

1 **MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING**
2 **PLAN AND DESIGN COMMISSION**
3 **OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**
4

5
6 **MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026
7

8 **MEETING LOCATION:** Council Chambers, City Hall, 1707 St. Johns Avenue, Highland Park, IL
9

10 **CALL TO ORDER**

11 At 7:01 p.m., Chairperson Kerch called the meeting to order. Staff was asked to call the roll.
12

13 **ROLL CALL**

14 Commissioners Present: Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, &
15 Nanus
16

17 Councilmember Present: Lidawer
18

19 Student Council Present: Pielet
20

21 Staff declared that a quorum was present. Director Fontane recognized new Student Council member, Chloe
22 Pilot.
23

24 Guests Present: Mitch Goltz, Managing Principal/GTZ Properties
25 Corey Glasson, Owner/Twinkle Twinkle Little One
26

27 Staff Present: Fontane, Burhop, & Mistretta
28

29 Others Present: Marcus Martinez, Corporation Counsel/Elrod Friedman LLP
30 Gale Cerabona/Recorder
31

32 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

33 *Regular Meeting of the Plan and Design Commission – January 20, 2026*
34

35 Commissioner Moore moved to approve the January 20, 2026, PDC regular meeting minutes. Commissioner
36 Ihnchak seconded the motion.
37

38 On a voice vote

39 Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, & Nanus

40 Voting Nay: None

41 Abstain: Commissioner Henry
42

43 Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed 6-0.
44

45 **SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

46 1. DES-2026-00085 for Design Review & Sign Package with Variations (172-178 Skokie Valley Road)
47 Senior Planner Burhop distributed a material sample.
48

1 Planner Mistretta reviewed the proposal:

- 2 • Existing Property
 - 3 ○ has no sign package; 3 tenants
- 4 • Aerial View was shown
- 5 • Proposed Sign Package
 - 6 ○ existing gooseneck lights
- 7 • Renderings were illustrated
 - 8 ○ Applicant owns property to the north; will mirror those façade improvements
- 9 • Façade Improvements
 - 10 ○ material was distributed
- 11 • Existing Signage & Facade
 - 12 ○ current internally-illuminated signs
- 13 • Sign Standards were displayed
- 14 • Approval Process & Recommendation
 - 15 ○ with Condition per Staff

16
17 Chairperson Kerch asked about variations. Senior Planner Burhop said there are no variations – but rather a
18 sign package. Each window sign would be up to 6 sq. ft.; total of 120 sq. ft.; height complies. He did note
19 there is 1 variance – identifications signs (hours of operation).

20
21 Mr. Mitch Goltz, Managing Principal with GTZ Properties, stated they renovated the neighboring property
22 and are excited to receive new tenants. He noted demolition is underway.

23
24 Commissioner Nanus asked, and Mr. Goltz said there are 3 tenants in 4 spaces.

25
26 Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. There was no one.

27
28 Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the Certificate of Approval as listed. Commissioner Mantis seconded
29 the motion.

30
31 On a roll call vote

32 Voting Yea	Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, & 33 Nanus
34 Voting Nay:	None

35
36 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.

37
38 2. DES-2026-00086 for Design Review & Sign Package with Variations (1849 Green Bay Road)

39 Planner Mistretta reviewed the proposal:

- 40 • Existing Property
 - 41 ○ tenant space in Renaissance Place
 - 42 ○ sign package in place
 - 43 ○ triggers Design Review
- 44 • Aerial View was shown
- 45 • Existing 1998 Sign Package
- 46 • Proposed Amendments (first-time signage on wall and awnings)
 - 47 ○ wall-sign total area is 63.2 sq. ft.

- 1 ○ awning-sign total area is 178.4 sq. ft.
- 2 ○ total sign area is 241.6 sq. ft.
- 3 • Proposed Awnings (will match what's currently there)
- 4 • Proposed Renderings
 - 5 ○ signage on all awnings (separate signs)
 - 6 ○ wall signs comply
- 7 • Existing Photos
- 8 • Staff Photos (surrounding area)
- 9 • Approval Process & Recommendation
 - 10 ○ Petitioner could amend dimensions
 - 11 ○ 11 signs

12
13 Some PDC comments are.....

- 14 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked what identification signage is. Planner Mistretta responded it would have the store name, logo, etc.
- 15
- 16 • Commissioner Henry is troubled by letter "a" in the standards for sign packages. This is a hodgepodge; lack of consistency. Director Fontane said flexibility of content is necessary to express one's business. He explained the focus should be on the containers and how many there are (not the content).
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20 • Commissioner Fettner asked if current tenants have signage on awnings. Planner Mistretta said no. Senior Planner Burhop said the restriction is 1 pedestrian sign per frontage.
- 21
- 22 • Commissioner Moore asked if *Local Leaf* has awnings; not super consistent.
- 23 • Chairperson Kerch said the 1998 sign package didn't set good guidelines. Senior Planner Burhop said some parts of that sign package have been amended.
- 24
- 25 • Commissioner Mantis asked if other tenants, who have more facades, have different signage. Senior Planner Burhop said some signs have above-window signs or signage on the door.
- 26

27
28 Mr. Corey Glasson, owner of Twinkle Twinkle Little One, advised he and his wife have been in business for
29 19 years in Chicago. He noted there is a need to educate first-time parents, and explained they needed room
30 for furniture, usage of car seats/strollers. They fell in love with Renaissance Place to lease 2 spaces. The
31 challenge is 2 separate spaces with 2 entrances. Mr. Glasson shared, if signage was different, it may not
32 identify this is all 1 store; don't wish to have confused customers. An alternate/revised sign option was
33 shown (connecting 2 stores into 1).

34
35 More PDC comments are.....

- 36 • Chairperson Kerch asked if an entrance on both frontages is desired. Mr. Glasson said yes.
- 37 • Commissioner Mantis said there may be more depth/protrusion. Mr. Glasson stated they will use the awnings that are there.
- 38
- 39

40 Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. There was no one.

41
42 Councilperson Lidawer asked/said.....

- 43 • and Staff said each face can have an identification sign.
- 44 • if an awning is a separate sign. Director Fontane said yes. Senior Planner Burhop said, in the 1998 sign package, 1 pedestrian sign per frontage is allowed (without the subsequent amendments).
- 45 • 11 signs are a lot.
- 46
- 47

1 Mr. Glasson said he wishes to comply. He is not adamant about the valance signage. The concern is to be
2 classy and combine 2 spaces; wants uniformity with the facades; matching look. No one else has taken 2
3 spaces and combined them into 1.
4

5 Final PDC comments are.....

- 6 • Commissioner Moore likes:
 - 7 ○ the 1 awning along the north side. A concern is the valance. Mr. Glasson noted the middle
 - 8 door doesn't exist.
 - 9 ○ the revised option better; looks cleaner.
- 10 • Commissioner Fettner concurred and likes the revised sign better; looks cleaner; wants the business
- 11 to be successful.
- 12 • Commissioner Mantis struggles with the signage on the valance. There are no other areas with 2
- 13 entrances; a big ask.
- 14 • Commissioner Ihnchak concurs with Commissioner Mantis; the valance looks busy. The first version
- 15 looks repetitive. She appreciates identifying this is a family-owned business.
- 16 • Commissioner Nanus applauds and admires the Petitioner. He shared this may set a precedent for
- 17 the future.
- 18 • Chairperson Kerch:
 - 19 ○ likes the 3 awnings. He hates to cover stone. There are too many logos; repetitive.
 - 20 ○ doesn't think people will be confused; likely want more signage on the Green Bay side.
- 21 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked Corporation Counsel for valance feedback. Corporation Counsel
- 22 Martinez said the content of the sign cannot be dictated, as it's a constitutional issue. Content strays
- 23 away from design. He suggested concentrating on the number of signs.
- 24 • Commissioner Mantis asked, and Corporation Counsel Martinez said the tenant can switch content.
- 25 Director Fontane said the number of signs and the size of the containers should be the focus.
- 26 • Commissioner Henry likes the revised sign; lends uniformity to the area. He would remove Twinkle
- 27 Twinkle Little One and indicate *family-owned* instead. Mr. Glasson informed they wish to open the
- 28 business in the next 6 weeks.
- 29 • Chairperson Kerch said there could be 1 less sign on the Green Bay side. He agreed everyone wants
- 30 to see businesses succeed. Director Fontaine summarized that the valance would only have 1
- 31 centered sign, a logo, and a wall sign.

32
33 Commissioner Henry moved to continue this matter to the next PDC meeting on February 17, 2026.

34 Commissioner Fettner seconded the motion.

35
36 On a voice vote

37 Voting Yea	Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, &
38	Nanus
39 Voting Nay:	None

40
41 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.
42

43 **OTHER BUSINESS**

44 1. Information Item: Administrative Design Review Update

45 There were no updates.

46 2. Next Regular Meeting – February 17, 2026

1 The next regular meeting will be February 17, 2026, in City Hall at 7 p.m.

2

3 **3. Case Briefing**

4 There were no Case Briefings.

5

6 **BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**

7 There was no Business from the Public.

8

9 **ADJOURNMENT**

10 Commissioner Henry moved to adjourn at 8:03 p.m. Commissioner Mantis seconded the motion.

11

12 On a voice vote

13 Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, & Nanus

14 Voting Nay: None

15

16 Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed unanimously.

17

18 Respectfully Submitted,

19

20

21 Gale Cerabona

22 Recorder

23

24 **MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING ON JANUARY 20, 2026, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.**