

Highland Park Neighborhood Association

May 2023 Minutes

Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

[Click here to watch a recording of the meeting.](#)

WELCOME AND OPENING

President Elizabeth Sanfelippo called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

ROLL CALL

Elizabeth Sanfelippo called roll with the Zoom attendees and asked everyone in the room to sign in.

APRIL MINUTES

Anne Sunkel made a motion to accept the April minutes. Richard Kiell seconded.

All voted in favor, none in opposition.

COMMUNITY RESOURCE REPRESENTATIVE

Andrea Watson is the new Community Resource Representative for Highland Park. He may join us tonight.

PRESENTATION FROM ANNE SUNKEL WITH THE FRIENDS OF HIGHLAND PARK (FOHP 501(c)3) ABOUT STANCHIONS IN CROSSWALKS OF HIGHLAND AVENUE

Anne Sunkel moved back to Birmingham nearly five years ago and is happy to be here in Highland Park. She went to high school at the old John Carroll location so she's glad to be home.

Anne reminds us that Highland Park Neighborhood Association is **not** a non-profit organization and has funds allocated from the City to plant trees, fix sidewalks, etc but sometimes that can take a while, or not be approved. Because of this, years ago, some neighbors got together and decided to start a non-profit organization so that residents could help fund projects, and so that their donations would be tax-deductible. This created a better way to get donations and complete projects in the neighborhood with those funds. Anne recognized resident Judy Jones, who is amazing and helped create the by-laws for Friends of Highland Park (FoHP) and then submitted them to the IRS. FoHP received their tax id number and 501 (c)3 designation and is an official organization!

Other officers of the Friends of Highland Park are:

Marian Wilson is the Vice President

Judy Jones is the Secretary

David Finn is Treasurer

Ray Davis and Marcy Morgenbesser are also Board members.

FoHP has launched a project to get stanchions along Highland Avenue. FoHP started this project a while back with the City. You may have noticed that the painted crosswalks along Highland Avenue have faded away. FoHP started working with the City to have the crosswalks repainted in a ladder style, according to ALDOT code. The group then decided while we wait on the City to complete this project, to initiate a campaign to fund these crosswalk stanchions that you see here.



Anne shared the fundraising plan with the group in attendance. Anne described the sign and the base that holds the yield sign.. As an example, Judy demonstrated what would happen if it encountered an impact from a car. Friends of Highland Park is trying to raise the funds to put these signs/stanchions elsewhere along Highland Park in these crosswalks. The group wants to help make walkers more secure for all neighbors. \$7,500 would buy 15 of these stanchions. FoHP has raised enough to purchase one, which will be in the neighborhood soon. If you want to donate to this fund to help bring all 15 of these stanchions to Highland Park, please do! Any amount will help!

If you are able to put up a sign about this campaign in your building, please do. [Click here to print the sign.](#)

WAYS YOU CAN GIVE TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT:

Venmo: @FriendsofHighlandPark
Zelle: 205-587-8908 | Friends of Highland Park
Mail a check to:
FOHP
2601 11th Ave South 35205
FOHP2023@gmail.com

Questions?

Mark: Are the signs fixed to the road?

Anne: no, they are portable, for many reasons.

Adam: Do you know who put the stanchion on Highland Court?

Anne: We've seen it, but we believe a Midnight Maverick may have put it out, but it was not us.

Anne mentioned that the City is looking into some traffic-calming solutions on Highland Court and 28th St., and then down by the Rojo intersection.

Judy: the speed limits on Highland are 30 and maybe they should be 20.

Judy reminds everyone that FoHP bought the first one to use as a demo, but they won't purchase any others until they have the donations to purchase them.

Someone asked: Does FoHP have a membership program?

Anne: Not yet, but maybe soon.

further demonstration of how the stanchion works

Kathleen: Is there anything to stop someone from walking away with the sign?

Anne: No, unfortunately not.

Judy: but no one has stolen the ones by IPC, and they are smaller

Judy: another advantage to FoHP having our 501 (c)3 designation is that we can apply for grants too, such as senior-friendly playground equipment, etc.

Adam: did y'all work with James Fowler at the City on this?

Elizabeth: yes, this is a joint effort with Birmingham Department of Transportation

COUNCILWOMAN VALERIE ABBOTT UPDATE

Councilor Abbott is at the League of Municipalities conference, but **Dr. Darryl Lee** is here to provide updates for us. Dr. Lee said that they are working to make sure that the items requested are in place for the cleanup on May 20. Dr. Lee said that the trash can liners that we requested for the park have been taken care of. The mulch for the playground is waiting to be delivered. The lights have been chosen and once Alabama Power finishes a project on Springville Road, they will be in our neighborhood to install the lights. Once there is an update, Dr. Lee will let Elizabeth know. The City Council meeting today was mostly abatements. The USFL game is this weekend. The League of Municipalities is here from all over the state.

Mary Helen Crowe: A while back, Councilor Abbott there was a young guy who was making resin collars that could go around the bottom of the light poles to prevent dog pee from rusting the light poles. Did anything come from that or is there any coating they put on there to ameliorate that problem?

Dr. Lee has not heard an update on that but he will put it on his list to mention to Council Abbott. He will also call Home Depot or Lowe's and see if there is something like that on the market currently.

OLD BUSINESS

Mulch will be delivered soon to the playgrounds. We are still trying to figure out how to get it into the playground.

The new city-wide trash can program: they are still evaluating each area / neighborhood on a case to case basis.

Dr. Lee said there is a significant delay in correspondence from the city about the new trash can system. He recognizes it is a headache. The City says a letter will come before you get the trash can, but he got the letter after he got the can. He admits there is a lot of confusion with it.

BIRMINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Officer Alice with the South Precinct said there is nothing new to report, but that Birmingham Police Department is here to help - call if needed!

Questions:

Richard Kiell asked if there is an update on street racing? His family heard some street racers the other weekend and he wondered if there was any update. Officer Alice said they are installing speed humps and will continue to monitor. If you hear them, call the police department. Elizabeth reminds us that our police cannot engage in a high speed chase due to community safety concerns.

Mary Helen Crowe: there was a bill introduced in the state legislature this session to make street racing illegal.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cleanup Day on May 20 and the rain date will be May 21. Sign up included in recent newsletters. We will meet at the South end of Rhodes park, near the Sister Houses. HPNA will provide some tools and trash bags. FIDO will be picking up their flags. If you have a specific area you would like to focus on, let us know when you register. There was a fire at the Birmingham Recycling and Recovery. The City will still be accepting recycling though.

***COMMUNITY RESOURCE REPRESENTATIVE**

Andrea Watson introduced himself. He has 23 other neighborhoods so he may not be able to attend every meeting. He looks forward to working with Highland Park again!

Adam Ward: what does a CRR do?

Andrea: we serve as a liaison between the neighborhoods and the Mayor's office. We try to document everything and make sure all the projects get accomplished and funds are allocated.

Question about whether to contact Andrea directly...Elizabeth reminds neighbors to contact her first, and she will get it to the right person.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MARJORIE WHITE AND HPNA LOCAL HISTORIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE!

Congratulations to Marjorie White with the Birmingham Historical Society! She received the Lifetime Achievement Award for her excellent work.

Our local historic advisory committee members were also honored and received an award for work in preserving the history of the neighborhood through their work to support the city design review committee. Members of that committee are: Jim Cooper, Evan Williams, Christian Rogers, Mark Ritter, Cherri Pitts, Elizabeth Sanfelippo.

OLD BUSINESS: HANOVER COURT and GEORGE'S RESTAURANT PARKING UPDATE

Kathleen Byington and her husband talked to two residents of Hanover Court and those two residents told her that when the City met with them recently, the City outlined other options for parking at Hanover Court but said that the City will not support any of them, so there will be no change in parking at Hanover Court. Kathleen asked Elizabeth if she will check with the residents there and see if what she heard is true. Elizabeth will follow up and find out.

Kathleen also attended the City Council meeting a week ago when the zoning change for George's Restaurant was approved. Kathleen noted that Councilor Abbott did a fantastic job of how she worked that process and Kathleen was proud to watch her. Councilor Abbott asked James Flower (Birmingham Department of Transportation) about getting parking permits and the Mayor answered for him and said the project is ongoing but there is no schedule. Councilor O'Quinn followed that up with "I do not support the use of city resources for the storage of private vehicles". Kathleen wondered what that statement meant and what constitutes the "use of city resources for the storage of private vehicles".

Elizabeth got a notice today that the developers of George's will be going before the ZBA in June and the zoning committee will meet to look at their request for a special exception that would get them around the requirement to have 35 parking spots for the restaurant. At the next neighborhood meeting, we will hear a recommendation on that request from the zoning committee.

Kathleen said there is also something working its way through the city that could change the ordinance to not have minimum parking requirements. If George's is going through the process now, they are operating under current ordinance, but if the new ordinance is fast tracked, it's theoretically possible it could get approved with zero parking?

Elizabeth does not think so, but she will find out. She's also president of Red Mountain Community (Forest Park, South Avondale, Redmont) and at that monthly meeting with other community leaders, the transportation department brought that ordinance and asked for their support of that ordinance. Elizabeth expressed concern to the group - that they needed time to look it over and she wanted to share it with the neighborhood residents. Other community leaders agreed. Elizabeth is hoping that timeline will be pushed so that she can share it with residents for community engagement. She will keep everyone updated.

The summary of that ordinance is that instead of a parking minimum, there would be a parking maximum. The idea is to allow residents to use parking spaces that are only used during the day for businesses, at night for residential parking. There is also a push to reduce construction of more parking lots as they are expensive, often sit empty/unused, cause stormwater runoff issues, and contribute to the urban heat island effect. The revisions also include bicycle parking requirements. Elizabeth included a link to that in the newsletter.

UPDATE ON NATIVE PLANTS

Since the last update, Homegrown Habitat met with the City and looked at the Highland Park medians. We were pleasantly surprised to see some native plants already in the medians. The City is very receptive to planting native plants in our medians! Over the next few months, we will be working on getting designs to figure out which plants to put in the medians, but we wanted to see if there is support from the Neighborhood Association.

MOTION TO SUPPORT A MOVE TO NATIVE PLANTS

Richard Kiell moves to support the neighborhood planting native plants in the Highland Avenue medians, under the condition that the Homegrown Habitat Highland Park group update the HPNA with the plans for what to put in the medians. Kathleen Byington seconds. All voted in favor, none in opposition.

ADDITIONAL OLD BUSINESS

Adam: Any update on the bollards on the Highland Park sign?

Elizabeth: I've tried to put them back, but can't move concrete. Shout out to Gip Plott who helped pull the old sign stumps up. Elizabeth will find out what to do about the bollards.

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next meeting: June 13 6pm, hybrid

ADJOURNMENT

Kathleen Byington moved to adjourn. Richard Kiell seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 pm.

Minutes submitted by Kelly Marshall, Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association

*Indicates adjustment to meeting format/agenda

FOLLOW UP ITEMS (to be included in the old business section of next month's meeting):

Item	Person Responsible for Update	Status/Action	Update/Result/Conclusion	Closed/Open
Clean up Day	Elizabeth	Shout out to participants: Ray Davis, John Somerset, ___ Covington, Joe Wilson, Suzanne Baker, Sharon Nelson	Great job! Many thanks!	Closed
Parking ordinance proposed changes	Elizabeth	Could George's possibly not be required to have any parking with the new ordinance? Check on timing of request and ordinance revisions implementation	It is possible but unlikely due to the timing of the request and ongoing process to move ahead with the ordinance changes.	Open
collars/protectors for light post bases	Dr. Lee	Check with Home Depot/Lowe's		Open

to protect from pet urine				
Avondale Recycling Center and City pickups	Elizabeth	Provide updates as received	Avondale Recycling Center is open again and city pickups will resume June 7	Closed
Sidewalk improvements	Elizabeth	Ongoing efforts to obtain bids proved unsuccessful - bid received was very vague and for \$50k	Will follow up with Andrew Doleman with Capital Improvements Dept.	Open
311 Issues - some getting closed out or disappearing without resolution	Elizabeth	Corresponding with Alicia Lumpkin with city to figure out why this is happening	Alicia is investigating several specific cases and there has been recent focus of city attention to these types of complaints	Open
Rushton Park Playground Mulch/fall material refurbishment	Elizabeth	Continuing to correspond with city to coordinate with various depts. for implementation ASAP.	Cedric Sparks was looped in after several weeks of no response from the city. Parks and Rec seems to now be moving to facilitate delivery and public works earth moving equipment	Open
Park Lights	Elizabeth/Dr. Lee	Long time efforts are finally getting us closer to repairs/replacements	This project is next for city implementation with AL Power	Open
Bollards by neighborhood sign	Elizabeth & Judy	Follow up with DPW to see if they can help us with removal	Waiting for more information on who originally installed them	Open