

# Highland Park Neighborhood Association

## September 2022 Minutes

**Meeting Date: September 13, 2022**

President Elizabeth Sanfelippo called the September 2022 meeting of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association (being held via Zoom) to order at 6:00 pm. She welcomed everyone and introduced herself as President, Mark Ritter as Vice President and Judy Jones as Secretary.

Sanfelippo asked if residents had reviewed the August 2022 meeting minutes and whether there were any changes or corrections needed. No changes or corrections were noted. Mark Ritter moved to approve the August 2022 minutes. Anne Sunkel seconded the motion which then passed unanimously.

Sanfelippo thanked Rob Burton (from Glen Iris Neighborhood) for allowing Highland Park to use his Zoom account for the meeting tonight.

Sanfelippo performed a roll call as required by the city for virtual meetings.

Sanfelippo noted there were no representatives from Public Works, the Police Department or the Fire Department in attendance.

### **2020 Census Data Review/Monica Dukes**

Mark Ritter introduced Monica Dukes as a Data Dissemination Specialist with the US Census Bureau. He said Dukes would share information with residents on the last census (2020) as it relates to where we live.

Dukes shared that according to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2020 5 year estimates, the population of zip code 35205 is 20,145. She demonstrated a Bureau tool, the Census Demographic Data Map Viewer (<https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/geo/demographicmapviewer.html>) explaining the tool could show population density information, change in population from the 2010 census to 2020 and information on race and housing. She said information could be accessed at state, county and census tract level.

Dukes explained the Decennial Census was the official count the Bureau does every ten years, including every resident where they live on April 1 in years ending with zero. She said this information is available down to a 'block' level. Duke said they also conduct the 'American Community Survey' (ACS) which is where most of the information from actual 'neighborhoods' comes from. It includes information related to social (disability status, veteran status, marital status, etc) economic (income, earning, health insurance coverage, poverty status, etc), housing (owned/rented, structure, vehicles available, etc) and demographics (race, age, sex, etc). Dukes explained whereas the Decennial Census

provided 'official counts' and basic demographics every 10 years, the ACS furnished 'sample estimates' annually for detailed categories of information.

Dukes explained census information was available from 'nation', the highest level, down to 'block', adding that some of these points could be further broken down into, for example, Congressional District or School District. She demonstrated two data tools -the Demographic Data Map Viewer and the overarching data.census.gov. Dukes said you could get to all the tools at Census.gov and drill down into the information using a place or address. She explained if you used an address the tool will provide the census tract where the address is located. Dukes showed the type of information available at , for example, zip code level using data.census.gov - race, income, poverty, school enrollment, marital status, class of worker, employment rate, etc, - in percentages compared to the state numbers. She said filters will also allow comparison to other geography levels (census tract/neighborhood, county, etc).

Dukes shared a link to the table she demonstrated to residents:

[https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=DP02%3A%20SELECTED%20SOCIAL%20CHARACTERISTICS%20IN%20THE%20UNITED%20STATES&g=0100000US\\_1400000US01073004701](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=DP02%3A%20SELECTED%20SOCIAL%20CHARACTERISTICS%20IN%20THE%20UNITED%20STATES&g=0100000US_1400000US01073004701)

Sanfelippo thanked Dukes for her presentation. She told the group if they had any questions for Dukes they could forward them to her.

### **2614 Highland Avenue/Miller Mobley**

Sanfelippo introduced Miller Mobley as someone who is working on plans for 2614 Highland Avenue. Mobley told the group he indeed has 2614 'under contract' at the present time. He shared he was a photographer who has taken portraits of people all over the world. He shared a few photographs as being representative of his work - included were photographs of Michelle Obama, Robert DeNiro, Taylor Swift and Michael McConaughey. Mobley said he moved back to Birmingham about 4 years ago and has had a desire to move into the 'hospitality world' and to do so with "excellent design". He said his first venture was 'Slim's Pizzeria' in Crestline. He shared some images of the establishment, adding that he had been the creative director and served as designer for the project. Regarding 2614 Highland, he said he would love to turn it into a state of the art restaurant that Birmingham and the neighborhood could be very proud of. He said the restaurant would be valet only 'fine dining', and the preliminary name is *George's*. He said it is inspired by classic New York establishment and is American cuisine and white tablecloth. Mobley said he wants to combine theater and dining and for people to walk in and be transported. He said he thinks Highland Park is the most beautiful neighborhood in Birmingham and has the most attractive qualities that bring charm to this city. Mobley said he has always wanted to do a project in this neighborhood. He said the building itself right now isn't very attractive but he is partnering with Christopher Architects which is across the street. Mobley shared a preliminary rendering from the front of the restaurant. Several residents expressed support for the project. A resident asked about his timeline. Mobley said they would need to get the building zoned for a restaurant and hoped they could get started the beginning of next year adding he hoped

within the next 16-18 months they were very close. He thanked residents for their time this evening.

### **39 Hanover Circle Project/Mike Brown**

Brown shared that '39 Hanover Partners' recently purchased 39 Hanover Circle and they are seeking a 'special exception' under the Birmingham Zoning Ordinance to request permission for a communal living facility to allow for the renovation of the property to allow a 38 bed facility to host overnight stays for persons suffering with eating disorders. In addition to the beds it will have group meeting rooms, some teaching rooms, a group kitchen and dining area. He said some individuals/clients might visit during the day for teaching or art instruction whereas others would overnight. He shared some renderings of the building renovations. Brown introduced John Chapman who shared the office for 39 Hanover Partners was on Arlington, that they were very local to Highland Park. Chapman said they also own and operate the apartment building Highland Towers. He shared 39 Hanover was occupied for many years by an assisted living and skilled nursing facility. He said he thinks it's been vacant now for almost 3 years and has become somewhat blighted and is no longer contributing to the positivity that is happening in Highland Park Neighborhood. Chapman introduced all the team members saying everyone was local which was a priority for them. Chapman explained the activities contained in the building will be specific to the treatment of eating disorders in its communal application. Chapman shared that eating disorders affect a large percentage of the population and are present in all walks of life, adolescents through older adults. He said a group atmosphere, a sense of community, is very positive for those working through this condition. Chapman said the design of the building is intended to bring a lot of positivity to a blighted location. He said impact on the neighborhood will be minimal, that there will not be a lot of traffic related to the building or occupants.

A question was asked about a 'typical stay'; Chapman replied it varies but typically anywhere from 30-90 days. A question was asked about number of residents and if it is similar to the previous facility. Chapman said it was definitely similar, that much of the original layout will be able to be repurposed. A question was asked whether the facility was affiliated with any faith-based organization; Chapman replied that it was not.

Sanfelippo thanked the group for presenting to the neighborhood. She said the neighborhood's Zoning Committee would meet to discuss the project. She said she knew the Hanover Circle residents would have questions about the project. She told residents if they had other questions to email [highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com](mailto:highlandparkneighborhoodal@gmail.com) or just reply to a neighborhood email. Sanfelippo told the developers that she would share any questions that came up.

### **Funding Requests.**

Sanfelippo reported the last round of tree purchases was delayed because of vendor issues. She said that order, previously allocated as \$2500, was canceled. She said now they are requesting an additional \$1700 which includes a little padding in case prices have gone up - which represents \$4200 to plant 24 trees along Highland Avenue, which includes delivery and mulch. Sanfelippo said this expenditure was approved by the neighborhood's Spending

Committee. Sharon Nelson made a motion to allocate \$4200 for the tree purchase and planting. Sandra Bailey seconded the motion which then passed without opposition.

Sanfelippo brought the group's attention to the lights out in Rushton Park, that this had been an ongoing issue for some time now. Sanfelippo said we now have a proposal for \$15,000 to repair the lights in Rushton, Rhodes and Caldwell Parks. She said if we allocate the funds we normally receive from Councilwoman Abbott's discretionary funds (\$6400), then Abbott's office has agreed to match that amount and provide the balance of the funds needed. Sanfelippo said we are waiting to confirm whether the proposal includes the lights that are currently 'stumps' (that the city removed for whatever reason). She said the Spending Committee has approved the expenditure pending more information on exactly which lights will be covered. Sanfelippo said this will include maintenance and repair/replacement of the lights through the fiscal year and then it will be taken into the city budget. Dr. Lee said he has submitted the neighborhood's questions to Alabama Power and had not received a response yet. He said he has also sent some information to them regarding the globes they were going to use. Lee confirmed this proposal would take care of this year's allocation that Councilor gives to the neighborhood associations. He said July 1 it will become part of the city's utility bill so there would be no cost to their office or the neighborhood after July 1. Sanfelippo said she thinks we need some more information from Parks and Rec before taking a vote. Councilwoman Abbott said she feels handling the project in this manner will get things moving faster. Dr Lee said they would forward any information/photographs they received for neighborhood review. Sharon Nelson moved to delay approval of the expenditure until the next meeting. Kelly Marshall seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

### **City Council Update/Councilwoman Valerie Abbott**

Councilwoman Abbott reported the Council approved having the neighborhood elections on October 18<sup>th</sup>, adding that residents can vote absentee or in person. She said there will be five voting locations but they've not been announced yet. She said anyone in any of the 99 neighborhoods could vote at any of the locations. She said they also approved funding for neighborhood office supplies and holiday events if Highland Park is having one. She said they also approved a contract with ALDOT for the city to install and maintain all of the lighting on all state and local roads within the city limits of Birmingham. She said that has been contracted to Alabama Power also. Abbott said they also approved the 99 Neighborhoods Picnic at Railroad Park, coming up on October 2. She said they also approved 17 contracts for 17 different companies to assist with the cutting of grass - not in parks but in vacant lots owned by individuals who don't maintain them. Abbott expressed frustration saying she thought these were efforts to help Public Works with their backlog due to staffing issues.

Abbott also reported Birmingham Water Works had sent her a letter stating that they intended to complete all the concrete work and the landscape restoration on Hanover Circle on Wednesday of this week. She said they said 'weather permitting' – but they intend to be finished with their work. Abbott said then it will be up to the city to get the paving contractor back into the picture to finish up. Sanfelippo expressed appreciation to Abbott for all she had

4 done in support of the Hanover Circle project. Abbott said she had to give credit to Dr Lee because he was the one who gets everything done.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Sidewalk Repairs/Next Phase.**

Sanfelippo said she spoke with Andrew Doelman with Capital Projects today and he said they are waiting to get quotes back. She said she will continue to press on this very important project.

### **Sisters Houses & Abandoned Homes on Rhodes Circle.**

Sanfelippo reported that it was public knowledge the owner is being taken to Circuit Court which is a step up from Municipal Court – and that she has been asked to sign an affidavit for that court case. She shared the squatter that was residing in empty Rhodes Circle residences had been picked up by police but was out and back in the area. Sanfelippo encouraged residents to continue to report directly to her – but also to call the police if you feel threatened. Sanfelippo said they were able to get the owner of the property at 11th Avenue and Rhodes Circle to board up the property, hopefully blocking access for this specific squatter in the future.

### **Speeding Issues**

Sanfelippo said there had been a lot of issues with speeders in and around the intersection of 28th and Highland Court. She said the City has plans to make this a 3-way stop and install ‘buttons’ to tighten up that curve. Sanfelippo said we are working with the city to communicate better so we can alert people of the changes ahead of time. Sanfelippo said the City had recently added a 3-way stop on Clairmont at Essex and it has been a little scary watching people slide through them because they didn’t expect stop signs there. She said Highland Park is hoping to give residents a head’s up on the change and ideally put flashing lights on the intersection. Sanfelippo said the October meeting would feature the new 501c3 ‘Friends of Highland Park’ and the City Transportation Department, that they would be talking about some other problematic intersections and potentially restriping multiple pedestrian crosswalk in the neighborhood.

### **Announcements**

Sanfelippo shared there was a Code Enforcement Town Hall this coming Thursday at 6 pm at Boutwell Auditorium.

Sanfelippo shared recycling was still the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month.

Sanfelippo shared the next Large Trash and Brush pickup was September 23. She reminded residents that if your building has a dumpster the city will not pick up large trash and brush at that location. Sanfelippo said that unfortunately the city has gone back to one pick up per month for Large Trash & Brush.

Sanfelippo announced Neighborhood Elections for Neighborhood Officers are scheduled for October 18th. She said September 20th was the deadline to request an absentee ballot. Sanfelippo shared if you want to request an absentee ballot you should call 205.297.8192 or you can email [communityresourceservices@birminghamal.gov](mailto:communityresourceservices@birminghamal.gov). Sanfelippo said the City was supposed to have the ballots prepared by last Friday but they were running a little behind. Sanfelippo shared the people she knew were running for Highland Park positions are herself for President, Judy Jones for Vice President and Kelly Marshall for Secretary. She said she was unaware whether others were running – and would update residents when polling places were known.

Sanfelippo announced the 4th annual St Symeon Food and Culture Fair was coming up on Saturday October 8 from 9 am – 3 pm. Sanfelippo shared they will have church tours and a choir concert, talk about church iconography, offer homemade food and baked foods – and vendors.

### **Next Meeting**

Sanfelippo said the next meeting will be held 6 pm Tuesday October 11, in person and Zoom, at the Highland Golf Club. Sharon Nelson thanked Sanfelippo, Jones and Kelly Marshall for running for officer positions and continuing to serve Highland Park. Nelson then moved to adjourn the meeting. Sandra Bailey seconded. The September 2022 Highland Park Neighborhood Association meeting was adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Jones  
Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association