

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

MEETING DATE: March 30, 2026

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

I. Call to Order

At 8:01 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, Finance Director McCaulou, Fire Chief Schrage, Assistant City Manager Taub, Police Commander Roberts, 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 February 23, 2026 & Approval of the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Rescheduled Regular Meeting of the City Council on February 23, 2026
Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting and Closed Session Meeting of the City Council Held on February 23, 2026. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

V. Approval of Warrant List

- A. Warrant List and Wire Transfers from February 13, 2026 to March 19, 2026. Councilmember Tapia moved to approve the Warrant List. Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

VI. Report of Mayor

- A. **Appointments**

- Appointment to Fill a Vacancy - Sustainability Advisory Group

- Mayor Rotering noted there was a recommendation to appoint Jessica D. Scott to the Sustainability Advisory Group, for a term effective May 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.

- The Council was in consensus with the recommendation.

VII. Business from the Council

- A. **Councilmember Reports**

- Councilmember Blumberg provided a report on the Library Board of Trustees.

- Councilmember Ross provided a report on the Plan and Design Commission.

VIII. Business from City Staff

City Manager Neukirch provided updates on the Place of Remembrance process and highlighted items on the omnibus agenda.

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

There was none.

X. Omnibus

Mayor Rotering requested to pull item #13 from omnibus agenda.

Councilmember Lidawer and staff discussed item #1 on the omnibus agenda.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve items 1-12 and 14-16 by omnibus vote agenda. Councilmember Tapia seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously.

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

Administration

1. Adoption of a Resolution (R32-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution entering into an Exterior Improvement Grant for 172 Skokie Blvd HP LLC d/b/a Artist Frame Services (176 Skokie Valley Road)”.
2. Adoption of a Resolution (R33-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution entering into an Exterior Improvement Grant for Katy the Butcher LLC (1954 First Street)”.

Finance

3. Adoption of a Resolution (R34-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Reallocating 2026 Volume Cap to the Village of Buffalo Grove, Illinois”.

Public Works

4. Adoption of a Resolution (R35-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Ratifying an Amendment to an Agreement with the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency for Energy Efficiency Projects at the Water Treatment Plant”.
5. Adoption of a Resolution (R36-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Award of the Sheridan Utility Improvements (Edgecliff to North End) Project Contract to Martam Construction, Inc. of Elgin, Illinois.”.
6. Adoption of a Resolution (R37-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the First Amendment to the Intergovernmental Agreement Between the City of Lake Forest and the City of Highland Park Relating to Water Interconnection for Both Emergency and System Maintenance Purposes”.
7. Adoption of a Resolution (R38-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving a Grant of Easement to Commonwealth Edison Company”.
8. Adoption of a Resolution (R39-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Award of the 2026 Leak Detection Services Contract to M.E. Simpson Company, Inc., of Valparaiso, Indiana”.
9. Adoption of a Resolution (R40-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Certain City Officials and Officers to Execute Approved Contracts with the State of Illinois and Directing the City Clerk to Complete and Execute a Certificate of Authority for State Contracts (Salt Purchase)”.
10. Adoption of a Resolution (R41-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Change Order No. 2 to the Agreement for the Finished Water Meter Improvements Services with Joseph J. Henderson & Son, Inc.”.

11. Adoption of a Resolution (R42-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Contract for The Art Center Tuckpointing Project to ALFA Chicago, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois through the Equalis Group Purchasing Cooperative.”.
12. Adoption of a Resolution (R43-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Award of the 2026 Concrete Street Patching and Sidewalk Repair Program Contract to Triggi Construction, Inc. of West Chicago, Illinois”.

Public Safety

14. Adoption of a Resolution (R44-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Board of Education of Township High School District No. 113 Regarding Use of Buses for Independence Day Parade.”.
15. Adoption of a Resolution (R45-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving the Purchase of Two Police Vehicles from the Highland Park Ford Lincoln Superstore”.
16. Adoption of a Resolution (R46-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving Indemnification Agreements with the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy at the College of DuPage for Entry-Level Police Recruit Training”.

XI. Items Removed From Omnibus Vote Consideration

13. Adoption of an Ordinance (O15-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “An Ordinance Designating the Property at 818 Hill Street a Local Landmark”.

Community Development Director Fontane presented historical information as it relates to 818 Hill Street. He highlighted the important fact that the local landmark designation will be for the entire property and not only for the structure on the property.

Mayor Rotering opined on some of the underlying historical features as they relate to this property and how fascinating it is to have this type of property in Highland Park.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to approve an Ordinance Designating the Property at 818 Hill Street a Local Landmark. 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

Other Business

- A. Adoption of a Resolution (R47-2026) by omnibus vote consideration titled, “A Resolution Approving an Agreement with Camosy, Inc. for Construction Management Services for the Renovation of the City Public Services Center and Fire Station 34”.

Councilmember Center and City Manager Neukirch discussed possible change of scope and how that could affect the agreement.

Mayor Rotering provided highlights of the Capital Improvement Plan for the Public Service Center and Fire Station #34. She discussed how the agreement for a construction manager relates to this project.

The Council and City Manager Neukirch discussed how the construction manager coordinates with the architect and engineering firm contracted for the project, and the construction manager is critical to the costing of the project. City Manager Neukirch confirmed that the work of the consultants and the staff group will be presented at a future Committee of the Whole meeting for Council consideration.

Councilmember Tapia moved to approve a Resolution Approving an Agreement with Camosy, Inc. for Construction Management Services for the Renovation of the City Public Services Center and Fire Station. Councilmember Center seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

- B. A Resolution Directing the Consideration of a Zoning Code Text Amendment Allowing a New Land Use as a Conditional Use Requiring a Planned Development in Certain Limited Locations in the R2 Residential Zoning District

Mayor Rotering noted that tonight's discussion is about whether or not to advance a zoning code text amendment for further consideration and not regarding Mr. Cooper's plan for the property.

Corporation Counsel Elrod provided guidance as to the subject matter for tonight's discussion and explained the City Code provision concerning the way in which zoning code text amendments are initiated. He also emphasized that tonight's meeting was not a public hearing

Community Development Director Fontane presented information regarding a Resolution to direct the Consideration of a Zoning Code Text Amendment Allowing a New Land Use as a Conditional Use Requiring a Planned Development in Certain Limited Locations in the R2 Residential Zoning District.

Mayor Rotering reiterated that this is not a public hearing and that Mr. Cooper is not an applicant but will provide information as to his proposal for the property; the Council is not making a determination on his proposal; rather it is making a decision as to whether to initiate the process for considering the proposal

Mr. Cooper presented information on the proposal for the property.

Mayor Rotering voiced her appreciation for what Mr. Cooper has presented but noted there are still questions that need to be answered.

Tim Pollowy, Senior Landscape Architect with Hey and Associates, provided information on the Champions Point access point at Heller Nature Center and environmental impacts.

Ranadip Bose, Partner with SB Friedman, provided information on the Economic Impact Champions Point would have on the community.

The Council, Corporation Counsel Elrod, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Bose, and Staff discussed:

- An appreciation for the in-depth review of the proposal and the property
- An appreciation for all of the communication received by the City from the neighbors
- Understanding of the difference between Champions Point and Champions Legacy
- Percentage of charitable offerings
- Ticket prices for all experiences
- Champions curriculum
- Off-site parking potential in Bannockburn
- Previous conversations Mr. Cooper and his team have had with the Park District
- Ways the City can enforce promised operations, including payments to the neighbors, by Mr. Cooper through a conditional use as a contract with the City and the property owner
- How non-profits are charged to use the property
- Concerns that the proposal does not provide information if the project fails
- Concerns with shuttling in 300-500 individuals into a neighborhood and how that can impact the residential environment
- How the public is not persuaded that the economic benefits will impact the City positively; what has been presented are assumptions, not guarantees
- Parking in a neighboring community has not been approved by their community, although there is a path for zoning consideration
- How parking in a different community affect driving business back into the Highland Park CBD
- Concern with setting a precedent for other areas within the City
- Exceptions in a residential district could impact the City across the board
- The make-up of the walking path and the proximity it is to the homes in the area
- The walk from Heller Nature Center is a little over a half mile
- How the estimated number of visitors to the property was calculated
- The rules in place are to preserve the nature of certain areas; this proposal is within a residential area
- The continued disruption and impacts this would have on the neighborhood
- What is being proposed is a commercial use in a residential district
- If this were to be allowed it would completely veer away from City policy
- May have considerations for the proposal if this was a transitional neighborhood
- The proposal is inconsistent with the intent of the neighborhood
- Mr. Cooper's neighbors did not buy their homes in this area with the intent of allowing a commercial use
- The difference between a Zoning Text Amendment and a Zoning Map Amendment; why this process was chosen

- The proposal would contribute the vibrancy the City needs but this is not the location for it
- What is being proposed has nothing to do with the individual who owned the property previously
- Impact on home values for the neighbors
- Could this project be considered in a different location

Braeden Lord, Associate with Taft Law and representing Mr. Cooper, opined on the matter before the Council tonight.

Kevin Cullather, Highland Park resident, thanked Mr. Cooper for his proposal. He believes that this consideration is not at a point where it can be referred to the Plan and Design Commission. He thanked the Council for taking the time to listen to all of the neighbors and community members.

Alex Ulyanov, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Michael Friduss, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Paula Serlin, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Nina Heller, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Boris Kholyavsky, Highland Park resident spoke in favor of the consideration.

Roxanna Haery, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Jane Faynshteyn, Highland Park resident, spoke in favor of the proposed consideration.

Dr. Cameron Haery, Highland Park resident, spoke against the proposed consideration.

Tre Demps, Basketball Director with Intentional Sports, spoke in favor of the proposed consideration.

Mayor Rotering thanked the last speaker for his idea of the spark. She thanked Mr. Cooper for his time and investment into something that does have a lot of great potential. She stated that this proposal is just in the wrong location but the City would be glad to have the opportunity to work with Mr. Cooper on finding another location within City limits if there was interest.

Councilmember Blumberg moved to deny, and therefore not approve, a Resolution Directing the Consideration of a Zoning Code Text Amendment Allowing a New Land Use as a Conditional Use Requiring a Planned Development in Certain Limited Locations in the R2 Residential Zoning District. Councilmember Tapia seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously, and therefore the City Council will not be initiating the proposed zoning code text amendment.

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

XII. Adjournment

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

The City Council adjourned its meeting at 10:16 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Palbitska
Assistant to the City Manager/Deputy City Clerk