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**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**

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MEETING DATE: Monday, December 11, 2025

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MEETING LOCATION: Council Chambers, City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, IL

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CALL TO ORDER

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At 6:32 p.m., Chairperson Pines called the meeting to order. This Commission meeting takes place on-site. Staff was asked to call the roll.

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ROLL CALL

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Commissioners Present: Chairperson Pines; Commissioners Gonka, Hartinger, Portman, & Weeder

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Commissioners Absent: Commissioners Ehrlich & Greenbaum

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Councilmember Present: Blumberg

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Student Council Absent: Koslow

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Staff declared that a quorum was present.

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Staff Present: Fontane, Coleman, & Markle

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Guests Present: Donna Verechek/Petitioner
Tomaz Gniedziejko, Owner/TG Homes LLC

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Others Present: Gale Cerabona, Recorder

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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Regular Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission – November 13, 2025

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Commissioner Weeder moved to approve the regular meeting minutes of November 13, 2025.

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Commissioner Gonka seconded the motion.

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On a voice vote

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Voting Yea: Chairperson Pines; Commissioners Gonka, Hartinger, Portman, & Weeder

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Voting Nay: None

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Staff declared that the motion passed unanimously.

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SCHEDULED BUSINESS

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1. Preliminary Consideration of Landmark Nomination – 3135 Priscilla Avenue

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Planner Markle offered a presentation:

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- Landmark Designation Process

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- 3-step

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Historic Preservation Commission Minutes

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December 11, 2025 - Page 1

- 1 • Summary
- 2 ○ H.W. Kadell House
- 3 ○ built in 1941
- 4 ○ architect is George Keck
- 5 ○ Contemporary style
- 6 • Existing Conditions were shown
- 7 • Architectural Features
- 8 • Contemporary Style Characteristics
- 9 ○ wood, brick, stucco
- 10 • Keck and Keck
- 11 ○ Famous for 1933 House of Tomorrow
- 12 ○ passive solar design
- 13 ○ designed 300 homes in Chicago area, 30 in Highland Park
- 14 • Original Owner & Chain of Title
- 15 • Historic Plans
- 16 • Floor Plans & Elevations were illustrated
- 17 • Radiant Heat Plan was noted (iron pipes, heated floors)
- 18 • Photos were displayed (from 1941, 1942, and 1968)
- 19 • Alteration History
- 20 ○ Material changes to windows and doors
- 21 ○ front porch extended in 2014
- 22 • Landmark Criteria were referenced (Staff highlighted Criteria #1, 4, 5, and 6)
- 23 • Recommendation

24
25 Some HPC comments are

- 26 • Chairperson Pines asked:
- 27 ○ and Ms. Donna Verechek, owner, stated they don't know if the pipes work. There is no
- 28 control valve. She noted the floors are heated in the kitchen and bathrooms.
- 29 ○ how many Keck homes there are in Highland Park. Planner Markle will review same.
- 30 • Commissioner Portman referenced a possible Keck home.

31
32 Councilperson Blumberg said he grew up in a Keck house. He noted a house in Glencoe had radiant heat and
33 expounded on same.

- 34
- 35 • Commissioner Weeder believes this house meets Criteria #4, 5, and 6. She commends the
- 36 homeowners.
- 37 • Commissioner Gonka concurred and believes this may meet Criteria #1, 3, and 7. He shared it is
- 38 incredibly important to save. The integrity is still there.
- 39 • Chairperson Pines believes Criteria #1, 4, 5, and 6 are met.
- 40 • Commissioner Portman believes Criteria #4, 5, and 6 are met. He believes Criteria 1 and 7 blend
- 41 together. Commissioner Portman loves this home; beautiful example of an early Mid-Century
- 42 Modern home; represents an owner who had a vision built by a renowned architect. The
- 43 documentation is wonderful. This was called the Woodlands subdivision.
- 44

45 Commissioner Gonka moved that Criteria #1, 4, 5, and 6 apply and sufficient integrity is met – with adoption
46 of a Preliminary Landmark Designation. Commissioner Weeder seconded the motion.

47

1 Commissioner Portman noted the code said the home must have sufficient integrity. He expressed the front
2 entry is more habitable.

3
4 On a roll call vote

5 Voting Yea Chairperson Pines; Commissioners Gonka, Hartinger, Portman, & Weeder

6 Voting Nay: None

7
8 Staff declared that the motion passed unanimously.

9
10 Extended HPC comments are:

- 11 • Commissioner Portman said due to a narrow lot and trees make it is hard to see the beauty of this
12 home. He appreciates its modest design.
- 13 • Commissioner Gonka said the home has curb appeal.

14
15 Councilperson Blumberg referred to his modest home in Glencoe. He shared his parents contacted the
16 Keck's and had their current home built in Highland Park.

- 17
18 • Chairperson Pines asked Petitioner why they decided to landmark the home. Ms. Verechek said she
19 read an article about Keck and learned a home he built in Glencoe got leveled following the closing.
20 She doesn't ever want her house to be demolished.

21
22 2. Determination of Historic Significance – 1373 Oakwood Avenue

23 Planner Markle offered a presentation:

- 24 • Summary
 - 25 ○ Contributing Structure in 2006 Bob O'Link survey
 - 26 ○ Dutch Revival style
 - 27 ○ built c.1912
- 28 • Property History
- 29 • Architecture
- 30 • Elevations were shown
- 31 • Landmark Criteria were illustrated
- 32 • Impact of Historic Findings
- 33 • Recommendation (Staff recommends Commission consider Criteria #1 and 4)

34
35 Some HPC comments are.....

- 36 • Commissioner Portman:
 - 37 ○ referenced Page 2 of the memo in the packet and asked how it is known that the photo is
38 from 1974. Planner Markle said it is from a real estate listing that indicated 1974. They
39 noted a lot has changed with the current structure.
 - 40 ○ asked what would be done if more information is needed. Planner Markle said this is a
41 standard option.
 - 42 ○ asked how many homes in Highland Park have this style. Planner Markle referenced Page 2,
43 and said there are 9 at least.
- 44 • Chairperson Pines believes Criteria #4 and 6 are on the edge of being met.
- 45 • Commissioner Weeder said this is a solid Four Square; a good example of a modest home. She
46 believes Criteria #1 and 4 pertain. Porch additions are not detrimental.

- Commissioner Hartinger believes Criteria #1 and 4 are met. The additions make it look piece meal. The front porch blends and is all over the place.
- Commissioner Gonka identified the original steps, roofline. He asked, and Planner Markle said the back porch was added later. The front porch was added c. 1924.

Petitioner, Tomaz Gniedziejko, Owner, with TG Homes LLC, noted this is a 2-bedroom house; like a barn in Wisconsin. He advised the original owner was a construction worker in the 1920s; a cheap way to build a house.

More HPC comments:

- Commissioner Portman said, based on other Dutch Revival homes, this style is a stretch. He noted, if the house was altered with pride, he would vote against all criteria.
- Commissioner Gonka believes this house has integrity. The house is still a Dutch Colonial Revival that could contribute to the neighborhood.
- Commissioner Weeder believes this house meets Criteria #1 and 4.

Commissioner Gonka moved that this house meets Criteria #1 and 4 and has integrity. Commissioner Weeder seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote

Voting Yea Commissioners Gonka & Weeder

Voting Nay: Chairperson Pines; Commissioners Hartinger & Portman

Staff declared that the motion failed 2-3. Commissioner Portman read a portion of the Ordinance.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Continued Discussion – Encouraging Historic Preservation

Planner Markle noted the HPC will offer recommendations to City Council, and Staff will provide same.

Further clarification was discussed on the following.....

- Historic Rehabilitation Grants
 - Planner Markle provided Commissioner Ehrlich’s comments that he would like to offer a \$10,000 incentive amount like the City of Hinsdale does.
 - Commissioner Hartinger wants to save homes. A significant amount/match should be offered. He is not a fan of income eligibility.
 - Commissioner Portman believes, as per Elgin, policing would be difficult.
 - Commissioner Gonka said a cap on the grant takes care of various issues.
 - Commissioner Weeder believes rich people should also receive benefits; try to come up with a menu for more preservation. Councilperson Blumberg believes this is accurate. He expounded. A protection should be put in place if the house gets sold, demolished, etc. (so the City receives its money back).

A more general discussion took place.

Director Fontane asked what criteria would be a distinction to preserve; incentive to landmark a home.

1 Councilperson Blumberg said, based on City Council’s position, the goal is to benefit the community. He
2 noted there are 2 issues – incentivize landmarking and preventing teardowns.

3
4 Director Fontane said the focus is to encourage preservation – more landmarkings.

5
6 Commissioner Gonka doesn’t understand persistent encouragement rather than discouragement.

7
8 Director Fontane reminded this came from City Council. Feedback is still welcome, and Staff will convey
9 same. Recommendations can be made without all details.

10
11 • Local Property Tax Abatement

- 12 ○ Director Fontane said the property tax rate is based on assessed values.

13
14 Councilperson Blumberg said Staff doesn’t make policy. The tax levy is whatever it is for
15 Highland Park. He explained same.

- 16
17 ○ Commissioner Weeder:

- 18 ■ stated there are empty lots. Director Fontane concurred, and said the assessed
19 value is less. Residential properties are desirable. He noted City Council will give
20 direction from the HPC’s recommendations.
21 ■ would like to broaden this category to Contributing Structures.

22
23 It was stated Highland Park has the public benefit of private preservation. There is no
24 incentive for encouragement beyond education.

- 25
26 ○ Commissioner Gonka said maintenance could be at a reduced rate.

27
28 Councilperson Blumberg reminded the goal is historic preservation. The HPC should recommend a program
29 to incentivize the landmarking of a home – not set a dollar amount. The value to the community is vibrancy.
30 The main goal is to recommend as many programs as possible.

31
32 Commissioner Gonka stated paying someone to landmark their house is the goal.

33
34 • Land Use Incentives

- 35 ○ Commissioner Hartinger would like to see land use incentives expanded.

36
37 A general discussion continued.

38
39 Commissioner Portman would like to identify what homes would qualify for programs. Councilperson
40 Blumberg reminded one has to qualify for a landmark (2 or more criteria). He noted a Regulated Structure is
41 a landmark structure. During a teardown delay, programs could be told to the homeowner. He summarized
42 that programs should be given by the HPC that City Council would implement.

43
44 Director Fontane said Grants would be for exterior features, so the community can benefit.

45
46 Senior Planner Coleman discussed restoring integrity.

47
48 Chairperson Pines suggested heightening awareness by offering a plaque program for landmarked homes.

1
2 Commissioner Gonka explained the process to landmark, go for a COA, then benefit from a grant.
3
4 Councilperson Blumberg recapped how to format the content; give City Council a lot to review.
5
6 Director Fontane discussed prioritizing:
7 • Grant Program link with Land Use
8 • Reduce Zoning Relief after a 365-Day Delay
9
10 Commissioner Weeder:
11 • asked, and Planner Markle said, when sending new resident letters, that resident could be informed
12 he/she purchased a Contributing Structure, is in a landmark district, etc.
13 • said a big menu shows this is being taken seriously.

14
15 Commissioner Gonka would like to add Commissioner Weeder’s suggestion – If something is demolished,
16 there should be a plan to rebuild.

17
18 Councilperson Blumberg departed the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

19
20 **2. Introduction to 2026 Historic Preservation Awards**
21 Planner Markle advised the ceremony is slated to take place at the Willits House.

22
23 Director Fontane departed the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

24
25 Senior Planner Coleman noted there is a running list of homeowners doing projects/preserving homes.

26
27 **BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**
28 There was no Business from the Public.

29
30 **OTHER BUSINESS**
31 **1. Next Regular Meeting is Scheduled for January 8, 2026**
32 It was noted the next regular HPC Meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2026.

33
34 **STAFF REPORT**
35 Planner Markle shared book recommendations. They noted multiple copies are available for viewing in
36 Community Development or at the library. They will distribute the list to the HPC.

37
38 Planner Markle advised if there is a material or dimension change on windows, a COA is required.

39
40 Senior Planner Coleman asked that the HPC give Chairperson Pines a round of applause as he ends his
41 appointment as Chair. Chairperson Pines said the HPC is devoted, and this has been a rewarding experience
42 for him. Commissioner Weeder will be the new Chair in 2026.

43
44 **ADJOURNMENT**
45 Commissioner Gonka moved to adjourn at 9:11 p.m. Commissioner Hartinger seconded the motion.

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47 On a voice vote

1 Voting Yea Chairperson Pines; Commissioners Gonka, Hartinger, Portman, & Weeder
2 Voting Nay: None

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4 Staff declared that the motion passed unanimously.

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6 Respectfully Submitted,

7

8 Gale Cerabona

9 Recorder

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11 **MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2025, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.**