a Planned Development and Approving an Inclusionary Housing Plan (1632-1646 Second St PUD)”.

C. Adoption of a Resolution (R170-2025) titled, “Resolution Approving Development Agreement (1632, 1640, and 1646 Second Street)”.
Community Development Director Fontane presented information on Items A-C as it relates to 1632, 1640 and 1646 Second Street.

Mark Muller, applicant, noted that their proposal was updated by enhancing the green space in the front of the building on Second Street. He noted that they would offer the landscaping on Second Street, a donation to the Place of Remembrance and \$100K to the housing fund.

Jana Hill, Highland Park resident, noted that 37% is the median lot coverage; 49% is the principal lot coverage for this project; 30% is the additional property coverage from large porches, roofs, and overhangs, which reduces open space on the property; and 79% of open sky and unobstructed views are wiped out with the building of the Walton. She indicated that this is a real loss of open space for the neighborhood. She requested that there be a reduction in the footprint of the project and a redesign

of the overhangs in order to provide a true benefit to the community. She stated that the City Council can choose to vote no on a project that truly affects the neighborhood in a negative way.

Dale Cahotes, Highland Park resident, stated the he does not believe the City has listened to the concerns of the neighbors. He noted that Fulton Developers has received variances that will degrade the lives of the neighbors in the area. He voiced concern with language that was used by the City Forester within the staff report and that Fulton Developers does not have a good track record with it comes to tree preservation. He voiced concerns with the unknown as to how the project will be staged and information not being provided until the project has been approved.

Dennis Siegel, Highland Park resident, noted that his apartment would be directly facing the Walton if the project were to be approved. He noted that Fulton Development has done an admirable job with other projects but he is highly concerned with the design of The Walton.

Kathy Thissen, Highland Park resident, noted that the Wolbright and the Walton are right across from each other and not a few blocks away, as has been indicated by staff. She voiced concerns regarding parking and traffic impacts on the area.

The Council requested information from Mr. Muller as it relates to heritage trees on past and present projects, as well as information on the staging of construction.

Mr. Muller provided information as it relates to the heritage trees and provided direction as to how the construction of the project will be staged.

Corporation Counsel Elrod noted that there is language drafted in the Development Agreement regarding the process that will need to be followed as it relates to maintenance of trees on the property, as well as the planning for the project. He indicated that permits will not be issued until the construction plan has been approved.

The Council voiced their appreciation for their willingness to provide funds to the housing fund and the green space planned for the front of the building. They requested clarification as to how many terraces are on the first floor and how that impacts green space. They discussed the approval of the project by the Plan and Design Commission and concerns about how the most recent developments look very similar.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve items A-C. Councilmember Lidawer seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Blumberg
SECONDER:	Councilmember Lidawer
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

D. Adoption of a Resolution (R171-2025) titled, “A Resolution Ratifying a Minor Amendment to Planned Development for 1950 and 1964 Sheridan Road”.

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve a Resolution Ratifying a Minor Amendment to Planned Development for 1950 and 1964 Sheridan Road. Councilmember Blumberg seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

MOVER:	Councilmember Lidawer
SECONDER:	Councilmember Blumberg
AYES:	Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg
NAYS:	None

XIII. Closed Session

Councilmember Blumberg moved the Council to close its meeting to the public, pursuant to the following cited section of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/2(c)), for the purposes of, (i) pending litigation (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)); (ii) personnel (5 ILCS 120/2(C)(1)); and (iii) purchase or lease of property (5 ILCS 120/2(C)(5)). Councilmember Lidawer seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:31 PM, the Council recessed the public portion of the meeting to meet in Closed Session.

At 10:10 PM, Mayor Rotering reconvened the open session of the City Council meeting.

PRESENT: Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Lidawer, Blumberg

ABSENT: Councilmember Tapia

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Neukirch, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska

ALSO PRESENT: Corporation Counsel Elrod

XIV. Adjournment

Councilmember Center moved to adjourn the City Council meeting. Councilmember Lidawer seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, Mayor Rotering declared the motion passed unanimously.

The City Council adjourned its meeting at 10:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Palbitska
Assistant to the City Manager/Deputy City Clerk