

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

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, June 16, 2026

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

CALL TO ORDER

At 7 p.m., Chairperson Kerch called the meeting to order. Staff was asked to call the roll.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & Nanus

Commissioner Absent: Moore

Councilmember Absent: Ross

Student Council Absent: Piolet

Staff declared that a quorum was present.

Guests Present: Alec Thornton, Architect/LCM Architects, LLC
Cal Bernstein, Attorney/Samuels & Bernstein
Von Joseph Hanovnikian/Petitioner
Michael Ezgur, Attorney/Acosta Ezgur, LLC
David Goldman, Founder/Structa LLC
Jeff Goulette, Founding Partner & Design Principal/SGW Architecture & Design
Zach Kenitzer, Manager, Land Planning & Entitlements and Scott Barenbrugge,
VP of Landscaping/M/I Homes

Staff Present: Fontane, Burhop, Hoffmann, & Mistretta

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

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

Chair Kerch asked that the last item under Scheduled Business be taken first, as the Applicant requested a continuance. Senior Planner Burhop confirmed same and said July 21, 2026, is a date certain.

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

Commissioner Henry moved to continue this case to the July 21, 2026, PDC meeting. Commissioner Nanus seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & 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.

Back to.....

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Plan and Design Commission – May 19, 2026

Commissioner Henry moved to approve the May 19, 2026, PDC regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Mantis seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & Nanus

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed unanimously.

Back to.....

SCHEDULED BUSINESS

1. #DES-2026-00096, Design Review Amendment, Sign Package Amendment, and Variations from the City Code (791-799 Central Avenue)

Planner Mistretta reviewed the proposal:

- Existing Property
 - 12,000 square-foot lot
 - zoned B5
 - two-story parking garage
 - approved in October, 2025
- Amendment Summary
 - changing exterior material, etc.
- Considerations
- Site Plan was illustrated
- Renderings were shown
 - thermoplastic, bollards; replaced knee wall
 - new canopy sign, ground sign, etc.
- Staff Comments
- Approval Process & Recommendation
- Recommendation

Mr. Alec Thornton, Architect with LCM Architects, LLC, said Keshet's identity is being heightened. Thermoplastic is a heated sheet applied to crosswalks. He explained further changes.

Commissioner Henry asked if the bollard will be as secure as the knee wall. Mr. Thornton said yes, standard spacing will occur to deter vehicles.

Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. There was no one.

Commissioner Nanus moved to approve these Amendments & Variations. Commissioner Fettner seconded the motion.

Commissioner Ihnchak stated the COA is dated for June 2, 2026. Senior Planner Burhop noted this would be updated to June 16, 2026.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea	Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & Nanus
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Voting Nay:	None
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Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.

2. Final Plat of Re-Subdivision with Variations (0 Meadow Lane, a vacant lot with the PIN 1616310002 that is adjacent to 1700 Meadow Lane)

Planner Mistretta reviewed the proposal:

- Existing Property
 - 2 acres
 - zoned R3
- Proposed Re-Subdivision
 - Lot 1 & Lot 2
 - lots are vacant and buildable
- Zoning Analysis Chart
- Requested Variations (2)
- City Department Comments
 - Engineering - Lot 2 will accept Lot 1's drainage
- Utility Agency Comments
 - easement provisions per Com Ed
- Public Comment
- Approval Process
- Recommendation

Senior Planner Burhop advised 5 years ago, this was 1 property which was then subdivided. This is now new ownership; is compliant. This is not part of the Hibernia development. This was scheduled for June 2, 2026.

Some PDC comments are.....

- Commissioner Henry asked:

- what the impact is of Engineering's comments. Director Fontane said it's within the development/subdivision. This has to be considered when purchased.
- how this can be addressed. Chair Kerch said there are no building plans. Engineers will review as part of the permit process.

Corporation Counsel Martinez said drainage facilities will need to be maintained, or citations could be issued. Director Fontane informed a Condition could be stated that drainage facilities could be added from Lot 2 to Lot 1.

- Commissioner Mantis shared this seems consistent with buying any other house in Highland Park.
- Commissioner Ihnchak said, regarding the Plat of 2 lots, 3 lots are being created. Senior Planner Burhop stated this is not a through-lot with frontage along the north. He noted a preliminary setback analysis was provided.
- Commissioner Fettner said the HOA has concerns during construction. He asked if there are rules for this. Senior Planner Burhop concurred.

Petitioner, Cal Bernstein, Attorney with Samuels & Bernstein, said this is preliminary. Water will be addressed by a Civil Engineer for the homes' orientation. Nothing has been designed yet. These are irregular-shaped lots which require variations. Building permits would be submitted. Access is through the easements throughout Hibernia. This request meets the standards (minus variations). Lots are a proper size.

Chairperson Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. The following came forward:

- John Strom said he lives opposite the new construction. His main concern on Thornwood Lane is driveways and curb cuts. He hopes owners of the houses exit on Meadow Road. This cul-de-sac has grandchildren who play outdoors, so traffic is a concern. Utility lines will not be underground. Mr. Strom asked if poles or electricity would be installed.
- Michael McGee:
 - gave a history noting this was a wetland area. He is curious if Meadow Lane has been granted access.

Mr. Bernstein responded, per easements of Hibernia, access could be via driveways on Thornwood Lane. It is unknown how these lots will be developed.

- asked if the agreement includes Meadow Lane. Chair Kerch said the easement, by-right, is via Thornwood Lane. Mr. Bernstein is unaware if there are legacy rights on Meadow Lane. He could look into same.

Commissioner Henry asked, and Senior Planner Burhop said there is no frontage along this property.

Commissioner Mantis moved to adopt Findings of Fact recommending approval. Commissioner Nanus seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

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

1 Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.

2
3 3. Public Hearing #REZ-2026-00014 to amend the Zoning Map from the R1 to the R6 Zoning District (1047
4 Livingston Street)

5
6 Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- 7 • Project Summary
 - 8 ○ rezoning from R1 to R6
- 9 • Existing Conditions
 - 10 ○ built in 1927
 - 11 ○ zoned R1 since 1947
- 12 • Aerial map was shown
 - 13 ○ has 10 single-family houses
 - 14 ○ flood plain
- 15 • Neighborhood Context
- 16 • Zoning Comparison
 - 17 ○ no buildable area (75'-wide)
 - 18 ○ City will rezone surrounding areas also
- 19 • Recommendation

20
21 Some PDC comments are.....

- 22 • Commissioner Nanus asked why these weren't originally zoned R1. Planner Hoffmann said this area is
23 very old and in a flood area; detention area. Senior Planner Burhop stated the first zoning code
24 dates back to 1922. Most of these homes were built in the 40s.
- 25 • Commissioner Mantis asked if this would be rezoned R6. Senior Planner Burhop said yes, it's
26 consistent with the neighborhood.
- 27 • Commissioner Ihnchak said she wonders, regarding flood-plain regulations, what these are, as
28 building isn't necessarily recommended. Director Fontane said, in 2006, this area was rezoned to R6
29 with 10 homes and storm-water management (completed in the last year). Chair Kerch added there
30 is no proposal to build. Senior Planner Burhop said it appears to be in the FEMA 500-year flood
31 plain. Storage may be considered onsite. Planner Hoffmann noted there are a lot of single-family
32 homes in this area and are closely-sized to the Applicant's property.

33
34 Chair Kerch swore in the owner, Mr. Von Joseph Hanovnikian who advised Staff covered everything.

35
36 Chair Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. There was no one.

37
38 Commissioner Henry moved to approve Findings of Fact to rezone from R1 to R6. Commissioner Nanus
39 seconded the motion.

40
41 Corporation Counsel Martinez noted this is recommending approval. Commissioners Henry & Nanus
42 accepted same.

43
44 On a voice vote

45 Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, &
46 Nanus

47 Voting Nay: None

Director Fontane declared that the motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Hearing #PUD-2026-00083 & PUD-2026-00084 for a Zoning Map Amendment to Rezone from RM1A to RO, a Special Use Permit in the Nature of a Concurrent Preliminary and Final Planned Development, and Design Review, with Modifications and Variations from City Code, for multi-story Multiple-Family Developments (1696-1704 McGovern Street and 793 Laurel Avenue)

Planner Hoffmann reviewed the proposal:

- Project Summary was presented on April 21, 2026
 - Chair Kerch said though he was absent from this meeting, he reviewed the audio.
- Rezoning, Zoning, & Design Review Summary
- Existing Conditions
 - vacant church & vacant church residence includes parking lot; common ownership
- Property Photos
- Neighborhood Context
- PUD Request
 - rezoning of RM1A to RO
 - 34 total units
 - 67 parking spaces
- Zoning Analysis – Setbacks for 1696 McGovern Street
- Zoning Analysis – Setbacks for 793 Laurel Avenue
 - 5' of encroachment
- Lot Coverage Analysis
- Zoning Analysis
 - lowered site by 1.5'
 - stories are reduced to 5
- Height
- Height & Coverage Exhibit
 - average is 51.27%
 - comparisons were shared
- Zoning Analysis – Lot Area & Density
- Zoning Analysis – Article 23 (Step-backs)
 - 3-5 stories
 - rendering was shown
 - deck area
- Parking
- Off-Street Parking & Loading
 - no requirement
 - 40 underground spaces at McGovern site
 - 27 at Laurel site
- Landscaping
 - trees are being provided in the parkway
 - landscaping around foundation
- Materials
- Public Benefit
 - burying utilities; necessary per City Staff

- Design Review
 - lighting
- Visual Clearance
- Housing Commission Review
- Traffic Study
- Other Comments
- Recommendation

Some PDC comments for Staff are.....

- Commissioner Henry asked if discussions have occurred regarding the public benefit. Planner Hoffmann said the proposal is the same.
- Commissioner Mantis:
 - asked if there is any analysis for height and density. There are few units. Planner Hoffmann said it exceeds RM2 for density and is on the lower end for units. Director Fontane said this maximizes density and has a bigger envelope.
 - said the only reason to go to this zone is for height and density. Director Fontane said density cannot be varied. Planner Hoffmann expounded.

Chair Kerch identified the variation. Planner Hoffmann said landscaping and lighting don't count for the public benefit. He noted the height has changed from 70.25' to 68.5'.

Mr. Michael Ezgur, Attorney with Acosta Ezgur, LLC, introduced himself, Mr. David Goldman, Founder with Structa LLC, and Jeff Goulette, Founding Partner & Design Principal with SGW Architecture & Design. Mr. Ezgur noted changes were made per the feedback. Lot coverage was reduced, setbacks and spacing are increased. There is no relief request for landscaping or lighting (except for 1 area of lighting). Comparisons in changes of the building were shown; contextual. They are comfortable with the RO district. A 5th story required a 15' setback. This is a corner lot and has 2 rear lots. The McGovern Street project received a 25' setback. Lot coverage is less than buildings to the west. They are still working on the Public Benefit (transformers are in the alley) as well as Affordable Housing.

Some PDC comments are.....

- Commissioner Nanus asked what has changed other than height reductions. Mr. Goldman noted the rest of the building hasn't changed. Mr. Roulette said the fire-pump rooms and hydrant were relocated.
- Commissioner Mantis asked, and Mr. Goldman said unit sizes have not changed. There are 34 units. Planner Hoffmann stated these figures were not provided last time.
- Commissioner Ihnchak asked about public open space along Laurel Avenue. Mr. Goldman said it is private space and accessible to passersby. Director Fontane added the sum of the units doesn't include common area. Mr. Goldman said it's just the units.

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

- George Sang noted he is a resident at McGovern House. He stated, if this is granted, the buildings would be close together, and views would be impacted. Considerations should not be given to this development due to the impact.
- Rhonda Miller, also a resident of McGovern House, informed the church was there and operating. This is a different scenario. She asked if the 2 buildings would be constructed simultaneously; need access in the alley from their garages.

More PDC comments.....

- Commissioner Fettner appreciates the Applicant taking this seriously; scaling it down. He'd like to see progress in this downtown area. This is a lot better. Variances and this project seem reasonable.
- Commissioner Mantis wants to see this go through. It's a good project. Foot traffic will feed into downtown. He would like to see more units.
- Commissioner Ihnchak said this is a good overall development. She is grappling with the bulk.
- Commissioner Nanus agrees with Commissioner Mantis. He would like the Applicant to buy the house next door.
- Commissioner Henry expressed the density bothers him. The City hasn't provided much guidance; is troubling.
- Chair Kerch commends the Petitioner for the changes; is much better. There are a number of issues that need resolution (i.e. public benefit).

Commissioner Mantis moved to continue this case to the July 21, 2026, PDC meeting. Commissioner Fettner seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea	Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & 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.

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

Senior Planner Burhop reviewed the proposal:

- Recommendation
 - considered on May 19, 2026
- Site – 28.6-Acre Site
- May 19, 2025, Summary
 - reduced height by 2'
 - for-sale product
 - 63 units go to 3-bedroom units
 - marketing signage
- May 19 – Temporary Marketing Signage
- Updated Marketing Signage
 - decreased
 - signage to be removed in 3 years at most
- Temporary Marketing Signage
- Onsite Signage was shown
- Inclusionary Housing Update

- Phasing & Construction Logistics
- Exterior Lighting & Landscaping Updates
 - removing fewer trees
- NW Buffering
 - 3.3'-wide buffer
- Offsite Screening Near NW Buffer
 - development-agreement consideration
- Conditions for Consideration
- Recommendation

Petitioner, Zach Kenitzer, Manager, Land Planning & Entitlements with M/I Homes, noted the requests were to revise marketing signage and engage with the neighbor/owner of Bluegrass Restaurant. The owner of Comfort Care has rights to the easement. He will also maintain the landscaping. The landscape strip is irrigated. They found Juniper trees to provide this landscape strip for Mr. Lederer, owner of Bluegrass. The coach lights are present and are garage lights. These are included in the photometric study. This for-sale product commands reduced lighting. A consultant was brought in regarding trees. There is an existing fence with landscaping around it. The 6 trees will be planted.

Chair Kerch asked if anyone in the audience wishes to speak. The following came forward:

- Dan Wagner said he is surprised about 3-bedroom units. He believes there will be more than 13 high-school students. It's a better project. Mr. Wagner doesn't like the flagpoles. Mr. Kenitzer responded the school district provided the information. He noted there are no lights on the flagpoles. Director Fontane noted the fiscal-impact study was submitted to school districts, and there were no comments. Mr. Lederer said he would like a buffer. There are 6 small Junipers in a 110' area. They are trying to retain privacy. He would like to see more trees.

Final PDC comments are.....

- Commissioner Henry asked about lighting the flag. Mr. Kenitzer said they are amenable to place a small light. Director Fontane said the flag could be lit different ways. Mr. Kenitzer noted the flagpoles are temporary.
- Commissioner Henry said he has not been in favor of this. He noted Mr. Lederer has attended many of these meetings. The request is significant to Mr. Lederer and insignificant to this project.
- Commissioner Fettner said he appreciates the marketing-signage reduction. Among 110', 6 trees seem minimal. Mr. Kenitzer said they are committed to continuing conversations. He explained they've tried to create a larger experience for the patrons of Bluegrass and the residents of this project.
- Commissioner Nanus asked, and Mr. Kenitzer said a rendering could be made. It was stated this could be a Condition.

Chairperson Kerch swore in Scott Barenbrugge, VP of Landscaping with M/I Homes who said this has been a discussion that's ongoing.

Corporation Counsel Martinez discussed Conditions related to a request. Director Fontane noted there is no relief being requested; it's an enhancement. Senior Planner Burhop illustrated same.

Mr. Barenbrugge said, regarding maintenance, plantings will be implemented either way.

Commissioner Henry moved to adopt Findings of Fact recommending approval with Conditions presented by City Staff and the Rendering presented to City Council. Commissioner Fettner seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea Commissioners Fettner, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & Nanus

Voting Nay: Chairperson Kerch; Henry

Director Fontane declared that the motion passed 4-2.

Chair Kerch stated this project is too dense; an enclave; monotonous.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Information Item: Administrative Design Review Update

There were no Updates.

2. Next Regular Meeting – July 21, 2026

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 21, 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 9:50 p.m. Commissioner Henry seconded the motion.

On a voice vote

Voting Yea Chairperson Kerch; Commissioners Fettner, Henry, Ihnchak (remotely), Mantis, & Nanus

Voting Nay: None

Chairperson Kerch declared that the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gale Cerabona

Recorder

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING ON MAY 19, 2026, WERE APPROVED WITHOUT CORRECTIONS.