

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

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**MEETING DATE:** April 27, 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 (remote), Bruckman, Ross, Tapia, Lidawer (remote), Blumberg

**Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** City Manager Neukirch, Director of Public Works Bannon, Community Development Director Fontane, Assistant City Manager Jason, Finance Director McCaulou, Assistant City Manager Taub, Commander Curran, Communications Manager Bennett, Assistant to the City Manager Palbitska

**Also Present:** Corporation Counsel Elrod

**III. Approval of Minutes**

A. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Committee of the Whole Held on April 13, 2026

Councilmember Lidawer moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Committee of the Whole Held on April 13, 2026. Councilmember Bruckman seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

B. Approval of the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Regular Meeting of the Committee of the Whole of the City Council Held on April 13, 2026

Councilmember Bruckman moved to approve the Minutes of the Closed Session of the Regular Meeting of the Committee of the Whole Held on April 13, 2026. Councilmember Ross seconded the motion. Upon a voice vote, the Mayor declared the motion Passed (7 - 0).

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

**IV. Scheduled Business**

**A. Incentivizing Reduction in Use of Single-Use Bags**

City Manager Neukirch introduced tonight's discussion regarding incentivizing a reduction in the use of single-use bags.

Assistant City Manager Jason presented information on incentivizing a reduction in the use of single-use bags and staff's recommendations.

The Council, Corporation Counsel Elrod, and staff discussed other State bans outside of Illinois, Chicago and Northbrook's processes and outcomes, the need to narrow down to just retail space, lowering the square footage requirement, creation of a pilot program, information on impacts through PlacerAI data, continued work towards sustainability, support for the exemptions recommended by staff, optimal split between the merchant and the City as well as what the optimal tax could be to make an impact, and the importance of education for both retailers and the community.

Councilmember Center exited the meeting at 6:16 PM.

The majority of Council was interested in continuing to explore ways the City can assist with reducing single-use bags. A majority of the Council was in favor of a 50/50 split between the merchant and the City, as well as lowering the square footage requirement to a number in line with Northbrook's legislation.

City Manager Neukirch and Assistant City Manager Jason noted that staff will continue to work on this based on Council feedback and will present a follow-up report and recommendation at a future meeting.

**B. Historic Preservation Incentives**

City Manager Neukirch noted this is a high level overview and there are some policy considerations that are being sought by staff from the Council.

Community Development Director Fontane presented information pertaining to recommendations for encouraging historic preservation.

The Council, Corporation Counsel Elrod, and staff discussed preservation through financial tools and regulatory tools. They discussed discouraging loss of preservation through penalty tools.

The Council was interested in having staff conduct more research on topics related to property tax abatement, rehabilitation grants, reducing the required number of properties to constitute a district, zoning relief, establishing a historic resource demolition tax, and the prohibition of variances with the loss of a historic resource. A majority of the Council was not interested in exploring the waiving of permit fees or instituting a longer demolition delay.

City Manager Neukirch and Director Fontane stated that more information will be presented at a future meeting based on the feedback provided by the Council.

**V. Adjournment**

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

The Committee of the Whole adjourned its meeting at 7:01 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ashley Palbitska  
Assistant to the City Manager/Deputy City Clerk