

## Highland Park Neighborhood Association

### May Minutes

Meeting Date: May 13, 2025

Meeting Location: Highland Park Golf Course, first floor

[Link to meeting recording](#)

President Elizabeth Sanfelippo called the May 2025 meeting of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association to order at 6 pm. She welcomed everyone and introduced herself as president, Judy Jones as vice-president and Kelly Marshall as secretary.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Sanfelippo announced that former Highland Park Neighborhood Association president Alison Glascock passed away in April. In her twenty year tenure, she accomplished many great things for our neighborhood and will be dearly missed. Read more about her [here](#).

### **ROLL CALL**

Sanfelippo performed a roll call of online attendees as required by the City. Online attendees were: Marjorie White, Evan Williams and Joe Wilson.

### **APRIL 2025 MINUTES**

Sanfelippo asked if there were any corrections or additions to the April 2025 meeting minutes. John Somerset moved to approve the minutes from the April 2025 meeting. Sharon Nelson seconded the motion. A vote was taken, no one was opposed, and the minutes were approved.

### **SPENDING RECOMMENDATION - NEIGHBORHOOD TREES**

Sanfelippo gave an update on trees for the neighborhood. The City does not have the capacity right now to remove dead trees and plant the new trees. Ray Davis, who has been a tremendous asset in helping the neighborhood trees, has received a quote for planting 14 new trees for \$325 per tree and \$475 for a Japanese maple near Freddy's as you arrive in the neighborhood. The total cost for the trees would be \$6,250. We have approximately \$50k in city funds - Sanfelippo to confirm exact amount.

Sanfelippo asked if there were any questions about this spending recommendation. Judy Jones asked how much the trees cost initially. Ray said the neighborhood typically spends \$2,500-\$3,000 a year on trees. There was more discussion about the difficulty of identifying and working with approved vendors by the City to be able to plant these trees. Scot Duncan recommended reaching out to Cool Green Trees for potential volunteers to help plant the trees. Davis said he is in contact with a few different groups. There was more discussion about working with the City to plant the trees vs volunteers and organizations to help. A resident asked if Birmingham is still considered a tree city? Jones said she would try to find out.

Diann Weatherly moved to approve the expenditures for the tree planting. John Somerset seconded. 17 voted in favor and none opposed. The motion was approved.

Sharon Nelson said she has several native trees up for grabs if anyone is interested - let her know!

### **SPEAKER: DR. SCOT DUNCAN, ALABAMA AUDUBON**

Dr. Scot Duncan lives in Highland Park and is the executive director of Alabama Audubon, also located here in Highland Park! Duncan gave a presentation about the birds we can see in Highland Park currently, during

spring bird migration. He also described the work of Alabama Audubon throughout the state. Read more about their work [here](#). Duncan invited the community to their annual [Black Belt Birding Festival](#) August 1-3. Duncan also described their [Project Safe Light](#) program, which helps communities understand what we can do to help make cities safer for birds such as inexpensive window clings, turning lights off during heavy migration times, etc.

Because of Highland Park's native plants and trees, proximity to Red Mountain, heavy vegetation, etc., we have a lot of habitats for birds like cardinals, finches, and robins. During Spring and Fall, we also have a lot of migratory birds passing through our neighborhood. Just the other day, Duncan saw a tiny [magnolia warbler](#) in a tree near Rhodes Park! Duncan described some of the cool birds in Highland Park like: chimney swifts, barred owls (Rushton Park), yellow crowned night heron (corner of 11th Avenue South and 28th Place South - look up in the tree!), broad winged hawk and more!

Duncan said during migration periods, there are several things we can do to help these visiting birds such as [Lights Out](#) programs, keeping your chimneys open for the swifts, using cling/decals on windows, and more. Finally, Duncan reminded us that cats are another major threat to our bird populations. Outdoor cats kill a staggering 4,566 birds per minute in the US! Some ways to keep birds safe from cats: keep them indoors, use a "cat collar" that is brightly colored and reduces the chance of a cat sneaking up on a bird, create a "catio", where the cat can't get to the birds.

A resident asked about a nearby church's parking lot that is super well lit at night. Duncan suggested talking to Michelle Wooten with [Dark Skies](#). Not only do the lights interfere with bird migration, but it also interferes with our sleep.

To learn more about Alabama Audubon and to become a member, [click here!](#)

## **UPDATES FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Officer Howard with the Birmingham Police Department was available for questions. Ray Davis asked if there was any progress with what happened at the Capri apartments a few days ago. Officer Howard had not heard about this incident. Davis said a woman was followed into the parking lot, jumped, and beaten on Sunday morning - in broad daylight. Officer Howard was unaware. A resident asked about the surveillance system on the corner of Highland and 33rd. Sanfelippo said BPD said that the system is moved around the city at different places and times - not because of an uptick in crime in our neighborhood.

Sanfelippo reported that the neighborhood signed on to a letter of support for the City applying for a Safe Streets for All grant, which will help bring pedestrian friendly improvements like the beeping crosswalk signals for those who can't see, crosslights with timers, and more.

## **UPDATE FROM COUNCILOR VALERIE ABBOTT**

Abbott said the main issue the City Council has been dealing with is the theft of the Birmingham Water Works by legislators in Montgomery. Abbott said Birmingham felt blindsided by this, but the City has filed a lawsuit. Abbott said it is patently unfair, racist and unconstitutional. Residents asked questions and Abbott provided some context and history about the Birmingham Water Works and how the bill was passed. The City Council appointed Sheila Tyson as their representative on the Board, and the Mayor has appointed Jarvis Patton.

Because of all of this happening so quickly, the City Council has not been able to address the burning issue

of Short Term Rentals. There is a Committee meeting about STRs next week. The public needs to attend the hearing before the Planning Commission and the City Council meeting where the decision is made.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- The flooding at Clairmont and 32nd and Highland Drive has been horrendous. Sanfelippo has emailed the City many times with photos of the drains clogged with mud. Hopefully we will see improvements there during the next rain.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- Construction will start soon on 26th Street near Virginia Samford Theatre and Episcopal Place. They have also had terrible repeated flooding issues. The City will be replacing pipes along 26th/23rd Street and it will probably be a bit inconvenient for a few years. We have been told at least one lane will remain open at any given time. While they replace the pipes, they will also add a bike lane, and other improvements to the street.
- The Zoning Committee (and anyone else who wants to attend) will have a working meeting at the Planning Commission Wednesday, May 21 in City Council Chambers for Highland Park to make our case again to keep parcels in our neighborhood zoned as single family. Get in touch with Sanfelippo for more information.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Friends in Dog Ownership (FIDO) will be chalking the sidewalks soon to remind residents to take care of their dog poop and not leave it behind!
- Do Dah Day is this Saturday. More info at [www.dodahday.org](http://www.dodahday.org)
- Birmingham Folk Fest is this Saturday. More info at [www.birminghamfolkfest.org](http://www.birminghamfolkfest.org)
- The Jewish Food Festival is this weekend. More info at [bhamjcc.org](http://bhamjcc.org)
- Bulk trash day is May 23
- May 26 is Memorial Day, the City will be closed. Our trash pick up will be on Tuesday, May 27. See trash and recycling pick ups on our website.
- Alabama Power is NOT supposed to be cutting trees right now. If you see them, please contact Judy Jones.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Marshall  
Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association