

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, May 19, 2026
7

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

10 **CALL TO ORDER**

11 At 7 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: Ross
18

19 Student Council Absent: Pielet
20

21 Staff declared that a quorum was present.
22

23 Guests Present: Russ Whitaker, Partner/Rosanova & Whitaker Ltd.
24 Scott Borstein, Attorney/Neal & Leroy
25 Jacob Dodds, Architect/Dirk Denison Architects
26 Steve Gregory, Director of Land Planning & Landscape Architecture; Alex Eppert,
27 Project Manager/Eriksson Engineering Associates, Ltd.
28

29 Staff Present: Fontane, Burhop, & Mistretta
30

31 Others Present: Marcus Martinez, Corporation Counsel/Elrod Friedman LLP
32 Gale Cerabona/Recorder
33

34 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

35 *Regular Meeting of the Plan and Design Commission – May 5, 2026*
36

37 Chairperson Kerch thanked Vice Chair Nanus, the PDC, and Staff for their hard work during his absence.
38

39 Commissioner Nanus moved to approve the May 5, 2026, PDC regular meeting minutes. Commissioner
40 Mantis seconded the motion.
41

42 On a voice vote

43 Voting Yea Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, & Nanus

44 Voting Nay: None

45 Abstain: Chairperson Kerch; Commissioner Moore
46

47 Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed 5-0.
48

1 **SCHEDULED BUSINESS**

2 1. Public Hearing #PUD-2025-00087 to amend the following: (1) O11-2026, an ordinance approving a Special
3 Use Permit for a Planned Development for 227 residential-units (townhomes) with garages, parking
4 clubhouse amenity, landscaping, other related improvements, and a Special Use Permit for an Off-Street
5 Parking Lot; including modifications from City Code; (2) a Plat of Re-Subdivision approved by Resolution R22-
6 2026, with variations, and (3) Design Review, with variations (1660 and 1700 Old Deerfield Road)

7
8 Senior Planner Burhop reviewed the proposal:

- 9 • Recommendation
 - 10 ○ will be presented to the HC
- 11 • Site – 28.6-Acre Site
 - 12 ○ subdivide into 2 lots
- 13 • Changes to Modifications – Height
 - 14 ○ reduced by 2'
- 15 • New Modification – Temporary Marketing Signage
- 16 • New Modification – due to “for-sale” units
- 17 • Plat of Re-Subdivision Changes
- 18 • Floor & Elevation Plan Changes
- 19 • Inclusionary Housing
- 20 • Phasing & Construction Logistics
- 21 • Other Staff Comments
- 22 • Recommendation

23
24 Some PDC comments for Staff are.....

- 25 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked, and Senior Planner Burhop confirmed an access easement at
26 Devonshire & Ridge is being removed.
- 27 • Commissioner Mantis said the easement is no longer necessary. The trail easement will still be there.
28 Senior Planner Burhop concurred.
- 29 • Commissioner Moore asked, and Senior Planner Burhop said Staff recommends Bluegrass Restaurant
30 be in the landscape buffer. Director Fontane said this would be 1 contiguous buffer instead of 2.
- 31 • Commissioner Fettner asked:
 - 32 ○ and Director Fontane said the Applicant would maintain the buffer.
 - 33 ○ if there would be a new traffic study. Senior Planner Burhop said yes, when occupancy
34 reaches 90%.
- 35 • Commissioner Henry asked, and Senior Planner Burhop confirmed the HC will hear this case on
36 June 3, 2026.
- 37 • Commissioner Nanus asked about signs and flagpole. Senior Planner Burhop illustrated same – 11
38 signs on interior, 6 signs on property line, and 1 flagpole.
- 39 • Commissioner Moore asked how long the signs would be out. Senior Planner Burhop replied during
40 construction. Director Fontane said a timeframe could be set.
- 41 • Commissioner Henry asked if there could be signage up now. Senior Planner Burhop said yes,
42 pertaining to code.

43
44 Chairperson Kerch swore in Petitioner, Russ Whitaker, Partner at Rosanova & Whitaker Ltd., who gave a
45 presentation on M/I Homes:

- 46 • About M/I Homes
 - 47 ○ joint venture with Habitat

- 1 • Lake County Communities
- 2 • Recent M/I Townhome Communities
- 3 • Subject Property
- 4 • Updated – Rear/Side Elevations
 - 5 ○ bump-out is continuous at the back of the building
- 6 • Exterior Marketing Signage
- 7 • Interior Model Area
- 8 • Interior Marketing Signage

9

10 Commissioner Moore stated a lot of time was spent to reach an approval, and now items are being taken
11 away; feel their time was wasted.

12

13 Corporation Counsel Marcus said, regarding the code, construction signs are taken down once a Certification
14 of Occupancy is issued. Temporary signs can remain up for 30 days.

15

16 Chairperson Kerch asked about 50 lots and 227 townhomes. Mr. Whitaker said building pads will be placed
17 (in non-easement area); re-subdivision of the lot.

18

19 Councilperson Ross asked about 16x9 signs rather than 8x8 signs. Mr. Whitaker said this is what markets
20 well. To not disturb the community, they hope to sell the townhomes as soon as possible; robust signage
21 helps that.

22

23 Commissioner Moore asked, since this is going from 3 phases to 2, how that affects the end point. Mr.
24 Whitaker said they are phasing down. There is a shortage of homes in Illinois. The infrastructure will be
25 completed in Phase II. The original Habitat plan was to be completed in 24 months. This will also be
26 completed in 24 months.

27

28 Director Fontane said Phase I is public improvements, 75 units, and the clubhouse. City Council/Staff are not
29 concerned about the two Phases. Senior Planner Burhop clarified that 2-bedroom units will now be 3-
30 bedroom units.

31

32 Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. He swore in the following:

- 33 • Lisa Radin said the storm sewer should not connect with existing lines – residents would like a
34 guarantee. She stated a new traffic study should be conducted. Ms. Radin asked how the railroad
35 will be made safe. She discussed school busses. Signage will be overkill and impact visibility.

36

37 Chairperson Kerch said Engineering Staff will approve all sewer requirements. Senior Planner Burhop
38 concurred.

39

- 40 • Sandy Lurie said she hopes this developer is totally successful. A 16' sign is too big to have on Ridge
41 Road. She asked:
 - 42 ○ when the EPA makes its report
 - 43 ○ when an HOA would be formed
 - 44 ○ how the landlord would be responsible for critters
 - 45 ○ what would be screened on Ridge Road

46

47 Ms. Lurie said, regarding the Devonshire crosswalk, it never should have been there; a danger to the

1 community. Residents are heartened City Council removed it.

- 2
- 3 • Jim Lederer, owner of Bluegrass, said they would like a berm, 4’ screening since they are giving up
- 4 dirt. He noted the speed limit on their road is 25 mph.

5
6 Councilperson Ross said there was a lot of discussion at City Council about the crosswalk. Concern was
7 expressed by neighbors. She noted the PDC was not disrespected.

8
9 Some PDC comments are.....

- 10 • Commissioner Nanus said he is not a fan of a lot of signage; 1, not 2, signs would be okay on Old
- 11 Deerfield Road; well above what’s permitted in Highland Park. He is against this and is okay with
- 12 internal and wayfinding signage.
- 13 • Commissioner Moore concurred.
- 14 • Commissioner Fettner concurred, and noted other modifications are improvements.
- 15 • Commissioner Ihnchak:
 - 16 ○ concurred, and stated people know this development is here, as there is a housing shortage.
 - 17 ○ would like to see a bigger buffer between the homes and industrial properties to the north.
- 18 • Commissioner Mantis is generally okay with this proposal.

19
20 Mr. Whitaker said he has no objection to adding landscaping as long as residents confirm this. He asked
21 about signage, and noted Sign “S” would be placed. Other signs could be removed. Regarding screening
22 along Ridge Road, that won’t change. Regarding EPA, that information has been submitted (there are heavy
23 metals, soils which will be taken off-site); pending EPA approval.

24
25 Corporation Counsel Martinez reminded the Amendments are before the PDC. The development was
26 already approved.

27
28 Councilperson Ross asked about the landscape strip. Director Fontane expounded this is regarding the area
29 at the Bluegrass Restaurant.

30
31 Chairperson Kerch swore in the following audience member:

- 32 • Dan Wagner said he likes the lighting and suggested the flagpole not be lit.

33
34 Commissioner Mantis moved to direct Staff to draft Findings of Fact recommending approval with the
35 Condition there is:

- 36 • No more than one 16x9 foot sign on Old Deerfield Road
- 37 • No more than one 8x8 foot sign on Ridge Road

38
39 Commissioner Nanus seconded the motion.

40
41 On a roll call vote

42 Voting Yea	Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, &
	Nanus
44 Voting Nay:	None

45
46 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.

1 Commissioner Nanus moved to continue this matter to the June 16, 2026, PDC meeting. Commissioner
2 Moore seconded the motion.

3
4 On a roll call vote

5 Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak, Mantis, Moore, &
6 Nanus

7 Voting Nay: None
8

9 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously, there would be no new notice, and the
10 next meeting would take place at City Hall in Highland Park, at 7 p.m.
11

12 2. Public Hearing #PUD-2025-00086 for a Special Use Permit in the Nature of a Preliminary and Final
13 Planned Development; Design Review; variations and modifications from City Codes; and to amend the
14 Planned Development approval O29-98 for property commonly known as “Town of Fort Sheridan” including
15 the Town of Fort Sheridan Master Redevelopment Plan (0 Patten Road.; a vacant parcel with PIN
16 1611301063 adjacent to the property 3535 Patten Road)
17

18 Senior Planner Burhop reviewed the proposal:

- 19 • Recommendation
- 20 • Site
 - 21 ○ 1.33 acres
 - 22 ○ RM1 zoning
- 23 • Background
 - 24 ○ approved in 1998
 - 25 ○ designated setbacks
 - 26 ○ driveway access along Patten Road
- 27 • Neighborhood
- 28 • Site Plan
 - 29 ○ 10 detached single-family homes
 - 30 ○ private cul-de-sac
- 31 • Modifications – Setbacks
- 32 • Modifications – Other
- 33 • The Ravines Open Space Plan
- 34 • Landscaping Plan
- 35 • Renderings
- 36 • Elevations
- 37 • Inclusionary Zoning
 - 38 ○ cash payment-in-lieu of \$370,800
- 39 • Other Comments
 - 40 ○ storm water management
 - 41 ○ air-conditioning mechanical units, screening
 - 42 ○ fencing
 - 43 ○ exterior lighting
 - 44 ○ pedestrian movement
- 45 • Recommendation

46
47 Some PDC comments are.....

- 1 • Commissioner Fettner said:
 - 2 ○ if the previously-slated tower was built, the Applicant would not have to come to the PDC.
 - 3 Senior Planner Burhop and Director Fontane concurred.
 - 4 ○ there would not be a traffic study. Senior Planner Burhop advised that Staff concurs, as it is
 - 5 a 10-unit plan.
- 6 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked:
 - 7 ○ about common open space. Senior Planner Burhop said the MPP supersedes this; over 20%.
 - 8 ○ where the open space is. Senior Planner Burhop illustrated same, and said there is no
 - 9 subdividing requested.
- 10 • Commissioner Mantis asked why the second tower wasn't built. Director Fontane said it is unknown.
- 11 • Chairperson Kerch said, due to the MRP never changing, that's why this needs so much relief.

12
13 Director Fontane added, regarding homes off of Bradley Ct., those are the rear homes on the cul-de-
14 sac. Senior Planner Burhop displayed same and said, access would have to be amended.
15

- 16 • Commissioner Henry asked for clarification regarding setbacks for each house for RM1 standards.
- 17 Senior Planner Burhop said setbacks are 25' in the front yard, 10' in the side yard.
- 18 • Commissioner Ihnchak concurred and identified the east single-family dwellings.
- 19 • Commissioner Moore:
 - 20 ○ asked if this is under the Lake County Zoning District. Senior Planner Burhop said no, this
 - 21 refers to the MRP.
 - 22 ○ concurred with Commissioners Henry and Ihnchak.

23
24 Senior Planner Burhop noted these are 2 acres per unit.
25

26 Chairperson Kerch swore in Petitioner Scott Borstein, Attorney with Neal & Leroy, who advised this is the
27 culmination of a year of thoughts and planning. This is a PUD. Based on the market, this is the best use.
28 There are 25' front-yard setbacks, and 9' side-yard setbacks.
29

30 Chairperson Kerch swore in Jacob Dodds, Architect with Dirk Denison Architects, who shared the setting of
31 Fort Sheridan was the inspiration. A cluster of homes is envisioned around a courtyard. The site has irregular
32 geometry. A PowerPoint presentation was given:

- 33 • Renderings
 - 34 ○ pitched roofs
 - 35 ○ fenced landscaping (no actual fence)
 - 36 ○ clear-story windows
 - 37 ○ natural materials from Fort Sheridan (stucco, masonry, zinc roofs, stained wood)
- 38 • Conceptual photos were shown
- 39 • Materials were displayed
- 40 • Site Plan
- 41 • Elevations
- 42 • Homes are 2,300 square feet on the first floor with a half second floor and basement
 - 43 ○ 2 types

44
45 Chairperson Kerch swore in Steve Gregory, Director of Land Planning & Landscape Architecture with
46 Eriksson Engineering Associates, Ltd., who advised there will be:

- 47 • native, adaptive plants

- 1 • arborvitae
- 2 • a lot of green in the interior, perimeter
- 3 • Oak tree will remain; will work with Staff and Forestry

4
5 Chairperson Kerch swore in Alex Eppert, Project Manager with Eriksson Engineering Associates, Ltd., who
6 stated there will be:

- 7 • a natural highpoint on the north traveling south
- 8 • drainage to the west, south, and east into the ravine
- 9 • discharge and funnels in a concrete trough
- 10 • access from Patten Road
- 11 • 2 exit points. A lift station is proposed.
- 12 • water tapped from Patten Rd. and looped to Bradley Ct.; existing hydrant will be relocated up the hill.
- 13 • grading and erosion control; some steep slopes

14
15 Mr. Borstein said this is intended as a condominium development. Individual lots won't be subdivided. A
16 common area will be the private yard, patio, and courtyard.

17
18 More PDC comments are.....

- 19 • Commissioner Nanus asked if Fire Staff was consulted due to turning radius. Mr. Dodds said yes, this
20 is a Preliminary Plan. Fire Staff had no issues. The center element may be an issue and is negotiable.
21 Director Fontane said all PUDs are sent to the Fire Department.
- 22 • Commissioner Mantis asked what the public benefit is. Mr. Borstein said the site has been vacant for
23 almost 30 years. This plan is a public benefit; market demand. Significant landscaping and
24 beautification will be added as well as Heritage trees.

25
26 Chairperson Kerch stated all those items are not a public benefit. They are standard for a PUD.

27
28 Mr. Borstein noted possible preservation of a monument sign may occur.

29
30 Director Fontane corrected they are going to plant the same species of Heritage trees.

- 31
32 • Commissioner Fettner asked if any Heritage trees are being removed. Senior Planner Burhop said no.
33 It was noted the plan was reviewed by the City Forester, and there were no concerns.

34
35 Mr. Gregory said there are some Key trees. Heritage trees will be replaced per code.

- 36
37 • Commissioner Moore said 3' of relief is being asked for side yards. There is a concern that would be
38 too small. Mr. Dodds said the typical space is 5' between buildings. There are no issues.
- 39 • Commissioner Ihnchak asked, and Mr. Dodds said it would be 5' total.

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41 Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. He swore in the following:

- 42 • Lisa Rosenberg said Fort Sheridan is a historic environment. She has concerns about:
 - 43 ○ density and site plan
 - 44 ○ spatial character
 - 45 ○ architecture and materials are a departure

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47 She urges the PDC to have this revised; not violate setbacks; have consistent and historic character.

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- Philip West who lives adjacent (and serves on nearby Boards) noted he sent a letter. He is not opposed, as this needs to be developed. What he opposes is the site plan; should be consistent; place homes on Bradley Ct. or across the street; would blend into the neighborhood. Variances should only be for extenuating circumstances.
 - Steve Kanter lives in the home that borders this property. He sent a letter and is upset, as he moved here to have homeowners' rights, setbacks protected. Open space will be removed. Three or more trees are proposed to be removed.
 - Anthony Rizzato represents himself and some neighbors from Bradley Ct. Issues are:
 - variance exceeds square footage of single-family homes
 - proper notification wasn't received
 - regarding the MRP, this development doesn't reflect neighborhood character, compatibility with existing fabric
 - wants quality design not quantity
 - green space is minimized
 - control impacts of new subdivisions

18 In closing, a smaller, non-encroaching project would decrease impacts; expanding ravines. Slopes
19 are part of the ravines.
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- Sarah Appel noted she is a resident of the Ravines Condominiums and stated this project:
 - is too dense
 - homes are supposed to face the street; not consistent
 - original Fort buildings were made of clay. Stucco bothers her.
 - arched entryways are currently present
 - brick wall faces Patten Road

28 Ms. Appel believes this would be a big mistake. Putting RM1 homes would enhance the
29 neighborhood and preserve property values. She is concerned about traffic, parking, and sewers. The
30 run-off from the bridge goes into the ravine.
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- Cindy Zarcone has lived in Fort Sheridan, which is a sanctuary, for 5 years. The density proposed is extreme. A condo community is a lovely idea, but it takes away green space; inconsistent. Tree preservation, traffic, parking are significant. The original tower is being extended. She is against this. Ms. Zarcone doesn't like removing the entrance from the south side of Patten Road, as it is historical. A large MHA entertainment facility has been approved; will increase water flow and impact water run-off into the ravine.

39 Final PDC comments are.....

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- Commissioner Moore said the houses are too big. Size of gangways between buildings is small. Smaller houses would help the housing stock. There needs to be more setbacks.
 - Commissioner Mantis said the brick element missing is foundational. There isn't a shortage of townhouses.
 - Commissioner Ihnchak agrees; would like fewer homes and more green space. The pillar is iconic for the area.
 - Commissioner Fettner said it seems denser than a tall building. The design is nice; should be more consistent with Fort Sheridan; would like to see a different plan.

- Commissioner Henry said everyone wants to see this property developed. Building materials aren't consistent; small spaces between homes. There are traffic, storm water issues; challenging plan.
- Commissioner Nanus said it's a challenging lot. He commends the Petitioner for trying to make it viable. He would like to see a different housing plan.
- Chairperson Kerch wants to defend the Master Plan. He doesn't want to change that. This plan has double the density. The public benefit is non-existent. Chairperson Kerch is worried about the trees; not consistent with any other products at Fort Sheridan.

Commissioner Mantis moved to continue this matter to the June 16, 2026, PDC meeting. Commissioner Nanus seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

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

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

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Information Item: Administrative Design Review Update

Senior Planner Burhop noted an Administrative Design Review approved:

- a utility pad at 636 Ridge Road
- an item at the Woodhouse Spa, 1850 Second Street
- a temporary trailer at Kia McGrath, 250 Skokie Valley Road

2. Next Regular Meeting – June 2, 2026

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 2, 2026.

3. Case Briefing

There was no Case Briefing.

BUSINESS FROM THE PUBLIC

There was no Business from the Public.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Nanus moved to adjourn at 10 p.m. Commissioner Fettner seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

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

Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted, Gale Cerabona/Recorder

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING ON MAY 5, 2026, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.