

# Highland Park Neighborhood Association

## March 2021 Minutes

Meeting Date: March 9, 2021

At 6 pm President Elizabeth Sanfelippo welcomed everyone arriving into the virtually held Highland Park Neighborhood Association March meeting. She introduced herself as President and Secretary Judy Jones. She expressed appreciation to Stephen Foster, President of the Five Points Neighborhood Association, for setting up Highland Park's meetings via Zoom.

Sanfelippo asked if everyone had received the February Meeting Minutes and whether anyone had any corrections or addition to those minutes. No one had any changes or corrections. Larry Contri moved adoption of the February Meeting Minutes as presented. John Somerset seconded Contri's motion. Sanfelippo took a vote; there were 14 yea votes and no opposed so the February minutes were approved.

Sanfelippo confirmed attendees as per city instructions, doing a verbal roll call of Highland Park residents on the call (additional names were added later as individuals joined the meeting).

Sanfelippo said she didn't think there was anyone from the Police Department or Public works on the call - but that she hoped everyone knew that if they were having any issues residents could report them to 311, adding they could also report them the neighborhood via email at [highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com](mailto:highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com).

Sanfelippo asked whether Shaunda Johnson was on the call. There was no response. Sanfelippo explained that Johnson was to attend tonight to share about the program 'Alabama Apart Together'.

### **Overview - Proposed Development Project on 23<sup>rd</sup> Street**

Sanfelippo introduced Justin Worthington, with the Development Team for Red Street Investment Company. He thanked residents for being willing to listen to them share about this project and for the interest in it that has been shown thus far. He said they greatly valued the feedback and input from residents. He said Red Street Investment Company was the group proposing the 23<sup>rd</sup> Street development. Worthington said in addition to being a part of the development group that he was a Highland Park neighbor, residing in Alley Royale which is just on the south side of the property off Arlington Avenue. He said he has lived her for almost 18 months and has fallen in love with Highland Park. He said since arriving he had gotten married and he and his wife couldn't love the area more. Worthington said this is

why they could not be more excited about bringing a high-quality boutique development that they feel will be congruent with the area, fit in nicely with the character of Highland Park. He said they were trying to bring a diversified product that will appeal to multiple demographics, that they will have the traditional townhomes on the front of the site and will have flats on the back that will be geared more toward the senior segment of the population. He then turned the presentation over to Lauren Barrett with Barrett Architectural Studios.

Barrett began by thanking Sanfelippo for comments/feedback forwarded to them a couple of weeks ago. Barrett told the group they were still in the 'due diligence mode' and evaluating the feasibility of the project. He said they'd like to talk more generally about questions tonight and then as they proceed more into design. Barrett said they were taking their cues from setback requirements as required by the special district they're in, that they are not requesting any zoning changes. He explained that honoring the minimum/maximum setback requirements on 23<sup>rd</sup> has led them to a brownstone style development with parking in the rear, a design consistent with the historical brownstone developments in New York City. Barrett said they were limited themselves to ten units and because of that the units not facing 23<sup>rd</sup> Street will have front loading garages. He went on to say they were very early in design, that they had developed some preliminary floor plans. Barrett said this is pretty much where they are with respect to the 'big picture', saying there had been some comments about their site development - and that Taylor Schoel was on the call and would respond to those.

Sanfelippo asked if the developers could 'share their screen', explaining they had forwarded some initial renderings which Sanfelippo had, with permission, sent along to our local Highland Park Historical Advisory Committee, to get some early initial feedback. She said the way the city functions, the development groups get so far down the line developing their project documents and get ready to pull a permit - and then at that late hour they get pushback/concerns from our Historical Advisory Committee and the City's Design Review Committee. She reiterated that we were following city procedures and not trying to skip any steps. Sanfelippo said she (at the suggestion of one of the LHAC members) felt the city should actually consider incorporating a mandatory 'preliminary review' in their process. Sanfelippo said luckily the development group reached out to the neighborhood and that we were able to make that preliminary review happen. Sanfelippo asked again about screen sharing renderings, the developers said they did not have the renderings with them but that if Sanfelippo did, she could share them. Sanfelippo replied that she would check to see if she could pull them up.

Taylor Schoel introduced himself saying he was with Schoel Engineering who would be the civil engineers who would be assisting the Barretts and Red Street with the

development. He reiterated they appreciated the comments and questions related to the site development. He said they intended to design consistent with any city ordinances. Schoel said they were really trying to match the grade that was there, not bring in a lot of dirt, work the development around the existing condition. Sanfelippo was able to access her copies of the renderings, she shared them and asked questions to orient the group to the drawings. Schoel confirmed they intended to maintain the existing 23<sup>rd</sup> St entrance. Schoel said they had the Fire Department by back in the fall in an early due diligence period, to confirm access was consistent with the Fire Department requirements.

Sanfelippo went on to other renderings and asked Justin to tell residents what they were seeing. He told the group that the units at the top were the more traditional brownstones they were planning right off 23<sup>rd</sup>. He said at the bottom were the flats that would go on the back of the property. He said there could be an upper level depending on buyer preferences when finishing them out but they were really being designed to have most of the living area on the ground floor. He said the cottages were to the left, perpendicular to the brownstones and the flats. He reiterated this was early in the design, they expected to have multiple design drafts - but that they thought Lauren and Brian did a great job on this first round of drawings.

Schoel turned the presentation over to Jamie Wadkins who introduced herself as President of Bayer Properties and that she was representing the owner of the 2222 Building and this property. She said she wanted to share a little history, to be completely transparent on how they'd progressed to where they are, going on to say that this property is tied to the 2222 Building through a settlement agreement this property, the parking lot, served as overflow parking to satisfy parking requirements for the 2222 Arlington Building. The property is zoned R6 but the settlement agreement actually allowed other uses as well. Under the settlement agreement we could consider a lot of uses as long as they were within the 35 foot height restriction- so that could be a parking deck, a small office building and other uses - or it could be townhomes just as we're doing. Wadkins said one of the most important things to Highland Park residents is that the settlement agreement included the 35-foot height restriction from 23<sup>rd</sup> Street. And it restricts the footprint of any development to the current asphalt, the actual parking lot. She told the group that as they have heard from the other developers for the 2222 Building, the 2222 developers have now satisfied their parking requirement without the use of this parking lot. She said what Bayer would like to do now is sell this parking lot to Worthington for these townhomes. Wadkins said this project would remove any future parking decks or more dense office building, that this proposed development is under the height restriction of 35 feet. She said they have confirmed with the City that their plans, as currently designed, comply with all of the Highland Overlay District boundaries and restrictions as well as those for R6. She told residents that

from the property owner's standpoint, they appreciate their time. She said as they move forward hopefully all can agree this is a quality development that will fit into the fabric of the neighborhood and will represent an improvement over some alternate uses that could be put into place. She said they would appreciate the neighborhood's support in moving this project along.

Sanfelippo said that Highland Park and Milner Crescent resident Phillip Foster was on the call tonight - and is a zoning guru; that Foster had highlighted an interesting point that the lines of the neighborhoods between Redmont and Highland Park almost goes through the middle of this property. Foster shared that according to the city's GIS system the Neighborhood Association boundary line crosses through one of the two pieces of property involved in that parking lot, 1231 and 1235, one of them kind of surrounds the other, and a portion of 1235, the portion closest to the townhomes that are existing now, that particular portion of the lot appears to be in Redmont. But the rest of it appears to be in Highland Park. So, he said, the form-based overlay for Highland Park would probably come into play for that property as well. Sanfelippo thanked him for that clarification saying she had not yet passed that on to the developers and wanted to be sure tonight they were aware of it. Foster said that one more piece of information that Schoel may already be aware of, in terms of engineering for the property, that it was his (Foster's) understanding that there was already a stormwater easement and a stormwater drainline put in to drain excess surface water from that parking lot - that runs through the "mini-park" (vacant lot) on Milner Crescent. He said he wasn't aware of what the draining situation was up there but there was, at one point, some sub-surface lines put in place to alleviate drainage from the parking lot into the sewer that runs below Milner Crescent - or that is his understanding. Schoel said they have not done a topographic survey yet but from just walking the site there were a number on inlets from the parking lot that discharge as Foster described, that they believe is through the east through that site down to Milner Crescent, that their plan would be to tie any new storm water improvements on their side into the inlets, the pipes before they discharge off the property. Schoel confirmed they intended to re-use the existing underground storm drains under the property and comply fully with any relevant ordinances.

Sanfelippo asked if there were any more questions. Rick Hubbard shared that he lives on Milner Crescent - and wanted to ask about the units on the back of the lot, closest to Milner Crescent - whether those units would have any decks on the back. Barrett replied saying they will have a deck or a terrace on the back, that they will be kind of tucked into the building, they don't project beyond the building, beyond the rear wall of the unit themselves. Hubbard asked if the developers had plans to do anything with the hill that comes down to the rock wall where all the kudzu is, will it be changed or will it just stay a 'kudzu hill'. Barrett replied they were trying

not to change the topography of it, it will be part of their landscape plan that they submit later on as they develop an overall landscape plan for the property. Sanfelippo asked if there were any plans yet for some kind of landscaping buffer on the rear of the property? Schoel said they were not far enough into planning yet to consider buffers but they would look into that going forward. Grace Goodrich shared that she was a new resident at Milner Crescent and Highland Avenue, she said her house literally backs up to this proposed development - and she asked about the timeline for the project. Justin replied, that given where they are, that he thinks if they could be breaking ground by summer, that would be optimal for them, that they are planning roughly a twelve month construction process - which hopefully would mean they would start in June 2021 and complete in June 2022, give or take a few months. Hubbard asked if they had any price ranges yet for the units. The reply was that they were trying to come out north of \$400 a foot; the brownstones are being planned for up to 2800 square feet and the smaller units will be 1900 square feet - meaning from \$900,000 to \$1.4 million.

Anne Wailes asked to confirm the total number of units, brownstones, flats and cottages. The developers confirmed they planned a total of ten units.

Joe Wilson shared they live across Milner Crescent from the vacant lot that is adjacent to this property. He said he could assure all that during heavy rains a tremendous amount of water, presumably from the parking lot surface water, comes down and runs through the gap in the wall that all on Milner are familiar with - and he suspected the developers will be if not already. He said he was sure it would be addressed but wanted to throw it out there.

Larry Contri asked Barrett about the floor plans, how many bedrooms and so on. Barrett replied the units closest to the park are either 3 bedrooms or 2 bedrooms and a study and 2-1/2 baths and a 2-car garage. The brownstones - or three levels - 3 bedrooms units with the master occupying most all of the top floor. He said they project to include an elevator in those units as part of the design.

Sanfelippo asked if there were any more questions. She expressed appreciation to the developers for looping in the neighborhood on the front end of the project - and that we look forward to hearing updates. She told residents if they had any other questions, comments or feedback they could email [highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com](mailto:highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com)

### **Little Free Library Proposal for Caldwell Park/Luke Wood**

Sanfelippo said that residents would hear next from Luke Wood who wanted to put a 'Little Free Library' in Caldwell Park. Wood told the group he had been part of a book group right before Covid in February 2020, that it started organically. He said

he would go to the park with his dog and read - and there were others who did the same. He shared that at some point several were reading the same book and thought - wouldn't it be fun to start a book club. They did just that and met in the park. Over time they decided it would be good for the group and community if there was a 'Little Free Library' here, because so many people come to the park to read. Then Covid happened and the book club has been since meeting by Zoom - but many still go to the park. Wood said with the time change and more people getting out they felt it's time to investigate the Little Library. He said he contacted the Park Board, even attended a Park and Recreation Board meeting. Wood said Parks and Rec staff went to the park with him and discussed location. They agreed on placement and the staff members told him he should present his idea to the Highland Park neighborhood association to obtain their support. Wood shared a photo of the library they have selected - it is blue, made of recycled milk jugs - doesn't absorb water so there's no mold or mildew. Wood says if the 'Little Library' ever gets dirty he will personally clean it since he's in the park most days. He added that the library is pest free and will not crack. The post is also made out of recycled milk jugs. It is 16 inches wide, 4 feet 8 inches tall - it will go 24 inches into the ground and the City of Birmingham will install it. He said as far as the location, if you know where the dog waste bag station is, it will be next to there and face into the park. Someone asked Wood where he got the library. Wood replied people could visit the website [www.LittleFreeLibrary.org](http://www.LittleFreeLibrary.org) - they call it the world's largest book sharing community. Mary Helen Crowe asked if she could put one in front of her house or if that would require approvals from multiple entities. Sanfelippo asked if any of the city representatives knew whether/what approvals were required. Councilor Abbott said she did know that Traffic and Engineering would have to approve anything that goes into the right of way, adding that putting it in your own yard was the safest thing to do. Anne Sunkel asked about one of these libraries on Highland Avenue near Rhodes Park and whether the city had originally put them out. Several residents replied that individuals put in the libraries, not the city. Rowena Frazier told Sunkel that property had recently changed hands and the new owner decided to keep the Little Library, thinking it a nice contribution to the neighborhood.

Mark Ritter moved that the neighborhood support installation of the Little Free Library in Caldwell Park. The motion was seconded by Janet Wallace. There were 17 yays and none opposed so the motion carried.

### **Bluebird House Park Proposal**

Sanfelippo shared we had a resident who was interested in putting a bluebird house in one of the parks. Janet Wallace chimed in that the 'resident' was her and that it would likely wind up being more than just one bluebird house. Sanfelippo asked her if she had settled on locations for the houses. Wallace replied she had talked to

some folks at Audubon and had some specifications - but didn't have specific locations yet. She asked Sanfelippo if she needed to have locations before the neighborhood could take a vote of support. Sanfelippo said she thought the best way to go about it would be to do as Wood had done with the Little Free Library and go to Parks and Recreation and seek their guidance - then return to the Neighborhood Association. Wallace said she would do this - and in the meantime also needed to find out when the best installation time would be.

### **Magic City Acceptance Academy/Dr Michael Wilson & Charity Jackson**

Sanfelippo announced our speakers for the night were from Magic City Acceptance Academy. Dr. Michael Wilson introduced himself, saying he was the Founding Principal of the Magic City Acceptance Academy. Wilson said most people knew him from his time with Birmingham City Schools, adding that he had been at Glen Iris Elementary for the past 14 years - but that then this special opportunity had come about and he was excited to share this with our residents. Wilson said he would start with the Academy's Mission Statement: The Magic City Acceptance Academy will facilitate a community in which all learners are empowered to embrace education, achieve individual success, and take ownership of their future in a safe, LGBTQ-affirming learning environment. Wilson said the Academy will open in the Fall in a location on Bagby Drive, which is right across from the new Homewood Police Department. Wilson shared they were going to have a beautiful new building for Grades 6-12. He said his Chief Academic Officer would talk about the academic program - but the program was embedded in social justice, restorative justice practices project based learning and innovative learning so that it meets the needs of the students. Wilson said they have proposed a very low student to teacher ratio, like 20 to 1, which is lower than most middle and high schools - so that they are able to create individual learning paths for their students whether they are behind where they need to be, on track or ahead. They plan a strong mentoring program for their students as well as complete wrap-around services to include physical health, mental health, social work and other services needed by students and families. He shared their website was [www.MagicCityAcceptanceAcademy.org](http://www.MagicCityAcceptanceAcademy.org) - and the application is open and they are accepting students for the 2021-2022 school year. Wilson said with that he wanted to introduce their Chief Academic Officer Charity Jackson.

Jackson shared she was a Birmingham native and excited to be speaking to Highland Park this evening. She thanked Highland Park resident Dr Contri for arranging their opportunity to speak. Jackson said that as Dr Wilson stated they intend to integrate social emotional learning into the thread of their existence, into the thread of the school, everything from the top level down. Jackson explained that 'social emotional learning' was a buzzword right now in academia, that it means that students are gaining knowledge around 'self', they are gaining more self-awareness, more self-

management systems for their own person emotions and feelings, they are building those strong relationships, having students reflect on themselves, who they are - at school and in the classroom, but also in the community at large. Jackson said with project-based learning, it is centered on projects - so students are no longer being taught, receiving instruction that is aligned to specific tests or assessments; the project keeps the community at the center so that students, get instruction across all content areas. Jackson gave an example - the students might be asked what they could do at school level - or community level - to protect the environment. She said in English they might review different position papers on the subject to build their own reading, argumentative and writing skills. In science they might learn what is our environment, what does affect its health and destruction. In history they might do a deep dive into the advocacy groups who have been doing this work over time. Jackson said at some point the students would present their project to fellow students and teachers - but also friends and family members.

Jackson said restorative justice practices are an important component in the Academy's learning process, that with restorative justice the focus is taken off the 'punitive' in systems and placed on 'restore'. She said at the center of this is relationship building and an understanding of what 'respect' is to each individual, holding themselves as well as others 'accountable' for the respect agreements they create in their classrooms, as well as relationship repair. Jackson said along with all of this they were looking to offer core courses in arts - whether in middle school or high school - and doing visual, band, chorus, theatre, etc - they will do a needs assessment to be able to offer what they need to for these students.

Wilson asked if there were any questions. Being none - he thanked residents for their time and interest. He reiterated they were open to all students and their goal was to have a diverse population. He asked for help in getting the word out about their program - and encouraged people to visit their website, [www.MagicCityAcceptanceAcademy.org](http://www.MagicCityAcceptanceAcademy.org). He said there's an info-tab on their site if you have any questions or would like to mentor students.

### **City Council Update/Councilor Abbott**

Councilor Abbott started by saying they did have a City Council meeting today, that the meetings were virtual and by law they can only discuss critical items of city business and issues related to Covid-19. Abbott said the Council meetings have been uncharacteristically brief - but that today it has lasted a little longer because they had a little controversy about the Mayor's office skipping the Committee Process and putting items on the agenda without following the rules. But, she said, after they hashed it all out, they ended up passing it - which was to extend a warrant for another year so that the Banks Middle School, formally Banks High School, could be demolished - which, Abbott said, desperately needs to happen.



Sanfelippo asked Abbott about the pending District 3 Town Hall. Abbott said yes, we do have a District 3 Town Hall Meeting scheduled for March 23<sup>rd</sup> - and it will be virtual. She said we asked all neighborhood officers to send in topics they would like to be discussed - and thankfully, Highland Park's President, Elizabeth Sanfelippo, sent in a large number of topics for discussion - which they, the city, appreciated - because they definitely want to talk about the things people are interested in. She said she knows the street pavings, the demolitions, the sidewalk conditions - there are lots of things residents are really concerned about - but then there are other things that the city does that people think - 'why are you wasting my money doing 'that'?? - when you could be paving my street or fixing my sidewalk. She thanked Sanfelippo and said Highland Park is one of the most active neighborhoods in the city so it is fitting we would have a number of topics to discuss. Sanfelippo thanked Abbott but said she had to give a shout out to Secretary Jones and Mark Ritter - who is running for VP - who both contributed to the effort and topics/questions submitted.

Mary Helen Crowe asked if Abbott thought recycling would go back to something more than once a month. Abbott said she certainly hopes so because once a month is not enough.

Larry Contri asked is Sanfelippo put 'the lights in Rhodes Park' on this list for the Town Hall. Abbott said - yes, we're still trying to find a way but the cost is huge. Darryl Lee said he had met that afternoon with Birmingham Parks and Recreation Director Shonae Bennett about these problems and she has given her permission to them being able to explore vendors other than Alabama Power to address these issues and see if we can get better pricing.

Hearing no other questions Sanfelippo thanked Councilor Abbott and encouraged residents to attend the virtual District 3 Town Hall. She told residents they could either call in or attend via Facebook. She said she will send out the information but to call in, the number is 415-655-0002 and the access code 1875267164. She said you can also find it/attend at [facebook.com/COBMayorsOffice](https://facebook.com/COBMayorsOffice) or [facebook.com/CityCouncilBHAM](https://facebook.com/CityCouncilBHAM).

### **Community Resource Representative Update/Jasmine Fells**

Sanfelippo introduced Highland Park's Community Resource Representative Jasmine Fells. Fells started by sharing the date for the pending neighborhood elections was Tuesday March 30<sup>th</sup>. She said there would only be 4 polling locations for the city and for this reason the city was really encouraging people to request a ballot and vote absentee. Fells said an absentee ballot could be requested from anyone in her office. She explained that with these absentee ballots you will receive

a number associated with your, the requestor's, name so one cannot make copies of the ballots and distribute them to others. She said residents can use her phone number to request ballots - 205-297-8336. Fells said there will be four sites, north, south, east and west. She lamented that everyone would not be pleased with the sites but that is all the city could commit to with staffing and Covid concerns. She said, at the present time, the locations for the polling places were still in the works but that she thought they were close to being able to announce them. Fells shared residents could also vote absentee-in-person between now and March 22nd, that they could come to their office at City Hall, Suite 202, all you will need is a driver's license or proof of residence so staff can verify your address is in the neighborhood for which you have requested a ballot. Fells said if you mail your ballot it must be postmarked by March 22nd. She shared residents could find a sample ballot on their Facebook page or the City's website under Community Resource Services.

Sanfelippo shared that she was running again for President, Judy Jones for Secretary and Mark Ritter for Vice President. She said this slate was running unopposed but the city was not allowing petition voting as they have in the past for unopposed slates of officers. Jones asked about proof of residence, if that was only needed if the address on the driver's license was not in the neighborhood for which a ballot was being requested. Fells confirmed that. Jones asked if they needed volunteers to help staff the locations, Fells said yes - and anyone who was interested to contact her ( [jasmine.fells@birminghamal.gov](mailto:jasmine.fells@birminghamal.gov) )

Sanfelippo thanked Fells for all that she does to support our community.

### **Old Business**

Sanfelippo said we are waiting on the start of the first phase of the sidewalk repair project. She said the project was awaiting a solid end of winter frost nights before starting.

Sanfelippo reported the trees have been ordered for our spring round of plantings, that residents might see the pink and red flags that have been put out by Ray Davis and the Beautification Committee to mark the planting sites. The city has contacted the utility companies to clear those sites for drilling with an auger.

Sanfelippo shared that when Do Dah Day was still happening in Highland Park (pre-covid), the neighborhood organization FIDO (Friends in Dog Ownership) would mark piles of dog waste in the neighborhood with cute flags with messages encouraging residents to pick up their pup's poop. She said this is a fun way to let people see it's not just 'one pile' when they leave their pup's waste sidewalk side. Sanfelippo said FIDO has asked for permission to execute their annual flagging campaign with flagging to start Saturday May 8, then leave them in place for the

week, and then collect them (and the poop!) on Saturday May 15 (with a rain date of Sunday May 16). Sanfelippo said they were working with the city to have that weekend coincide with a clean-up day. She shared the group had experienced a little push back in previous years from people who thought the flags were tacky. Sanfelippo said she and others feel like poop on shoes when you're out for a neighborhood walk is pretty tacky too. Jones added that some of the push back had come from people who didn't realize the flags would be collected. She encouraged neighbors if they heard any of these complaints to please share how the weeklong event will work. Rowena Frazier said it would be good to include in the project messaging that if you inadvertently run out of bags, to bring them next time and pick up what you didn't the last time. Mary Helen Crowe asked if we communicate with the people who live in the apartments over near Rhodes Circle, that that area is entirely filthy with dog waste. Sanfelippo said we could definitely communicate with the property management services for those buildings and get them to encourage their residents to do better. Crowe said it was also around the corner across from Greenbriar. Other residents concurred.

Mary Helen Crowe made a motion to give FIDO permission to execute their annual flagging campaign. so moved. Horace Hulsey seconded. With a vote of 14 for and no opposition, the motion passed.

### **Announcements and Reminders**

Sanfelippo reminded the group that recycling is only the first Wednesday of each month. She told residents that we are working with the city to try and get the frequency increased.

Sanfelippo said the next trash and brush pickup will be Thursday March 18. She said an interesting point that arose related to reported missed trash and brush pickups is that if your building has a dumpster, you do not receive a city large trash and brush pickup at your location. If that's the case you'll have to coordinate with your property manager or home owner's association to arrange for pickups for your building if you have something that doesn't fit in your dumpster.

Rowena Frazier provided residents with an update on the effort to create a non-profit 'Friends of Highland Park' group. Frazier said the group had been working diligently on this process and as a result have realized that as a starting point it would be good to establish the relationship between this nonprofit and the neighborhood association, specifically as it relates to the purpose of the 'Friends' organization. Frazier said her group has developed a document outlining the proposed premise for the new organization to ensure a mutual understanding regarding how the groups will work separately or together. Frazier says it is important to the organizers that the new group functions in a way the neighborhood

association feels is appropriate and beneficial. Frazier added that what the Friends organizers view as our purpose is to support and enhance the mission of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association. Frazier said that essentially the new Friends organization intends to leverage its 501c3 status, when received, in the words of the associations mission - to actively protect, maintain and enhance the quality of life of residents who live in the neighborhood - and to actively protect, maintain and enhance the aesthetics and natural environment of the neighborhood, being mindful at all times of the unique flavor of Highland Park and its historical heritage. Frazier referenced comments by Councilwoman Abbott earlier, speaking to the challenges in getting lighting back into Rhodes Park - and this was a good example of how the Friends organization could help the neighborhood. With its 501c3 status, the Friends group would be in a unique position to help by raising separate monies via tax deductible donations to support some of these initiatives in a way that the city wouldn't be fully able to do. Frazier said in addition to the document, the group was working on Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws - but that they felt it important before moving forward with these official processes that there's an alignment between the groups vision for their work and what the neighborhood association would like us to do. Frazier said they intended to get that draft document to Sanfelippo likely the next week for her review - and that hopefully they could schedule a meeting between her and the group for more discussion. Sanfelippo thanked the group for their good work and said she looked forward to reviewing the material. Frazier added that she wanted to give a big thanks to Sanfelippo for helping her condominium get a large trash and brush pile picked up by the city. Sanfelippo said that assisting in resolving that issue was how she learned buildings with dumpsters do not qualify for city pickups. Frazier called it a great win-win and thanked her again.

Sanfelippo said she wanted to give a quick shout out to Virginia Samford Theatre, regarding their upcoming shows: April 15-25<sup>th</sup> will be Neil Simon's famous comedy 'Plaza Suite'; June 11-27 they will be doing 'Million Dollar Quartet'. Sanfelippo encouraged residents to check out the shows and support our local neighborhood theatre if able.

Sanfelippo said our next Zoom Neighborhood Meeting would be Tuesday April 13 at 6 pm. She told residents they will be able to use the same login information to access the next meeting (and future meetings) that they used tonight. Sanfelippo shared that our speaker for the April meeting would be Josh Coleman, City of Birmingham Deputy Director of the Office of Social Justice and Racial Equity and the head of ACE, the City's Academy of Civic Engagement - which, Sanfelippo said, they did virtually in the fall and she attended and found it very informative.

Sanfelippo said she plans to keep everyone updated on the upcoming neighborhood elections.

### **Candidate Introductions & Remarks (2 minutes/each)**

#### **Blake Guin/Candidate for City Council District 3**

Sanfelippo introduced Blake Guinn who is running for City Council for District 3. Guinn shared he had actually attended the last Highland Park meeting but that he got to the end of the meeting and was unable to get Zoom to work for his remarks. He laughed saying he was 27 but not a technology person. Guinn said he had enjoyed the meeting tonight, that is knows a lot about these issues, zoning and planning. He said he hopes everyone is well, healthy and safe in this age of Covid and adjusting to life as we know it. Guinn said he served on the Gardendale City Council for four years, that he was elected in 2012 at the age of 19 and served one term so he left when he was 23. But when his term ended he was head of the Economic Development Committee, the Library Committee and was also the liason to the Beautification Commission. Guinn says he loves serving and has some experience in municipal governing. He said in 2018 he worked on Walt Maddox's campaign for governor and loved that experience. Guinn said he has a passion for people and public service and that he values listening and transparency. He said he looks forward to meeting the residents in person when it is safe to do so. Guinn says he now lives in Birmingham and works at Shipt headquarters. He says campaigning to him is a lot of fun. He promised that if elected he would lead by listening, example, transparency, engagement - and by being accessible and open. He expressed appreciation to the neighborhood for allowing him to speak. Guinn said if anyone wanted to get in touch with question or comments, his email was [blakeguinn123@gmail.com](mailto:blakeguinn123@gmail.com).

#### **Chris Woods/Candidate for Birmingham Mayor**

Sanfelippo introduced Chris Woods who is running for Mayor of Birmingham. Woods thanked the group for allowing him to participate this evening. He said he knew the night had been long so he would not be. He invited everyone to go to his website, [chriswoodsformayor.com](http://chriswoodsformayor.com) - where residents can see his kickoff speech where he shares his vision for the City of Birmingham. He said residents will also see detail plans for action on the website, proposals for making our city better in every area. He said his number one vision for the city is to unite us and not to divide us, to unite and achieve uncommon results. Woods said there was no greater priority for him than the safety and education of our children. Woods said as everyone knows, Birmingham ended 2020 with the most homicides in the last 25 years and that we want to put an end to this tragic journey that we've been on. Woods said that as the city's mayor his vision will be matched by the budget, that we will put our money where our mouth is when it comes to crime fighting. Woods said

he would mandate that the Birmingham Police Department be fully staffed. He said he will restore and fund Crime Stoppers and encourage more neighborhood participation. Woods said his personal phone number is 205.965.7124 and that he would like to hear from residents. He said the city would benefit from his construction experience, sharing that under two previous mayors, Langford and Kincaid, he was over the entire Construction Capitol Fund projects and they proved to be such an added value, the city implemented their process into the neighborhood funding where the money had been taking 12 months to 2 years to get there, recipients were getting their funds in two weeks. Woods said they were able to renovate, for example, Highland Racquet Club with city forces freeing up millions of dollars to go towards lighting, pouring concrete, storm issues, etc. Woods said he wants people to call him, he wants to engage because he knows that united we stand and divided we fall, that if we come together we will achieve uncommon results and lead Birmingham to that all American city she once was. Woods said he was proud that residents continued to follow the health guidelines, take care of their families and take those precautionary measures to be safe. Woods asked everyone to visit the website, watch his campaign speech and give them the opportunity to earn your vote.

President Sanfelippo asked if there were any more questions, comments, concerns. Being none, she asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Phillip Foster moved the meeting be adjourned. Diann Weatherly seconded. There was no opposition. President Sanfelippo thanked everyone for their time and participation and adjourned the March 2021 meeting of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association at 7:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Jones  
Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association