

Highland Park Neighborhood Association

November Minutes

Meeting Date: January 14, 2026 Meeting Location: Rojo Side Room

[Link to meeting recording](#)

President Elizabeth Sanfelippo called the January 2026 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.

NOVEMBER 2025 MINUTES

Sanfelippo asked if there were any corrections or additions to the November 2025 meeting minutes. John Somerset moved to approve the November 2025 minutes and Ray Davis seconded the motion. A vote was taken, all approved, no one was opposed, and the November minutes were approved.

ROLL CALL

Those attending online are: Philip Foster, Annette Rodgers, Sandra Bailey, Dian Weatherley, Alan and Enma R., Glenn, Whitney, Connie Urist, Captain Julie Quigley-Vining

HUGE THANK YOU

A huge thank you to Laney DeJonge and Clark Lopez for opening up Rojo for our neighborhood meeting and for all they do for the community!

SPENDING REQUEST

During the November meeting, Jennifer Chandler from Vulcan Park presented to us about a sponsorship of Thunder on the Mountain. The HPNA Spending Committee did not recommend funding of this sponsorship. Some discussion ensued, including what other neighborhoods were asked to sponsor, and how much they donated.

After discussion, Judy Jones moved that Highland Park Neighborhood Association donate \$1,500 to Thunder on the Mountain. Morris Newman seconds. 14 voted in favor, 3 opposed (including 2 online) and 6 abstained. The motion carries.

The current balance of our account is \$37,874, before this donation. Sanfelippo explained a little of the process of requesting funds from the City.

IT'S NICE TO HAVE YOU IN HIGHLAND PARK UPDATES

Sanfelippo shared a great video from the It's Nice to Have You in Highland Park event that Jacob DeLerosa made. [Click here to watch the short video!](#)

Sanfelippo thanked Friends of Highland Park and Annie Leardine. In 2024, we raised \$587 that was split amongst Friends of Highland Park, Alabama Audubon and the Birmingham Historical Society. In 2025, we raised \$975 for the same three organizations.

Sanfelippo said she asked the HP Spending Committee for a recommended \$3,000 from the HPNA account to support the event in 2026. The Spending Committee approved that request. This money would be used for food, musicians, promotion, etc. **Morris Newman made a motion that \$3,000 from our neighborhood account be given to Friends of Highland Park for the It's Nice to Have You in Birmingham event in 2026. Bob McKenna seconded that motion. 18 people voted in favor. The motion carries.**

UPDATE FROM BIRMINGHAM POLICE

Captain Quigley-Vining provided an update on homeless encampment at Underwood Park and on 28th Street. She said every time she drives by, they are not there, but she has heard there are still issues. A resident said there have been some issues across the street from Underwood. Another resident said there is a lot of trash in Underwood Park too. Captain Quigley-Vining said she has been talking to Parks and Rec about the available access to power outlets in the parks. Jones asked if there is an update on crime stats. Quigley-Vining said their system has been down, but she will email those to Sanfelippo.

Annette Rodgers said she has a lot of unhoused people sleeping on her porch, using her hose to shower, setting off her Ring alarms, etc. Quigley-Vining said to call the non-emergency number with every detail you can about their appearance, clothing, etc. so the police can try to locate them. It's harder to catch them and trespass them when they are transient. Police officers can also use their body cams to upload photos from Ring cameras, phones, etc. so you can call them if you have a photo of someone who has been on your property. Quigley-Vining said to be sure to have documentation of everything by asking for an officer to come to take the complaint.

A resident asked if there was any indication that ICE would be coming to Birmingham. Quigley-Vining said she does not have any information on that whatsoever and most likely will not receive any information about that.

SPECIAL SPEAKER: URBAN ALCHEMY (UA)

Stephanie Hicks is with [Urban Alchemy](#) and their Homeless Engagement Assistance Response Team (HEART). Urban Alchemy's goal is to connect unhoused Birminghamians to the resources they need to transition back into permanent housing by meeting them where they are. The team also works to build relationships between housed and unhoused residents and make neighborhoods safer.

Hicks encouraged residents to call them (at 311) if you meet a person experiencing homelessness and who needs help. They are not the police, but they work with the police

and can help link unhoused individuals with the right resources in town to help them, such as mental health help, etc.

All employees are certified in CPR and OD reversals. Their HEART team helps the unhoused that will accept their help with things like: obtaining their social security card or ID, transportation to doctors appointments, showers, food, etc.

UA's Care Coordinators are like case managers, and will help follow through in their life to help them become productive and steady. UA is open seven days a week, and on holidays.

Hicks said Firehouse Shelter has a lottery system for their beds. Hopefully with Jimmy Hale Mission expansion, we will have more beds for people to go. One of the challenges in this issue is that once a bed is available, it can be extremely difficult to locate the person to get them into the shelter. It's also difficult to locate people once they have asked for help in other ways as well. To this end, Urban Alchemy has secured some funding for an open respite place called OASIS, where the unhoused can visit daily, so that more services can be offered to these individuals. If they are visiting this space daily, Urban Alchemy can be on the lookout and help with the communication of opportunities and linking between services.

A resident asked why some of the unhoused refuse the services? Hicks said the trust factor is very low. They have been promised things before that have not been true. A huge part of UA's work is building that trust.

If you are concerned about an unhoused person, or want Urban Alchemy's help with someone, please contact them at XXX. UA has hand warmers, blankets, jackets, scarves, etc. and they can deliver them to people who need them.

A resident asked about volunteer opportunities for events, etc. Urban Alchemy is working on that and will send it to us as soon as it is ready for anyone interested in volunteering.

UPDATE FROM LANEY DEJONGE, ROJO

As a reminder, DeJonge and some other neighbors started [Homegrown Habitat](#), to encourage more native plants in Highland Park and beyond. In 2024-2025, 6 medians of native plants were planted and this past summer, fireflies were seen on Rojo's patio for the first time! That was in very large part due to [Leave the Leaves!](#) DeJonge reported that the group is currently analyzing the plants from last season to see which worked well, which need some help and/or to be moved, etc.

Due to the success of this pilot program, Episcopal Place also planted all natives in their landscaping, and now Virginia Samford Theatre has planted all natives in their courtyard too! Alabama Audubon has asked to partner with Homegrown Habitat to plant natives near their office. After a few meetings with Lea Ann Macknally, it has been decided to plant in the

median in front of Bob's House. DeJonge will present plans at the next neighborhood meeting. Friends of Highland Park is also partnering with Snable Law Firm for their median maybe this summer.

DeJonge also wanted to talk about leaf blowers. If you leave the leaves on the ground, a lot of the caterpillars that fall from the oak trees, native bees, insects, fireflies, etc. are living through the winter. If you blow them all winter, and bag them up, and send them to a landfill, we have lost all those needed critters. You can read more about that [here](#).

Another problem with blowing leaves is the horrible loudness of gas powered blowers. She cited [this article](#) when letting us know that the operation of a gas powered leaf blower for one hour releases emissions equivalent to driving a car for 15 hours or 1100 miles! **DeJonge wants to encourage us all to use and encourage landscapers the use of eclectic leaf blowers.** The City of Mountain Brook has switched to ALL eclectic leaf blowers for their public works department, and they love them.

DeJonge wrote a letter to her landlord at Rojo asking them to use electric leaf blowers and is happy to share that letter with anyone who wants to also encourage their landlords to do the same!

A resident asked about a list of easy natives to plant in her yard. DeJonge gave two resources: sign up for Homegrown Habitat here and she can send you a list, or you can also look [here at MBEE](#).

Judy Jones reminded everyone that we adopted a resolution to encourage electric-powered leaf blowers [note: it was [April 2024](#)]. Sanfelippo will add this to our website.

UPDATE FROM COUNCILOR VASA

Councilor Vasa introduced his team of Toni King (Chief of Staff) and Tony Diliberto (Director of Community Engagement). He reminded us that the City Council is the legislative branch of the City of Birmingham, and they vote on budget and ordinances.

Councilor Vasa reported the results of the survey related to the Southern Area Framework Plan. His office received more than 300 survey results and presented the results. [Click here](#) to see them: The key findings are: 77% of respondents oppose or strongly oppose the Southern Area Framework Plan as is. Only 10% support or strongly support. Most of the concerns are centered around traffic, density, preservation of the neighborhood character. Based on the survey results and some comments within, Vasa's office is going to go back to the Planning and Zoning Committee and ask more questions, get more clarity, and then report back to us.

ANOTHER SURVEY! Councilor Vasa has another survey for residents: District 3 Resident

Priority Survey [currently closed]. The results of this survey will help create a roadmap for Councilor Vasa's office for the year. These results will be announced at [Vasa's Town Hall](#) on Thursday, February 5 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at Vulcan Park.

OLD BUSINESS

- 28th Street is the detour route for the 26th Street construction. The detour will be finished at the end of this week. Sanfelippo will send updates when she gets them.
- 28th Street and 11th Avenue, there is an abandoned building/apartment complex and has been problematic. Now someone is working on it and Sanfelippo wants to remind everyone to get the proper permits for that type of work.
- There are no updates on the potential demolition of the two apartment buildings across from Freddy's on Highland Avenue.
- Morris Newman reported that he is continuing to work with the potential developers of the Tramont property.

NEW BUSINESS

Traffic Calming: There is a new traffic calming procedure from the City. There have been 500-800 requests sent to the City requesting traffic calming on their street. The City has analyzed the requests and now, twice a year they will provide to us their Top 5 complaint areas and then our neighborhood will vote for our Top 2 in Highland Park (from those five) to give to the City. The City will then prioritize those two for traffic calming methods. Sanfelippo will create a survey to send to the neighborhood via the email list and then we will discuss the results at the next neighborhood meeting. The criteria is 500+ cars a day with 10% of them speeding.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Highland Bark tees** are available and benefit Friends of Highland Park! You can talk to Bob about them or email clubhouseonhighland@gmail.com to order one.
- **Plastic recycling** of #5 you can drop off behind 1157 Lakeview Crescent)
- Don't forget to use **MY BHAM 311!**
- [Keep up with events, recycling days, etc. here.](#)
- Next meeting: February 10!

The meeting was adjourned at around 8:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Marshall
Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association