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**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND PARK, ILLINOIS**

MEETING DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2026

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

CALL TO ORDER

At 7:30 p.m., Chairperson Yablon called the meeting to order. This Commission meeting takes place on-site. Staff was asked to call the roll.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky, Weisberg, & Zaransky

Councilmember Absent: Center

Student Council Present: Zoe Heller

Staff declared that a quorum was present.

Guests Present: John Birazzi/Petitioner
Jeff Tondola, Co-Owner/CNM Development
Anam Hargey/Petitioner
Cal Bernstein, Attorney/Samuels & Bernstein
Scott Byron, Chief Executive Officer/Scott Byron & Co., Inc.

Staff Present: Hoffmann

Others Present: Gale Cerabona, Recorder

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Zoning Board of Appeals – March 19, 2026

Commissioner Chase moved to approve the March 19, 2026, regular meeting minutes as drafted. Commissioner Zaransky seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky, Weisberg, & Zaransky

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Yablon declared that the motion passed unanimously.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no Business from the Public.

1
2 **OLD BUSINESS**

3 There was no Old Business.
4

5 **NEW BUSINESS**

6 1. #VAR-2026-00064

7 Property: 3504 Dato Avenue Appellant: John Birazzi
8 Zoning District: R5 Address: 3504 Dato Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035
9

10 The petitioner and owner, John Birazzi, 3504 Dato Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035 requests by authority of
11 Section 150.1204(A)(1), of the Highland Park Zoning Code, a variation of provision Section 150.703, to
12 encroach into the front yard requirement for an addition.
13

14 Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- 15 • Project Background
 - 16 ○ R5
 - 17 ○ built in 1955
- 18 • Site Location (corner property, 2 frontages)
- 19 • Aerial view was shown
- 20 • Plat of Survey
 - 21 ○ existing home is nonconforming
- 22 • Property Photos were displayed
- 23 • Proposed Work
- 24 • Other Comments
 - 25 ○ tree removals will be reviewed by Forestry
- 26 • Review

27
28 Commissioner Chase asked how this was built. Planner Hoffmann said there were different standards in
29 1955.
30

31 Chairperson Yablon swore in Petitioner, John Birazzi, who stated they wish to downsize to a 1-level home. It
32 has a 1-car garage. The mud room and laundry room will take up the addition. The current home is being
33 renovating, improved, and enhanced. They wish to maintain the rectangular shape of the house; continuity.
34 The goal is to extend the home. He spoke to Forestry Staff, and it was agreed 2 trees that are being removed
35 are not Heritage trees and are on the neighbor's property. The home was previously used for an AirBnB and
36 had violations. They plan to live and retire in this home.
37

38 Two neighbors were happy to hear about the improvement about the residences.
39

40 Chairperson Yablon asked if Mr. Birazzi could speak to the standards. He did so (adding a garage meets
41 standards for home buyers, is an improvement; marketable). Everything will be resided and reroofed. The
42 hardship is there's no 2-car garage and a place for storage. They would like 1-story living; more usable. The
43 shape will be maintained. If he pushed the house back, the laundry room would be lost. The addition won't
44 harm anything; well below FAR and height requirements. This will not alter the character of the
45 neighborhood; will maintain harmony.
46

47 Chairperson Yablon asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on this matter. There was no one.

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Some ZBA comments are.....

- Commissioner Harmelech said the standards have been met; not infringing on side yards; makes sense.
- Commissioner Weisberg concurred and is in favor.
- Commissioner Zaransky concurred, and said it's a good plan.
- Commissioner Treshansky said the standards have been met; is in favor.
- Chairperson Yablon concurred.

Commissioner Chase moved to approve the variance as drafted. Commissioner Weisberg seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky, Weisberg, & Zaransky

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Yablon declared that the motion passed unanimously.

2. #VAR-2026-00065

Property: 353 N. Deere Park Dr. E Appellant: Peter Rose

Zoning District: R4/LFOZ Address: 353 N. Deere Park Dr. E, Highland Park, IL 60035

The petitioner, Jeff Tondola, on behalf of the owner, Peter Rose, 353 N. Deere Park Dr. E, Highland Park, IL 60035 requests by authority of Section 150.1204(A)(14) of the Highland Park Zoning Code, a variation of provision Section 150.707(B)(1), to encroach into the required 40' Subdivision Building Line measured from the frontage along Deere Park Dr. E in order to install a fence.

Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- Project Background
- Site Location
- Aerial view was shown
- Plat of Survey (40' Subdivision Building Line)
- Property Photos were displayed
- Proposed Work
 - 4' metal iron fence will be attached to the chain-link fence going toward the street
- Other Comments (there were none)
- Review

Some ZBA questions for Staff are.....

- Commissioner Aronoff said the current fence is not coming down. Planner Hoffmann said it is remaining.
- Commissioner Zaransky asked if the proposed fence goes into the public way. Planner Hoffmann said no, it will be 5' from the property line.
- Commissioner Chase asked, and Planner Hoffmann said the existing fence is nonconforming.

1 Chairperson Yablon swore in Petitioner, Jeff Tondola, who stated the new fence will be decorative to match
2 the other fence on the property. There are things built on the property that aren't the owner's.

3
4 Some ZBA & other comments are.....

- 5 • Chairperson Yablon asked, and Mr. Tondola said it doesn't block access; runs parallel to the property
6 line. Planner Hoffmann noted this is not a fence-height variation.
- 7 • Student Rep Heller asked what the hardship is. Mr. Tondola said it is for aesthetics.
- 8 • Commissioner Zaransky said if it weren't for the building line, it would be permanent. Planner
9 Hoffmann said that's correct.
- 10 • Commissioner Treshansky asked, and Planner Hoffmann said the ZBA has seen these cases before.
- 11 • Commissioner Chase identified a violation. Planner Hoffmann concurred.
- 12 • Chairperson Yablon asked about the standards. Mr. Tondola addressed the standards (no one will
13 make money from this, it is being kept out of the easement, the rest of the fence is in the easement,
14 it doesn't change the topography, drainage, etc.; this wasn't created by anyone, it's not detrimental
15 to the public, it is mostly open so it offers air and light; no obstructions, won't alter the character of
16 the neighborhood; is in harmony). The fence has been there for a long time.
- 17 • Commissioner Weisberg:
 - 18 ○ asked about another fence. Mr. Tondola identified same.
 - 19 ○ asked, and Mr. Tondola said it completes the landscape.
 - 20 ○ said the hardship is the existing fence. He asked how this makes it more aesthetic.
 - 21 ○ asked if there is an open slot. Mr. Tondola said yes, it's an open area.
- 22 • Commissioner Chase asked if the easement is on this parcel. Planner Hoffmann concurred. He said it
23 is not blocking the easement.
- 24 • Chairperson Yablon read the letter pertaining to the hardship. Mr. Tondola said this is not meant to
25 have screening.

26
27 Chairperson Yablon asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on this matter. The following came
28 forward:

- 29 • Char Goodman said they have 2 concerns. People don't use the easement to the beach. There is no
30 other property where fences go to the street. Cement may disturb cable lines.

31
32 More ZBA comments are.....

- 33 • Commissioner Zaransky asked:
 - 34 ○ about the easement. Ms. Goodman said it's on the Applicant's property. It offered beach
35 access but not anymore. She said it's an old easement; old pathway.
 - 36 ○ if it would impact anyone. Ms. Goodman doesn't think so.
- 37 • Commissioner Weisberg asked why Ms. Goodman doesn't want this. She said they don't have a
38 fence; will look different.

39
40 Planner Hoffmann said the proposed fence will not be in the City right-of-way.

- 41
42 • Commissioner Aronoff:
 - 43 ○ asked if this fence will match the other. Planner Hoffmann illustrated same (which is on the
44 property line).
 - 45 ○ said it's a book end. Planner Hoffmann said it could be stated that way.

46
47 Chairperson Yablon asked if there were further audience comments. There were none.

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Final ZBA comments are.....

- Commissioner Aronoff doesn't see a hardship. The fence will match. He is uncertain.
- Commissioner Treshansky sees, via the letter, why it's necessary. Based on neighbor's input, he is not in favor.
- Commissioner Chase said she doesn't see a hardship or a need; though, understands making a barrier; is concerned about objecting neighbors.
- Commissioner Zaransky said the hardship is the restrictive building line. The intent of the ordinance wasn't to prevent a fence. He doesn't understand the need; purpose. The photos aren't great. Commissioner Zaransky believes he will support it. The owner is restricted by the building line. Most would erect it. He commends the Petitioner for doing this the right way. No lines would be dug up.
- Commissioner Chase asked if the Plat has exceptions for fences. Planner Hoffmann said the City upholds the restrictions.
- Commissioner Weisberg said it's a small ask. A strong enough case hasn't been made. He would like to see contextual photos; not enough information.
- Commissioner Harmelech said the Petitioner didn't do the best job explaining. The neighbor is more prepared. The Petitioner said he doesn't believe there's much more to add.
- Commissioner Zaransky would like to know where the fence is to the street.

The Petitioner has a concern about the utilities, so he would like to continue this.

Commissioner Chase moved to continue this to the May 7, 2026, ZBA meeting. Commissioner Treshansky seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea	Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky, Weisberg, & Zaransky
Voting Nay:	None

Chairperson Yablon declared that the motion passed unanimously.

3. #VAR-2026-00066

Property: 1726 Park Ave W	Appellant: Anam Hargey
Zoning District: R3	Address: 1726 Park Ave W, Highland Park, IL 60035

The petitioner and owner, Anam Hargey, 1726 Park Ave W, Highland Park, IL 60035 requests by authority of Section 150.1204(A)(12) of the Highland Park Zoning Code, a variation of provision Section 150.712, to exceed the allowable 36' of exterior wall openings for vehicular entry.

Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- Project Background
 - R3
 - a new home is slated
- Site Location
 - existing home was demolished
- Property Photos were displayed
 - garage door openings

- 1 • Elevations
- 2 • Other Comments (there were none)
- 3 • Review

4
5 Some ZBA comments for Staff are.....

- 6 • Chairperson Yablon said tandem garages wouldn't be an issue. Planner Hoffmann concurred. The
- 7 rule is 36' for openings.
- 8 • Commissioner Chase said it doesn't matter if the garage is attached or detached. The limit stays the
- 9 same. Planner Hoffmann concurred.

10
11 Chairperson Yablon swore in Petitioner, Ms. Hargey, who offered a presentation:

- 12 • Variance Request (garages can't be seen)
- 13 • Home is on a busy street
- 14 • Hardship
 - 15 ○ there are 3 drivers with new ones approaching
 - 16 ○ don't want parents to walk outside
- 17 • Other homes have 5-6 car garages (photos were shown)
- 18 • Summary
 - 19 ○ no adverse impact on the neighborhood

20
21 Chairperson Yablon asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. There was no one.

22
23 Some ZBA & other comments are.....

- 24 • Chairperson Yablon said, if approved, the garage could be built in any way. Planner Hoffmann said it
- 25 will match closely with the approval order; a slight change would be okay.
- 26 • Commissioner Chase:
 - 27 ○ said, regarding the standards due to new construction, these garages will allow for future
 - 28 use. There is no comment from the public. She appreciates the presentation.
 - 29 ○ asked where the contextual homes are. Ms. Hargey said within 1 mile.
 - 30 ○ asked why the code limits the size of garages. Planner Hoffmann said, per the code, the
 - 31 houses are old, and this is legal nonconforming.
- 32 • Commissioner Zaransky asked if the approval could be conditioned on landscaping. Ms. Hargey said
- 33 yes, even without trees, the garage doors face each other.
- 34 • Commissioner Treshansky said they aren't attached. Ms. Hargey said they are attached. Planner
- 35 Hoffmann illustrated same.
- 36 • Commissioner Zaransky said he would approve this. The standards have been met. He would like to
- 37 have landscaping as shown.
- 38 • Commissioner Treshansky said it's a very detailed plan. The garages don't face the street. Hardships
- 39 were addressed. He is inclined to approve this.
- 40 • Commissioner Weisberg said the standards are not perfectly suited for this situation. The intent is to
- 41 prevent viewing garages. He would like shrubbery included.
- 42 • Commissioner Chase said, if not approved, the garages could still be there but smaller. Chairperson
- 43 Yablon explained there would be a smaller opening in which to enter.
- 44 • Student Rep Heller said, if garages are smaller, they still could be seen. Everyone agreed.
- 45 • Commissioner Aronoff said the Applicant did a good job. The hardship is the ordinance.
- 46 • Commissioner Harmelech said the standards have been met; good presentation.
- 47 • Student Rep Heller believes it was a good presentation; standards are met.

- Chairperson Yablon said the standards have been met. She would like to have screening as a Condition. Planner Hoffmann said this could be added.

Commissioner Chase moved to approve the variance as drafted with vegetative screening blocking views from the street per the proposed plans. Commissioner Aronoff seconded the motion.

On a roll call vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky,
Weisberg, & Zaransky

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Yablon declared that the motion passed unanimously.

4. #VAR-2026-00062

Property: 1425 Waverly Road Appellant: Cari B. Sacks
Zoning District: R4/LFOZ Address: 1425 Waverly Road, Highland Park, IL 60035

The petitioner, Cal Bernstein, on behalf of the owner, Cari B. Sacks, as Trustee of the Cari B. Sacks Revocable Trust, 1425 Waverly Road, Highland Park, IL 60035 request by authority of Section 173.030 of the Highland Park Zoning Code, variations of provisions of Section 173.010(C), to exceed the maximum allowable 4' fence-height requirement with the required front yard.

Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- Project Background
 - R6
 - built in 1930
- Site Location
- Aerial views were shown
- Plat of Survey
 - fence and gate to be added across incumbent driveway
- Proposed Work
- Elevations
- Other Comments
 - Police & Fire would need access

Commissioner Weisberg said this is only regarding height. Planner Hoffmann said yes, 4' is only allowed; the request is 6.5'.

Chairperson Yablon swore in Petitioner, Cal Bernstein, Attorney, & Scott Byron, CEO. Mr. Bernstein said it is a large secluded property that borders the beach and ravine. The property in the rear is owned by someone else who is in favor. The Applicant has obtained advice to add a gate and fence. They would be set back from the street, and a vehicle could turn around. Two additional neighbors are in support.

Mr. Byron said the arborvitae hedge will extend. The Maple tree remains. The gate or fences won't be seen. Columns would be visible. The gate is set nearly 30' off of the road and will be a classic, simple, and elegant design; blend in with the street. Planner Hoffmann illustrated same.

1 Mr. Bernstein said it's at the back end of Waverly Road. It is suitable and compatible. The 4' is not adequate.
2 Another 25' is for the protection and safety for the owner. This will not be detrimental, will have no impact
3 on this area; will not cause depreciation on lakefront property.
4

5 Some ZBA comments are.....

- 6 • Chairperson Yablon asked:
 - 7 ○ why not a fence with landscaping? Mr. Bernstein said a 6' fence deters people per advice
8 given for safety.
 - 9 ○ why is a 6' fence more safe than a 4' fence. Mr. Bernstein said there have been threats on
10 this owner. Security consultants advised this, as a 6' fence deters people.
- 11 • Commissioner Chase:
 - 12 ○ asked if this fence surrounds the property. Mr. Bernstein said no, just along the street – not
13 the ravine; links up to the pool fence. Mr. Byron said, visually from the neighborhood, it
- 14 can't be seen; is a deterrent. Mr. Bernstein said it is set back 30', so it can't be seen. Mr.15 Byron said 1 gate is more simple than 2.
- 16 ○ said the pool fence is 4'. Mr. Bernstein concurred and said the gate is 6'; a less-obtrusive
- 17 plan.

18
19 Chairperson Yablon asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak on this matter. There was no one.
20

21 More ZBA comments are.....

- 22 • Commissioner Treshansky said it's a no-brainer; standards have been met. He is in favor.
23 • Commissioner Harmelech is in favor.24 • Commissioner Chase asked if there are other gates. Mr. Bernstein is unsure.25 • Commissioner Zaransky said the standards have been met. The purpose of the ZBA is to approve a26 good plan. He is in favor.27 • Commissioner Aronoff concurred.28 • Commissioner Weisberg concurred.29 • Commissioner Chase said the standards have been met. The pillars and gate will match the30 architecture; blends in. It was stated the plan includes vegetation.31 • Chairperson Yablon agrees the standards have been met.

32
33 Commissioner Zaransky moved to approve the order as drafted. Commissioner Treshansky seconded the
34 motion.
35

36 On a roll call vote

37 Voting Yea Chairperson Yablon; Commissioners Aronoff, Chase, Harmelech, Treshansky,
38 Weisberg, & Zaransky

39 Voting Nay: None
40

41 Chairperson Yablon declared that the motion passed unanimously.
42

43 **STAFF REPORT**

44 There is no Staff Report.
45

46 **MISCELLANEOUS**

47 There are no Miscellaneous items.

