

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

**MEETING DATE:** January 12, 2026

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

**I. Call to Order**

At 7:40 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, Lidawer, Blumberg

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Manager Neukirch, Director of Public Works Bannon, Community Development Director Fontane, Assistant City Manager Jason, Police Chief Jogmen, Finance Director McCaulou, Fire Chief Schrage, Assistant City Manager Taub, 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 Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the City Council Held on December 15, 2025

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve, as amended, the Minutes of the Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the City Council Held on December 15, 2025. Councilmember Blumberg seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

B. Approval of the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the City Council on December 15, 2025

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the City Council Held on December 15, 2025. Councilmember Blumberg seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 – 0).

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

**V. Approval of Warrant List**

- A. Warrant List and Wire Transfers from December 04, 2025 to December 31, 2025. Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve the Warrant List. Councilmember Tapia seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 – 0).

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

**VI. Report of Mayor**

A. Appointments

1. Class of 2027 Student Commissioner Appointments  
Mayor Rotering presented the slate for the Class of 2027 Student Commissioner Appointments.
2. City Commission Appointments, Reappointments for Scheduled Vacancies and Appointments to Chair and Vice Chair with Terms beginning in 2026  
Mayor Rotering provided information on City Commission Appointments and Reappointments for Scheduled Vacancies and Appointments to Chair and Vice Chair with Terms beginning in 2026. She noted she was seeking consensus from the Council on the appointments and reappointments.

The Council was in consensus.

B. Proclamations

1. Recognizing Martin Luther King Day of Service - January 19, 2026  
Mayor Rotering recognized January 19, 2026 as Martin Luther King Day of Service.

Paul Canchester, Chair of the Human Relations Advisory Group, provided information regarding the plans for the 2026 MLK Day of Service program, service projects, and donation drop-off event.

C. Other Business

1. Highland Park High School Charity Drive  
Mayor Rotering introduced the Highland Park High School Charity Drive.

Lucy Wallman and Emerson Shamberg shared highlights of last year's event and provided information about this year's schedule of events and designated charity.

**VII. Business from the Council**

There was none.

**VIII. Business from City Staff**

City Manager Neukirch provided highlights regarding items on the Omnibus Agenda.

**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 comments for Business from the Public.

Sandy Lurie, Highland Park resident, commented on the process regarding the future development of the Solo-Cup property at 1700 Old Deerfield Road. She noted that the City is in favor of moving forward with the development at the detriment of the neighborhood. She voiced concerns about the ability to speak with the City regarding the neighbors' concerns. She voiced her disappointment with the direction the Council is taking with this development.

**X. Omnibus**

Councilmember Lidawer requested to remove item 5 from the omnibus vote agenda. She provided comments on item 8.

Councilmember Ross requested to remove 2 from omnibus vote agenda.

Councilmember Tapia moved to approve items 1, 3-4, and 6-10 by omnibus vote consideration. Councilmember Blumberg seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously.

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

**Administration**

1. Adoption of a Resolution (R01-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, "A Resolution Approving a Professional Services Agreement with JSJFlynn Public Relator LLC d/b/a Junipr Public Relations".
3. Adoption of a Resolution (R02-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, "A Resolution Entering Into a Food & Beverage Interior Improvement Grant for Viaggio Highland Park Inc. d/b/a Viaggio Restaurant (581 Roger Williams)".
4. A Request to Approve a New Special Event: Ravinia Farmer's Market Branded "Braeside Farmers Market"

6. Adoption of a Resolution (R03-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving an Agreement with SWA Group, Inc., of Sausalito, California, for Concept and Schematic Design Services for the Place of Remembrance”.
7. Adoption of a Resolution (R04-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Waiving Bids and Approving a Professional Services Agreement with SE-Inc.”.

### **Public Works**

8. Adoption of a Resolution (R05-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Authorizing Execution of a Purchase of Services Agreement With Pace to Provide Local Bus and Ravinia Park and Ride Service from January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026”.
9. Adoption of a Resolution (R06-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Waiving the Formal Bidding Requirements of the City's Purchasing Manual and Approving the Purchase of Membrane Filtration System Modules for the Water Treatment Plant, from Filmtec Corporation of Minneapolis, Minnesota”.

### **Community Development**

10. Adoption of an Ordinance (O01-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Amending Section 24.025 of “The Highland Park Code of 1968,” as amended, Regarding Landmark Designation Procedures”.

## **XI. Items Removed From Omnibus Vote Consideration**

2. Adoption of a Resolution (R07-2026) titled, “A Resolution Approving a Professional Services Agreement with United Talent Coordinators”.  
Councilmember Ross requested that the Council be updated more often as it relates to the vendors that are being interviewed and the staff recommendation before the consideration is on an agenda..

Mayor Rotering explained the process that is followed when decisions like this are being made; clarifying roles of Council in setting policy and professional staff who manage projects and make recommendations to the City Council.

City Manager Neukirch reviewed various opportunities whereby Council members can ask questions about project topics before recommendations are on a City Council agenda, and reiterated the role of staff to manage the City’s purchasing policies and management of projects.

Councilmember Ross noted that having the ability to get the information as early as possible would be helpful in making a decision. Discussion ensued on the timelines for posting Council packets in advance of meetings.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve a Resolution Approving a Professional Services Agreement with United Talen Coordinators. Councilmember Tapia seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

5. Adoption of an Ordinance (O02-2026) titled, “An Ordinance Amending Section 119.320 Of "The Highland Park Code Of 1968," As Amended, Eliminating Citizenship Requirements For Liquor Licenses To Conform With State Law”.

Councilmember Lidawer requested information on the background as to why this item was being brought before the Council for approval. She voiced concern about this item being on the consent agenda and requested more timely updates be provided to the Council with regard to State statute amendments that could impact the City Code.

Corporation Counsel Elrod provided information as to when this item was presented to City staff and what other municipalities have within their liquor codes.

City Manager Neukirch provided background information as to why staff brought this item before the City Council. She explained that as part of the 2026 Major Projects, staff will begin a multi-year project to organize every section of the Code to make recommendations for amendments.

Councilmember Blumberg provided his insights as to his experience with amendments to the Code and how those amendments are approved.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve an Ordinance Amending Section 119.320 of "The Highland Park Code of 1968," as Amended, Eliminating Citizenship Requirements for Liquor Licenses to Conform with State Law. Councilmember Lidawer seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

**XII. Other Business**

A. Consideration of Final Planned Development and Final Plat of Consolidation (734 Central Ave.)

Community Development Director Fontane presented information on the Consideration of a Final Planned Development and Final Plat of Consolidation (734 Central Ave). He noted, if the Council wished to move forward, the motion would be to direct staff to draft approval documents for a future meeting agenda.

The Council, Staff and the applicant's representatives discussed the changes that were made from the last time the consideration was before the City Council, concerns with the height of the proposed development in relation to similar developments in the future

creating a "wall" along Central Avenue, and the reasoning of the additional space needs on the top level in relation to the elevator access point.

Councilmember Tapia moved to direct staff to draft final approval documents for a Final Planned Development and Final Plat of Consolidation (734 Central Avenue). Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed (5-2).

<b>MOVER:</b>	Councilmember Tapia
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Councilmember Meckler Bruckman
<b>AYES:</b>	Mayor Roterig, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia
<b>NAYS:</b>	Councilmembers Lidawer, Blumberg

### **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) 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 8:54 PM, the Council recessed the public portion of the meeting to meet in Closed Session.

At 9:51 PM, Mayor Roterig reconvened the open session of the City Council meeting.

Present: Mayor Roterig, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer, Blumberg  
Absent: None  
Staff Present: City Manager Neukirch, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska Also  
Present: Corporation Counsel Elrod

### **XIV. Adjournment**

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

The City Council adjourned its meeting at 9:52 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Palbitska  
Assistant to the City Manager/Deputy City Clerk