

# **Highland Park Neighborhood Association**

## **June 2021 Minutes**

**Meeting Date: June 8, 2021**

At 6 pm President Elizabeth Sanfelippo welcomed everyone arriving into the virtually held Highland Park Neighborhood Association May meeting. She thanked Stephen Foster, President of the Five Points Neighborhood Association, for setting up Highland Park's meetings via Zoom. Sanfelippo said she had talked to Evan at the Golf Course and had been told we were free to return and hold our meetings there. She said the neighborhood may be able to meet in person for our July meeting though it is the we intend to continue offering a Zoom option for those who don't want to meet in person or who can't. She said she would keep everyone posted on that. Sanfelippo introduced herself as President of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association, Mark Ritter as Vice-President and Judy Jones as Secretary.

Sanfelippo performed a verbal roll call, confirming attendees/residents on the call as per city instructions (additional names were added later as individuals joined the meeting).

Sanfelippo asked if everyone had had an opportunity to look at the May minutes - and whether anyone had any corrections or changes to those minutes. Being none Mary Helen Crowe moved adoption of the May Meeting Minutes as presented. Mark Ritter seconded the motion. Sanfelippo took a vote; there were 6 yea votes and none opposed so the May meeting minutes were approved. She thanked Jones for her ongoing wonderful job on the minutes for the neighborhood meetings.

Sanfelippo said she didn't think there was anyone from the Fire Department, Police Department or Public Works on the call.

### **2022 World Games Update / Kathy Boswell, VP of Community Engagement**

Sanfelippo introduced tonight's speaker, Kathy Boswell sharing she was the Vice President of Community Engagement for the 2022 World Games. Boswell thanked Sanfelippo for asking her to attend the meeting this evening. She explained that in her position she was responsible for six areas: Education, Sustainability, Supplier Diversity Program, Volunteer Program, Community Engagement Initiative and World Games Ambassador Program.

Boswell asked residents to share what they would like to know about the games. Paige Klein started things off by sharing she had actually filled out the form to be a volunteer and asked when she could expect to hear back from the Games about her potential

assignment - or even when she might first be needed as a volunteer. Boswell said the Volunteer Program would launch September 30 of this year, saying there would be a form potential volunteers will fill out that details more about their interests and availability. She said for safety reasons some of the volunteer positions would require interviews and background checks because some of the people attending will be dignitaries. Boswell said Klein would definitely hear something on the 30<sup>th</sup> when the application would be launched but that it would be a while before specifics about assignments would be known, adding that the Games involved events in 17 venues over ten days and that competition would begin as early as 7 am and go as late as 11 pm across the city. Boswell said venues would include BJCC, the Birmingham CrossPlex, Hoover Met, Oak Mountain, Legion Field, Protective Stadium - so there will be a lot of opportunities to volunteer.

Sanfelippo asked about the World Game Dates and for the name of the web site. Boswell said the Games would be July 7 through July 17 of 2022. She said it will kick off with an opening ceremony on the evening of July 7<sup>th</sup> at Protective Stadium saying the games will then progress for the next ten days in Birmingham and the Greater Metropolitan Area. Boswell said the website for the Games was [www.TWG2020.com](http://www.TWG2020.com)

Mary Helen Crowe asked how many people, participants and spectators, organizers expected for this event. Boswell replied they were expecting something in the range of 500,000 spectators. Several people asked how the city would house that many people. Boswell said there will be 3600+ athletes attending to compete in 35 sports - and two universities, UAB and Birmingham Southern, will host 'athlete villages'. She said these sports not only include the athletes but also the officials and coaching staff - which probably represents about 4500 people who will live in those 'villages'. Boswell said they also have to consider the media in their housing plans, that they are expecting about 800 credentialed media professionals here from around the world. She said these professionals would be allocated rooms in hotels around Birmingham. Boswell said that when considering the other spectator housing there were a couple of things at play: 1 - some sports will end sooner than others, so they are considering almost a rotation of housing, that not all the spectators will be here at one time. Boswell said at some of her speaking engagements some people had asked if they should turn their homes into AirBNBs; Boswell said she replies - 'if that's what you want to do!'

Boswell asked if anyone knew the sports that would be in the World Games. Sanfelippo said she thought Bowling was one, Boswell replied that was correct! Mark Ritter said 'Flag Football' - Boswell said yes. Mary Helen Crowe said 'Orienteering', Boswell replied yes. Philip Foster said 'dancing', Boswell said yes - elaborating that Line Dancing, Rock and Roll Dancing and Breaking - that these were events, and athletes

would be competing for Gold, Silver and Bronze medals. Boswell said there will be a competition for 'Breaking' at-Sloss Furnace - as well as Sport Climbing. Boswell said they would be building a 20 foot sport climbing wall at Sloss. She said Avondale Park was to host the archery competition, that 'curve' and 'bow' would be two disciplines that would be there, Boswell said Boutwell would host the Sumo competition for men and women as well as Muaythai, Ju-Jitsu - and Wushu, which is very similar to Tai Chi. Boswell said Railroad Park would host 'Orienteering'. She shared the CrossPlex would host 'Fin Swimming', 'Lifesaving', Inline Skating, Outdoor Skating and 'Wheelchair Rugby'. Boswell added that 'Wheelchair Rugby' would be the first adaptive sport ever played at the World Games. She said they were working with the Lakeshore Foundation to make all events and the experience for the spectators very inclusive so that everyone will have the opportunity to enjoy the sport. Sanfelippo asked if the Wheelchair Rugby competition was only for people who were wheelchair bound. Boswell answered yes. Boswell shared Oak Mountain will host 'Water Skiing' and 'Wake Boarding' and Barber Motor Sports will host 'Drone Racing'. Boswell said other competition sports at the Games will be 'Korfball' and 'Tug of War' which will be played on the UAB campus. She said that if residents will go to [TWG2020.com](https://twg2020.com) and select the Sports Program drop down, ( <https://twg2022.com/sports/>) they will see a list of all sports that will be presented at the Games with an explanation of each sport and descriptive videos. She said there will truly be something for everyone.

Martha Weber asked about transportation, moving people around the area. Boswell said there is actually a committee, a team of people, who are working on this issue specifically. She said they have contracted with Calloway Transportation of Maryland who is working with the Games and the City of Birmingham to create a coordinated transportation plan. Boswell said they were looking at a coordinated system using shuttles since Birmingham isn't an especially parking-friendly city, adding, there's just not a lot of places to park. She said they will incorporate the Birmingham JeffCo Transit Authority, that they were very much engaged with planning for the Games also. She said she was confident they would develop a successful plan although they expected it wouldn't be 'perfect'. Mary Helen Crowe asked if they planned to test the transportation plan before the event. Boswell said she wasn't sure about that but that it was a good idea and she will take it back to the Transportation Committee.

Boswell said event tickets will go on sale July 7 ( <https://twg2022.com/tickets/> ). She said there will be over 200 sporting events in 35 sports hosted during the 10 days and over 800,000 tickets available. Boswell explained that each sport has 8 competing teams and there will be competition rounds that lead to semi-final rounds and into a championship round - which creates opportunity for a lot of ticketed events. Boswell shared they have some wonderful people that will be performing and serving as co-chairs

of the Games. Dr Henry Panion will be coordinating the music for the games (UAB Professor in Dept of Music best known for his work as conductor and arranger for Stevie Wonder). She said Dr Panion will be working with Randy Owens (Lead Singer for the group Alabama) to create a theme song. Boswell said they have retired military veteran and double amputee Noah Galloway as a Co-Chair, adding that he got a whole new start for his life through the Lakeshore Foundation. Boswell said they also have Vonetta Flowers as a Co-Chair, that she was the first African American to win a gold medal in the Winter Olympics. She said they also have Cat Reddick (member of the US Women's National Soccer Team from 2000 to 2010, winning Olympic Gold in 2004). Boswell said well known basketball legend Charles Barkley will also be an Honorary Co-Chair for the Games. Boswell said the opening ceremony in Protective Stadium on July 7, 2022 is going to be fantastic, recognizing the athletes and celebrating our city. She told the group we are about to host over 100 countries in our city and need everyone's help, that this was Birmingham's chance to create a unified message for the world, for our city. Boswell said moving the games from 2021 to 2022 allowed completion of Protective Stadium, the BJCC renovations and the City Walk. Boswell said the closing ceremony would be at Protective as well and would include a 30-minute presentation made by Chengdu, China - because they are the next host city for World Games 2025.

Horace Hulsey asked what network was going to televise the games. Boswell said negotiations were still in progress on who was going to handle the rights. She said part of the contract was that the International Broadcasting Network had to be the premier network to stream the games, so they are limited at how much time they can sell to other entities. Boswell said they had been in conversations with several broadcasters but now that streaming is so prevalent not everything people access is necessarily traditional TV broadcasting.

Philip Foster asked what events will take place in the new City Walk when complete. Boswell replied that part of the contract with the World Games requires the Host City to have an area called 'The Plaza'. She said the Plaza is the place where they host various sports demonstrations, they have an 'Athlete Night' where you recognize the athletes - and Birmingham's 'City Walk' will be our 'Plaza' and the hub for a lot of the activity, to include music performances and a merchant market, opportunities to meet the athletes, that will occur during the ten days of the Games. Boswell said the merchant plaza will allow for local small businesses, artisans across the state, to showcase some of their goods.

Mark Ritter asked how the eight teams were chosen and if there's been preliminary competitions. Boswell replied that every sport had been trying pre-pandemic to host their competitions to arrive at the 8 finalist teams. She said some sports had grandfathered

teams, allowing their 8 qualifying teams from 2020 competitions or the previous Games to retain their 2022 Games position. She said some have had 'virtual' competitions. But, she added, they have through January 31, 2022 to finalize their list of 8 teams for the Games in July.

Judy Jones asked if they were recruiting translators. Boswell said yes, on the volunteer application that is one of the questions because there will be a number of locations and situations where translators will be needed. Boswell added that every sport has submitted a list of the type of volunteers they will need (to include translators), that volunteers will be needed both on the field and around the venues. She said that English is the dominant language, that volunteers can be bilingual but will need to speak English fluently.

Boswell stated that Birmingham has a very unique opportunity in hosting these Games. She said this is the first time the Games have been back in the United States since 1980. The 2022 Games will be the 11<sup>th</sup> event since its inception in 1980. The first Games were in Santa Clara, California in 1981. Boswell said Birmingham was chosen, in her view the city was very blessed to be selected to host the Games - so the city will get to showcase its loving hospitality, beauty and history. She said from across the world people are likely very limited on what they know about Birmingham - so, she is very excited to lead community engagement for one particular reason, we get to lay aside everything we don't like, whether it's who is sitting in a district seat, whether we don't like certain things or people about our city - that this is our time to put all of that aside and just allow people to see the best part of us. She said sometimes our 'best parts' get clouded with the 'stuff'. Boswell said she was excited for the rest of the world to see a different and new Birmingham because 40+ years ago we weren't this way, things were different. Boswell said 'we' in Birmingham affected the world those 40+ years ago and did so in a way that changed the world. She said now we get to have people come to this same city and see us in a new way, in a new light. Boswell said not every city gets the chance, the blessing, of being able to do that. She said we need to stand together and do this thing well and right, to make it happen. Boswell said this is our chance to write a new page about our city in the history books. She asked residents to believe in the Games, to support the Games because this is a part of you hosting the world.

Jones asked Boswell if anyone associated with planning had thought about talking to the organizers of Sidewalk Film Festival, that for 20 years they had been hosting people from international locations - and managing housing, moving people around, producing events in multiple venues - and they may have some interesting information to contribute. Boswell replied they had talked to the people at Sidewalk and that one of their team was serving on their Volunteer Planning team - and contributing that sort of information.

Boswell shared her email address - [kathy.boswell@twg2022.com](mailto:kathy.boswell@twg2022.com) - and said if anyone has any questions or comments later to not hesitate to email her. Sanfelippo thanked Boswell for attending and all the great information. Boswell told her that the ‘neighborhood association’ could actually sign up as an organization to be a Games volunteer and work as a group. Boswell thanked the group.

### **City Council Update/Sherri Nielsen**

Sanfelippo introduced Sherri Nielsen with Councilwoman Valerie Abbott’s office. Nielsen said she wanted to make sure that everyone was aware of the Rental Assistance and the Utility Assistance programs that are available through the Mayor’s Office. Nielsen asked if residents had any questions. Mark Ritter said he had a question that day from a client, about different neighborhoods having different restrictions for AirBNB rentals. He asked if that was a city ordinance, a neighborhood ordinance or none. Nielsen replied that currently Birmingham does not have a city ordinance related to AirBNB rentals, saying she was aware there were AirBNBs in our neighborhoods but there was not currently any ordinance that related to the rentals. Ritter asked if the neighborhood could have an ordinance overriding the city. Nielsen said certainly a neighborhood could introduce an ordinance and it could be discussed at council level - but that it would really need to be passed as a city ordinance.

Sanfelippo asked if Nielsen had any updates on the Rhodes Park lighting project and the possibility of bidding that out to someone other than Alabama Power, explaining to Nielsen that the park lights had been out almost two years. Nielsen said they were working on park lighting but that she didn’t have an update on lighting for Rhodes Park but that she would get back with Sanfelippo.

Sanfelippo asked Nielsen if there were any tidbits of news that came out of the Council meeting today. Nielsen said there was nothing of particular note to District 3 that came out of the meeting today.

Mary Helen Crowe asked if there was any new information about how the rental scooters and bicycles project was going. She added that she had noticed scooters being abandoned in random places, presumably where their batteries run out. Nielsen said she didn’t think the ‘where’ they were abandoned had to do with the batteries, just that was where the renter finished with it. Nielsen said it was obviously an item they need to address. Paige Klein said she had noticed this too - but had also noticed the abandoned scooters/bicycles didn’t stay at these locations long, that they seem to be picked up within a day or two. Joseph Casper Baker said there had been a scooter parked up the street from then on 11<sup>th</sup> Street and it had been in the middle of the sidewalk for a couple of days. He said he opened up the VEO app and issued a report, they then went to run an errand and by the

time they returned, the scooter had been picked up. Baker said he thought residents' best bet was to get the app so they could report the abandoned equipment in inappropriate locations. Phillip Foster asked if it was possible that people parked them temporarily so they could do an errand, have lunch, where there wasn't a corral - so they would have the scooter when they came back out. Foster said obviously if it's been a number of days, the scooter has just been dumped there inappropriately. He asked if anyone knew if there was a requirement the renter could only park them in a corral? Baker replied they charge an 'unlock fee' and they waive most of that fee away if you park the scooter/bicycle in one of the corrals - meaning there is a financial incentive to return the equipment to a corral but there is nothing that prevents you from parking it pretty much where-ever inside the service area. Foster said, for example, if you took one to a brewpub and had a beer and then got back on it and took it back and deposited it in a corral, the time it's not in a corral is not a problem other than you're renting it the whole time it's not in a corral. Baker said they rented some and took them to one of the Opera Birmingham street events, the company charges you the entire time you have it unlocked. Baker said they went to the event and 'parked it' while we were there so that we weren't charged during the event and then took the same scooters again. So, he said, they were financially dinged for not parking in a corral at the event but when we unlocked them and returned, we parked them in a corral when they got back to the house - which meant the second 'unlock' they received that fee back. Baker said they are not the cheapest way to get around, that they're kinda fun but you might want to plan to go from corral to corral if you don't want to rack up a lot of extra charges.

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

Sanfelippo shared that Highland Park's Community Resource officer, Jasmine Fells, was not on the call tonight.

### **Old Business**

Sanfelippo said we were still waiting to hear on the 'weed prevention' project, the funds we allocated a few months ago should be making their way through the city channels.

Sanfelippo says she keeps contacting Michael Eddington with the city about when the sidewalk work is going to begin. She said she was told by a resident that some of the bricks had been marked at Caldwell Park so she thinks this means they're going to start very soon.

Jones reported that the Friends of Highland Park organizers continue to meet on obtaining the 501c3 status. She said Anne Sunkel's husband fell and is in the hospital, that they had actually had a meeting scheduled this morning but are going to have to reschedule. She reported they have raised some funds for the initial filing fees. Jones

said they'd also performed a 'name search' as required by the state and have confirmed that the name 'Friends of Highland Park' is available - and they are about to submit a 'name reservation form' to the state, which is part of the process and apply for an EIN from the federal government. Jones said their immediately pending task is to continue on their bylaws review. Sanfelippo thanked Jones, Anne Sunkel and Rowena Frazier for all their hard work on this effort.

Sanfelippo said she continues to follow-up with the city about abandoned houses in our neighborhood as well as the Sisters' Houses (which the city is not calling 'abandoned' right now). Sanfelippo said they did inspect the houses a few weeks ago and saw that there was some progress being made on the houses, which, she said, is good - albeit a little slow. She said she does think the message has gotten through that Highland Park residents are sick of seeing the houses sit there in that state of disrepair. Sanfelippo said there are a couple of abandoned houses over on Rhodes Circle as well and that a few people had contacted her recently about homeless people entering those residences through unsecured open windows. Sanfelippo said they have reported that to the city inspectors as well as making police reports. Sanfelippo said we continue to ask for the owner to be contacted and asked to secure the property.

Sanfelippo said Mary Helen Crow had contacted her recently about the two spots along the retaining wall on Highland Drive and Highland Avenue that have been hit by cars. Sanfelippo said the City's position is the neighborhood does not need to pay for the wall repair and that they will repair them but she has never been able to get any specific date on when that might happen. Sanfelippo said she knew the city was still strapped for funds and this repair project likely falls pretty low on the priority list - so she has gone ahead and asked Mike Eddington with the City to ask the people who are working on the sidewalk repairs if they can give us a quote on this work and repairs to the stairs damaged at the northeast corner of Rhodes Park. She said when they receive that estimate they will pass it along to the Spending Committee to see if they recommend spending neighborhood funds for those repairs.

### **New Business**

Sanfelippo asked whether anyone had any new business. Paige Klein said she wanted to share about an experience she'd had recently, explaining it involves an incident at her house. She said what she learned from the incident in regards to trespassing is that if you do not have posted signs that say 'no trespassing' then you cannot take legal action; it does not matter if you have security footage to show that person on your property. She reiterated that you must have 'no trespassing' signs posted otherwise the law states that you must first give that person who is trespassing a verbal warning and you must do that in the presence of a police officer. She said that residents might want to consider posting



some 'no trespassing' signs on their private property. Klein went on to say that if you were involved in any kind of incident remember to take out your cell phone and record what is happening, because if this incident happens to you and you are the only witness then you cannot swear a warrant, and they cannot charge that person. She added that unless there are multiple people the incident happens to or you get a video recording of it there is nothing that the police can do. Sanfelippo thanked Klein for sharing that information and said she was sorry she had to go through that. Jones said that experience was counter-intuitive to what she would have thought and that it might be a good idea to have someone from the Police Department attend our meeting and explain that and answer related questions. In response to questions, Klein explained she had a video of the individual trespassing in the pool area, which was gated - but that wasn't sufficient.

Sanfelippo recognized Darryl Lee's arrival (from Councilwoman Abbott's office). Lee said he'd had three meetings that evening but wanted to make at least part of Highland Park's meeting. He said he'd tried to get Sanfelippo today to let her know he'd discovered Michael Eddington was on vacation this week and that's why they'd had trouble reaching him. Lee said the second thing was that the Hanover Circle project was moving, the Council has approved the money part of the project and bids had been sent out; he said there were a few more steps, the Council has to accept it and then they will get to work on Hanover. Lee told Sanfelippo he would be sending her a letter, that the City has received Federal money, as in \$72 million, that can be spent on certain types of projects - that Lee will send that information on what the funds can be used for to Sanfelippo and will be taking recommendations for projects from every neighborhood. Lee said the flooding issue with Episcopal Place and Virginia Samford Theatre will receive priority within the list of these potential projects. Lee said they look forward to hearing Highland Park's recommendations for projects to add to the City's 'wish list'. Sanfelippo said she understood the funds needed to be used for projects that had a relevance to the pandemic/Covid. Lee said he didn't think so, that he thought the list of potential uses was more flexible than that, that there is opportunity to get some things done. Lee said the total award was something around \$142 million so they would be getting another \$60 million or so next year. He said as soon as they receive the guidelines for how the funds can be used, they will keep the neighborhood informed. Sanfelippo went on to explain the issue for Virginia Samford Theatre and Episcopal Place, that in heavy rains the water from Caldwell Park basically pools up and sometimes misses VST but often now goes into it - and then goes down the alley and floods Episcopal Place. She said they had both just recovered from a huge disaster, gotten repairs made and everything put back and then we had another weather incident. Sanfelippo said the City has been made aware of this in the past but hasn't acted on it - so people are pretty much circling the wagons now, saying something needs to be done about this - that these are two non-profit gems in our neighborhood and they need some

relief. Sherri Nielsen shared that storm water was one of the things on the list. Sanfelippo said 'great!' - and thanked Lee and Nielsen.

Phillip Foster said across the street from Caldwell Park on Highland Avenue where they have already marked the sidewalks that are about to be replaced, part of the sidewalks, because of the rains we've had, have 2 or 3 inches of mud that have washed down from the high side of the street (particularly near the intersection of Caldwell Avenue and Highland, just east of that). Foster said he was wondering if anything was going to happen to remediate the problem that is causing that while they are fixing the sidewalks. Lee said that is something he will take back to engineering and relate that response back to Elizabeth so she can share it with residents. Mary Helen Crowe shared there was a location on her section of Cliff, short Cliff, that had utilities marked and what the purpose might be. Lee said there may be some pending repairs or replacement of something there and they have to mark it ahead of time. Crowe gave Nielsen her address for additional verification of what might be happening in the way of utility projects around that location.

Sanfelippo asked Joseph Campbell Baker if he was attending the meeting in a candidate capacity and wanted to make any remarks. Campbell said he was just attending to listen, find out what was going on and contribute where he could. Sanfelippo told him he could have 2 minutes at the end of the meeting if he wished to make any remarks.

### **Announcements and Reminders**

Sanfelippo reminded the group that recycling is only the first Wednesday of each month. She cautioned residents not to put recycling out on other days because it would just be picked up with the trash and taken to the dump.

Sanfelippo reminded residents that if their building has a dumpster that they do not receive large trash and brush pick up by the city, that they had large items of trash or brush, they would need to coordinate with their homeowners association or property manager to take care of it.

Sanfelippo shared that FIDO's Flagging and Bagging Campaign had been a success. She said she was only one of a handful of volunteers - but that she personally collected

about 50 flags and about 110 piles. She reminded the group that poop was not fertilizer and to please be responsible owners who pick up after their pets.

Sanfelippo said the neighborhood's large trash and brush pickups have been moved to Friday adding that Highland Park's next pickup is Friday June 11. She reminded the group to report missed pickups to 311 and/or email the neighborhood at [highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com](mailto:highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com).

Sanfelippo shared that Virginia Samford Theatre has a show starting this Friday, June 11, running through June 27 - 'Million Dollar Quartet', their most popular show ever. She encouraged residents to support our neighborhood theater.

Sanfelippo said the Academy of Civic Engagement, ACE, was accepting applications for their next session through June 14. Sanfelippo said applications could be found at [www.BirminghamAL.gov/ACE](http://www.BirminghamAL.gov/ACE).

Sanfelippo said the next meeting would be July 13 at 6 pm. She said at this point, unless residents heard differently, we were going to have an in-person meeting at the Golf Course, upstairs where we used to meet - and we will do our best to offer a Zoom option for the meeting as well for those who would like it.

Joseph Campbell Baker III introduced himself as a candidate running for City Council District 3. He said he was a longtime resident of Birmingham and that he wanted to make a contribution to his city. He shared his particular areas of interest include technology, that he feels our area has unique opportunities to participate in emerging economies, particularly when it comes to biomedical technology, cybernetics, robotics, etc - those are areas he wants to focus on, especially how that relates to creating jobs for the future - to include the deployment of these technologies within our own community as well to solve longstanding issues that we have and improve quality of life for residents. He said we really need to look at how we build that economy here, establishing ourselves as a center for that. Sanfelippo thanked Baker for his remarks.

Sanfelippo asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Phillip Foster moved the meeting be adjourned. Horace Hulsey seconded. There was no opposition. President Sanfelippo thanked Stephen Foster for hosting these meetings for Highland Park. She everyone for their time and participation and adjourned the June 2021 meeting of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Jones

Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association