

**MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND
PARK**

MEETING DATE: April 13, 2026

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

I. Call to Order

At 5:30 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

Absent: Councilmember Blumberg

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, Commander Curran, City Engineer Stawski, Communications Manager Bennett, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska, Management Analyst Cherry

Also Present: Corporation Counsel Elrod, CivilTech Representatives (Joey Abramson, Tom Liliensiek), Ravinia Festival Association (Jim Schmitz)

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Rescheduled Regular Consolidated Meeting of the Committee of the Whole Held on March 30, 2026

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve the Minutes of the Rescheduled Regular Consolidated Meeting of the Committee of the Whole Held on March 30, 2026. Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (6 - 0).

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

IV. Scheduled Business

A. Floodplain Report & Recommendation

City Manager Neukirch introduced the topic of the Floodplain Report and Recommendations.

Joey Abramson, Civiltech Engineering, presented an overview of floodplain regulations in Highland Park and provided a recommendation to remove the Highland Park specific flood plain regulations and continue to adhere to FEMA, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Lake County Stormwater Management Commission regulations.

City Manager Neukirch emphasized important points that were presented by Mr. Abramson and provided information regarding next steps.

The Council, Civiltech Representatives, Corporation Counsel Elrod, and staff discussed climate change impacts on the potential increase in the speed or volume of flooding, impacts of developments in Wisconsin on northeastern parts of Illinois, liability exposures if the City continues with a more strict approach, insurance being driven by FEMA not Highland Park regulations, importance of education, potential property value increases with removing the Highland Park regulations, the use of FEMA floodplain mapping in neighboring communities, Lake County Watershed Ordinance protections, and work the City has completed to assist with flooding issues.

City Council consensus is to remove the Highland Park specific flood plain regulations and continue to adhere to FEMA, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, and Lake County Stormwater Management Commission regulations

City Manager Neukirch provided information on next steps which would include future formal Council approval as well as community education and notification of those affected.

B. Ravinia Festival Special License Agreement Recommendation

City Manager Neukirch introduced Management Analyst Cherry and the work staff has undertaken for this agenda item. She provided information about the relationship between the City and Ravinia Festival.

Management Analyst Cherry provided background information regarding the development agreements the City and Ravinia Festival have had over the years. She reviewed the staff recommendation that the parties enter into a special license agreement in relation to the Special License Area, which would decouple the operational matters from the current amended development agreement, giving an overview of current practices that would be formalized in the agreement as well as incorporation of new items.

The Council, Mr. Schmitz, Corporation Counsel Elrod, and staff discussed the intent of restricting non-motorized and motorized vehicles within the special license area, proposed sidewalk updates by Ravinia Festival, lighting of the Green Bay trail beyond the special license area, importance of removing the public demonstration language, term and expiration of the license agreement, outside events like the school district's Fun Run that would impact the special license area, and seasonal

usage of proposed signage by Ravinia Festival.

The Council was in favor of staff's recommendations. A majority of the Council expressed approval to update the expiration of the special license agreement to run concurrent with the development agreement.

City Manager Neukirch noted the conversation regarding the lighting on the Green Bay Trail will be discussed at a future meeting.

V. Closed Session

Councilmember Lidawer moved the Committee 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) probable litigation (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(11)); and (ii) lease of property (5 ILCS 120/2(c)(6)). Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. On a roll call vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed unanimously.

At 6:39 PM, the Committee recessed the public portion of the meeting to meet in Closed Session.

At 7:07 PM, Mayor Rotering reconvened the open session of the Committee of the Whole meeting.

Present: Mayor Rotering, Councilmembers Center, Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer

Absent: Councilmember Blumberg

Staff Present: City Manager Neukirch, Public Works Director Bannon, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska

Also Present: Corporation Counsel Elrod

VI. Adjournment

Councilmember Tapia moved to adjourn the Committee of the Whole meeting. Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, Mayor Rotering declared the motion passed unanimously.

The Committee of the Whole adjourned its meeting at 7:07 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Palbitska
Assistant to the City Manager/Deputy City Clerk