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

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, April 21, 2026

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

CALL TO ORDER

At 7 p.m., Acting Chair Nanus called the meeting to order. Staff was asked to call the roll.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Acting (Vice) Chair Nanus; Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, & Mantis

Commissioner Absent: Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner & Moore

Councilmember Present: Ross

Student Council Present: Pielet

Staff declared that a quorum was present.

Guests Present: Cal Bernstein, Attorney/Samuels & Bernstein
Michael Ezgur, Attorney/Acosta Ezgur, LLC
David Goldman, Founder/Structa LLC
Jeff Goulette, Founding Partner & Design Principal/SGW Architecture & Design

Staff Present: Fontane, Burhop, Hoffmann, & Markle

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Plan and Design Commission – April 7, 2026

Commissioner Henry moved to approve the April 7, 2026, PDC regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Ihnchak seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea: Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, & Mantis

Voting Nay: None

Abstain: Acting Chair Nanus

Acting Chair Nanus declared that the motion passed 3-0.

Corporation Counsel Martinez advised for any approvals, 3 of 4 Commissioners must be in favor.

1 **SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

2 1. PUD-2025-00081 for a Special Use Permit in the Nature of a Preliminary and Final Planned Development
3 with Modifications from City Code; and a Plat of Re-Subdivision, with Variances from City Code (147 Central
4 Avenue)

5
6 Councilperson Ross reminded she lives across the street from 147 Central Avenue. She will be fair and has
7 checked with Corporation Counsel & City Manager, Ghida Neukirch.

8
9 Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- 10 • Recommendation
- 11 • Project Summary
- 12 • Aerial View was shown
 - 13 ○ create 2 lots
- 14 • Planned Development
 - 15 ○ landmarked
- 16 • Public Benefit
 - 17 ○ \$2,500 donation
- 18 • Proposal
 - 19 ○ Lot 1 & Lot 2
- 20 • Heritage trees on Lot 2
- 21 • Review
- 22 • Public Comment
 - 23 ○ 3 public comments (1 piece of correspondence was distributed)
- 24 • City Comments
 - 25 ○ Forestry will review
 - 26 ○ Engineering provided comments of Lot 2
- 27 • Recommendation
 - 28 ○ Applicant submitted edits and has asked for a continuance

29
30 Corporation Counsel Martinez stated this is regarding the PUD & Plat of Subdivision. This is an Application as
31 presented (no structures proposed at this time).

32
33 Planner Markle offered a presentation from the HPC:

- 34 • HPC Written Recommendation & Report
- 35 • HPC Consideration Required
- 36 • 147 Central Avenue Landmark Status
- 37 • Prior HPD Consideration – January 8, 2026
 - 38 ○ HPC voted to deny the PUD
 - 39 ○ Continued to February, March, then April, 2026
 - 40 ○ HPC unanimously still recommends denial
- 41 • Historic Resource Standard
- 42 • Previous Landmark Removal Consideration (Concurrent Application)
 - 43 ○ HPC doesn't recommend landmark removal
 - 44 ○ Lot 2 meets criteria
 - 45 ○ a structure on Lot 2 requires a Certificate of Appropriateness/COA
 - 46 ○ Lot 2 meets Integrity of Design
- 47 • Cornelius Field House

- 1 ○ second Mayor of Highland Park lived there; President of Highland Park Building Company
- 2 ○ is on Lot 1
- 3 ○ Gardener's Cottage, Historic Greenhouse (remnants)
- 4 ○ new driveway
- 5 ○ Lot 2 (wooded area, ravine, trees, driveway)
- 6 ○ Lots 1&2
- 7 ▪ historic wrought-iron fence
- 8 ▪ historic gatepost (on City right-of-way)
- 9 ▪ fence was restored

- 10 ● HPC Findings
 - 11 ○ fence would be damaged with newly-constructed driveway
 - 12 ○ HPC is opposed to damaging existing driveway
 - 13 ○ would damage estate setting
- 14 ● HPC Recommendations
 - 15 ○ denial
 - 16 ○ Conditions if approved
 - 17 ▪ Site Plan was illustrated & explained

18
19 Some PDC comments are.....

- 20 ● Commissioner Ihnchak asked:
 - 21 ○ where the 80' setback would be. Planner Markle said – to the proposed lot line.
 - 22 ○ what the potential maximum would be if building on Lot 2. Director Fontane reminded there
 - 23 is no proposed structure on Lot 2. Planner Hoffmann identified the Plat of Subdivision and
 - 24 explained required setbacks, buildable area.
- 25 ● Acting Chair Nanus asked:
 - 26 ○ what the square footage of the buildable area is. Senior Planner Burhop and Planner Markle
 - 27 will review.
 - 28 ○ if only a single-family home can be placed. Planner Hoffmann said yes.
- 29 ● Commissioner Mantis asked, regarding the estate setting, if landscaping is included. Planner Markle
- 30 said it's just the estate setting. She expounded (on 1980 landscape survey, etc.). Out buildings, etc.
- 31 on the National Register were mentioned.
- 32 ● Acting Chair Nanus asked:
 - 33 ○ about the carriages. Planner Markle said, presumably, they would go around the house.
 - 34
 - 35 Senior Planner Burhop provided information about the FAR. If approved on Lot 2, 15,352 square
 - 36 feet would be the buildable area not withstanding trees. Planner Hoffmann said it would be 32'
 - 37 in height; average grade.
 - 38
 - 39 ○ if there is a legal definition that deems an estate. Planner Markle said no. Director Fontane
 - 40 noted the historic setting and whole landmarking is important.
 - 41
 - 42 ● Commissioner Ihnchak asked what the home would be (with setback included) if 80' is included.
 - 43 Senior Planner Burhop said something could be built. Planner Hoffmann said the existing home has
 - 44 5,000 square feet of livable area. Lot width is 258'. Buildable area would be 170' with an 80' setback.
 - 45

46 Mr. Cal Bernstein said, due to the size, historic preservation is relevant. They are seeking 2 lots. The 4 acres
47 is triggering the PUD. There was confusion as to what was landmarked. The house was all that was discussed

1 in the ordinance as well as Stupey Log Cabin. The City extended landmarking to the whole property (which
2 included Lot 2). A COA was subsequently requested. All historic elements were noted on Lot 1. Based on the
3 HPC's determination, anything that's built would have to be presented to the HPC with a COA process. This
4 proposal is not seeking to remove anything on Lot 1. They are seeking to build on Lot 2 (two 2-acre
5 properties). The real estate taxes are \$80,000 not including the care of the property, etc.; purchasing of this
6 house is limited. If subdivided, Lot 1 would have a lower tax bill (and increase purchase options). This has
7 been on the market for 1 year. This could be a problematic property in Highland Park.

8
9 He gave history on the overlay zone; limits density. Both proposed lots are double the size in this overlay
10 zone; consistent with the Lakefront Strategic Plan and the City's Master Plan. It was not a surprise that the
11 HPC is not in favor of a subdivision. Many of the HPC's conditions are acceptable (fence, gateposts
12 remaining). There is a challenge with 1 driveway serving 2 houses. They would propose a 20' setback along
13 the west side along the Field House and 12' in the rear. There's a significant drop-off between Lot 1 & Lot 2;
14 grade change. There are a lot of factors to consider regarding height. The Heritage trees would not be
15 removed.

16
17 A Public Benefit is not required. They want to preserve what is there. There is a large empty lot. A donation
18 of \$2,500 would go to historic preservation.

19
20 This proposal would fit the neighborhood. The landmark would not be touched. This meets all the standards
21 except the 4 acres. This looks at practicality. There are no landmark structures on Lot 2. Mr. Bernstein noted
22 prospective buyers are present.

23
24 Commissioner Mantis asked why a driveway is being requested for a new home on Lot 2 that meets 14
25 standards. Mr. Bernstein said the driveway is for Lot 1.

26
27 Acting Chair Nanus asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. He swore in the following:

- 28 • Ms. Kelsey Gonzalez advised she lives across the street. She noted the HPC recommended denial
29 regarding the entire estate setting. This has status. Conditions change the character. Once it's
30 destroyed, it can't come back. Ms. Gonzalez doesn't know how this could be delandmarked. Director
31 Fontane stated the HPC's position is not binding. City Council has the final say.
- 32 • Tom Corning lives 1 block away. He commends the Staff for its presentation. He has the same
33 position. His wish, if allowed, is that the construction be respectful regarding architecture; property
34 should be honored. A contemporary home next to this is unacceptable. Mr. Corning is sympathetic
35 to the Applicant's economic burden. If subdivided, he would like to see the HPC Conditions imposed;
36 should be complementary. Director Fontane reminded the PDC of its purview. Lot 2 is still
37 landmarked whether the PDC is in favor of subdividing or not. Applicable standards (14) could apply.

38
39 Councilperson Ross said, as indicated before, the owners of a 6-7,000 square-foot house on a 1-acre
40 property on this block pay \$80,000 in taxes due to improvements not lot size.

41
42 More PDC comments are.....

- 43 • Commissioner Henry clarified, and Director Fontane verified if anything is built on Lot 2, that would
44 have to be presented. There is no home proposed.
- 45 • Commissioner Ilnchak said the 1985 structure was landmarked rather than the estate. She asked for
46 further clarification. Director Fontane said City Staff believes the entire estate is landmarked. De-
47 landmarking Lot 2 was denied (by the HPC who has the final authority).

1
2 Director Fontane said amendments, by the Petitioner, have not yet been reviewed by Staff.

3
4 Mr. Bernsein said they are willing to continue this matter. He would like to learn the PDC's position on what
5 the HPC provided. Director Fontane identified the dates of May 5 or June 2, 2026, for a continuance.

6
7 Mr. Bernstein encourages the 3 Commissioners who aren't present to review tonight's video.

8
9 Commissioner Henry said this is complex. An owner has a right to do what he/she would like on his/her
10 property. The HPC doesn't see things like the PDC does. This is troubling. The PDC's job is different. He is
11 comforted that both lots are landmarked.

12
13 Commissioner Henry moved to continue this matter to the May 5, 2026, PDC meeting. He stated notice is
14 actual. Commissioner Mantis seconded the motion.

15
16 On a roll call vote

17 Voting Yea Acting Chair Nanus; Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, & Mantis
18 Voting Nay: None

19
20 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously, there would be no notice, and the next
21 meeting would take place at City Hall in Highland Park, at 7 p.m.

22
23 2. PUD-2026-00083 & PUD-2026-00084 for a Zoning Map Amendment to Rezone from RM1A to RO, a
24 Special Use Permit in the Nature of a Concurrent Preliminary and Final Planned Development, and Design
25 Review, with Modifications & Variations from City Code, for Multiple-Family Developments (1696-1704
26 McGovern St. & 793 Laurel Avenue)

27
28 Senior Planner Burhop said there are multiple requests; 1 project. Corporation Counsel Martinez concurred
29 there are 2 applications.

30
31 Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- 32 • Project Summary
 - 33 ○ 20-unit development on McGovern, 6 stories
 - 34 ○ 14-unit development on Laurel, 5 stories
- 35 • Rezoning, Zoning, & Design Review Summary
- 36 • Existing Conditions
 - 37 ○ vacant church and classroom wing
 - 38 ○ vacant church and residents' lot
- 39 • Property Photos
 - 40 ○ grade change; McGovern sits higher
 - 41 ○ Senior Planner Burhop expounded on heights and elevations
- 42 • Neighborhood Context
- 43 • PUD Request
 - 44 ○ 1 zoning lot
- 45 • All Elevations were shown
- 46 • Zoning Analysis – Setbacks 1696 McGovern Street
 - 47 ○ south and east; 2 frontages

- 1 ○ corner lot; 2 side-yard requirements
- 2 • Zoning Analysis – Setbacks 793 Laurel Avenue
- 3 ○ south, west, and north
- 4 • Site Plans were displayed
- 5 • Zoning Analysis – Article 23
- 6 • Zoning Analysis
- 7 ○ height
- 8 ○ lot coverage
- 9 ○ lot area and density
- 10 • Parking
- 11 ○ garages
- 12 • Off-Street Parking & Loading
- 13 • Zoning Analysis – Height & Coverage Exhibit
- 14 ○ comparables (provided by Applicant)
- 15 • Landscaping (some areas may not get sunlight)
- 16 • Materials
- 17 • Renderings
- 18 • Public Benefit
- 19 ○ bury utility lines, etc.
- 20 • Design Review
- 21 • Housing Commission/HC Review
- 22 • Other Comments
- 23 ○ Traffic-Impact Study
- 24 ○ Interdepartmental Comments
- 25 ○ Public Comments
- 26 • Recommendation

27
28 Some PDC comments are.....

- 29 • Commissioner Henry:
- 30 ○ said the buildings are not connected; unify zoning. Planner Hoffmann concurred. Amenities
- 31 will be shared.
- 32 ○ asked if the alley has public parking. Planner Hoffmann said it is private. Director Fontane
- 33 noted the alley is important for fire, safety, general traffic, etc. He noted other buildings’
- 34 residents access this alley. This is 1 zoning lot; 1 development agreement.
- 35 • Commissioner Mantis:
- 36 ○ asked what the average unit size is. Planner Hoffmann said 1,700 square feet.
- 37 ○ said the zoning change is for height not density; gateway site; more dense. Planner
- 38 Hoffmann said 34 units are proposed; with the zoning change, 53 units could be there
- 39 (base).
- 40 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked how this fits in regarding height and context. Planner Hoffmann
- 41 referenced other properties that received height variations. The Laurel site is 64’; average grade. He
- 42 illustrated a step map provided by the Petitioner.

43
44 Acting Chair Nanus swore in Mr. Ezgur who introduced his team, and noted they met with Staff 1 year ago.
45 He noted this proposal was revised. A presentation followed:

- 46 • Process Timeline
- 47 • Site Plan

- 1 ○ grade conditions
- 2 • Height Comparisons were shown
- 3 • Contextual Photos were illustrated
- 4 • Aerial View was displayed
- 5 • Site Plan was shown
- 6 • Modifications were identified
- 7 ○ meet and exceed standards
- 8 ○ 2 step backs
- 9 ○ combined Applications; 1 development

10
11 Acting Chair Nanus swore in Mr. Goldman who said they are not seeking to vacate the alley. He touched on
12 5 stories vs. 6 stories. The average unit size is 2,000 square feet. Regarding the Public Benefit, they will
13 extend the paved surface. They are working with Com Ed regarding transformers, relocating equipment, etc.

14
15 Acting Chair Nanus swore in Mr. Goulette who noted height on stepbacks, increased green space, etc.

16
17 Councilperson Ross said it's helpful to have context which wasn't in the packet. She asked about a green
18 roof and how to access it. Mr. Goldman said the renderings, etc. were included. He stated the green roof is
19 for storm-water management. There is a roof hatch atop stairs. There is no access for residents.

20
21 Mr. Ezgur discussed materials.

22
23 Acting Chair Nanus asked:

- 24 • why 1 building has a green roof and the other doesn't. Mr. Goldman said it's due to lot size and
25 requirements for detention.
- 26 • if it was considered to acquire another property. Mr. Goldman said they had discussions and are not
27 acquiring that property. Director Fontane noted mechanical equipment is yet to be determined.

28
29 Acting Chair Nanus asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. He swore in the following:

- 30 • Mr. Peter (son) and Anne (mother) Mordini said this is a residential neighborhood. The citizens
31 never receive relief. Air-conditioning units are loud. There are impacts when buildings are close.
32 They suffered from the Albion development. There is a gigantic wall feet from their windows. His
33 parents spent time making a garden that residents see. Mr. Mordini wants relief and tiering. When
34 light and air is blocked, there are impacts. He would like to see depictions. Their home is cut-off
35 from the plan. Director Fontane referenced Page 219. Senior Planner Burhop illustrated same.

36
37 Some PDC comments are.....

- 38 • Commissioner Mantis said:
 - 39 ○ regarding units per acre of other developments, breaking these into smaller units that are
 - 40 more attainable/affordable is desirable. Mr. Goldman said these are for sale, not rental
 - 41 units.
 - 42 ○ 2 and 3-bedrooms could be 1,400-1,500 square feet.
 - 43 ○ he prefers a higher unit count with more units.
- 44 • Commissioner Ihnchak concurred. She appreciates the sculpting; though, is concerned about the
- 45 bulk. It feels high on this street.
- 46 • Commissioner Henry said this could be going from mid-density to high-density.

47

1 Acting Chair Nanus swore in another audience member:

- 2 • Ted Pickus, Realtor for @Properties, said the reality is people are coming from a large home, and
3 they need space when they downsize; there is a need. Homeowners have children, caregivers
4 staying with them. Director Fontane reminded the inclusionary housing plan hasn't been received
5 yet. Acting Chair Nanus wants to be sure all of the developments are in the traffic study. Mr.
6 Goldman said they are included.

7
8 Commissioner Mantis moved to continue this matter to the June 16, 2026, PDC meeting. Commissioner
9 Henry seconded the motion.

10
11 On a roll call vote

12 Voting Yea Acting Chair Nanus; Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, & Mantis
13 Voting Nay: None

14
15 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously, there would be no notice, and the next
16 meeting would take place at City Hall in Highland Park, at 7 p.m.

17
18 **OTHER BUSINESS**

19 1. Information Item: Administrative Design Review Update

20 There were no updates.

21
22 2. Next Regular Meeting – May 5, 2026

23 The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2026.

24
25 3. Case Briefing

26 There was no Case Briefing.

27
28 **BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC**

29 There was no Business from the Public.

30
31 **ADJOURNMENT**

32 Commissioner Henry moved to adjourn at 10:05 p.m. Commissioner Ihnchak seconded the motion.

33
34 On a voice vote

35 Voting Yea Acting Chair Nanus; Commissioners Henry, Ihnchak, & Mantis
36 Voting Nay: None

37
38 Acting Chair Nanus declared that the motion passed unanimously.

39
40 Respectfully Submitted,

41
42
43 Gale Cerabona
44 Recorder

45
46 **MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2026, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.**