

Highland Park Neighborhood Association

April Minutes

Meeting Date: April 14, 2026 Meeting Location: Rojo

[Link to meeting recording](#)

President Elizabeth Sanfelippo called the April 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.

AGENDA

Elizabeth Sanfelippo asked if everyone saw the agenda and approved it. Motion to approve and seconded. All approved, none opposed.

ROLL CALL

Those attending online are: Lt. David Hyché (Birmingham Fire and Rescue), Mary Helen and Ralph Crowe, Tonya Gates, Rebecca Wharton, Amy Niesen, Jenny Craig, Dennis Skully, Annette Rodgers, Neal Yancey

UPDATES FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Lt. David Hyché wanted to provide a few tips about lightning safety. During lightning storms, stay inside and away from windows. Don't come in contact with electrical devices like corded phones. Keep away from water (such as washing hands, showering, laundry). If you are outside, try to seek shelter in a hard top vehicle, stay away from trees and water. If you think someone has been struck from lightning, call 911 as soon as you can. If you need help, call fire station no. 22 at (205) 254-2995

MARCH MINUTES

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

MAGIC CITY ART CONNECTION

Lizzie Scruggs with Magic City Art Connection invited everyone to come out and enjoy Magic City Art Connection April 24-26. This is the 43rd year of the outdoor festival at Sloss Furnaces featuring 175 artists from across the region. There is also food and drink at Corks and Chefs event. There will be music and a kid's activity area called Imagination Fest with workshops and more. Visit www.magiccityart.com for more information.

SPEAKER: SCOT DUNCAN, ALABAMA AUDUBON

Scot Duncan is the executive director of Alabama Audubon, which is located right here in Highland Park next door to the Historical Society.

Audubon's work is to uplift birds. Since the 70s there has been a significant decline in our bird population across species. Audubon is working to reverse that trend. Birds offer a lot to us, not just the soundtrack to our lives, but also provide incredibly important benefits to us.

We are currently in the peak of migration season, as well as breeding season for many birds. Some highlights from Highland Park: barred owls, [yellow crowned night heron](#) (currently living in an oak tree on the corner of 11th Avenue South and 28th Place South, follow the bird poop to see them!). This year there are two nests with two sets of birds! We also have breeding red tailed hawks (near IPC), broad wing hawks, chimney swifts, and so much more.

Scot reminded us of why he went into conservation which was because species are going extinct and populations are declining. The #1 cause of bird decline in the US is loss of habitat and the best way to help that is to, you guessed it, **plant native plants!** Scot gave a shout out to Laney and the Homegrown Habitat group for all their hard work planting natives in the medians. These native plants provide the shelter and cover for birds, as well as the insects and seeds needed for the birds. The second major threat to birds is outdoor cats. Consider bells on collars, brightly colored collars, etc. Cats are killing about 5,500 birds a minute. These collars have led to an 80% decline in bird deaths.

The third major reason for decline of the bird population is collision with windows, which is why Audubon has the “dotted windows” on their office. You can learn more about Project Safe Light and how you can help by [clicking here](#). Windows are killing about 2,400 birds a minute. : (

Learn more about Audubon and their events by [clicking here](#). Of special note is the Black Belt Birding Festival July 31 - August 2. [Click here](#) to learn more.

Sanfelippo opened it up to questions from the community. A resident asked if it is hummingbird season yet and Duncan said it always is in Alabama! He reminded us to clean our hummingbird feeders regularly with a 10% vinegar or bleach solution. A resident asked what is happening when the owls are “yelling” at each other and Duncan said the same thing that happens when you or I are yelling at each other! Sometimes it is flirting, sometimes communicating, sometimes they are staking their territory, etc. A resident asked what is the best thing to have in our bird feeders right now and Duncan recommended meal worms, suet (recipes online). Black oil sunflower seeds and white millet are the two favorite seeds. A resident asked what we can do to help birds nest. Duncan said to keep native vegetation around! He also said to leave dead trees up and around as long as you can as birds find homes within them. Bird boxes are also a great idea, but be sure to do some research before you purchase. Sanfelippo had a weird question about a baby or smaller bird constantly banging himself into her window, up to 500 times in a couple of days. Duncan advised to adhere some sort of bubble wrap or something similar to the outside of the window so the little birdie won't see its reflection and try to fight it.

UPDATES FROM BIRMINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

Captain Quigley-Vining provided an update on the unhoused people in the neighborhood. She said it has been very difficult to manage and she is requesting some help from the City. She said once they are able to move one encampment, another one pops up nearby, and it has been very difficult to completely remove them.

A resident asked what other entities or agencies are helping the police department with this situation. Captain Quigley-Vining said currently only the Department of Public Works, who has been assisting with moving of encampments and cleaning. It is law to provide a 24-48 hour vacate notice. Urban Alchemy's

street outreach teams (HEART) has also been trying to help the unhoused with resources but most refuse. Alanah Melton who heads the city's unhoused assistance has also been asked for help by Sanfelippo.

A resident asked about the RV that has been sitting on 11th, across from The Nick. He said it has been a "hotbed of nefarious activity". Captain Quigley-Vining said the police department has required them to move, and they do, but then they return. Captain Quigley-Vining said she will continue to make contact with them and have them move again. The Narcotics Department's number is 205-254-6416. If you see what you suspect to be drug activity happening, it is a good idea to call the narcotics department too. A resident asked if it is helpful to get ALDOT involved in moving the RV and Captain Quigley-Vining said yes, for sure. She also will look into zoning and code enforcements, etc. to see if there is another way to get the RV cited and moved.

A resident asked about the encampment behind The Nick that is on state property. They were told police can't do anything since it is state property. Captain Quigley-Vining said that is true, but will ask her boss about who to talk to about this area, and get back to us on that. Captain Quigley-Vining encouraged residents to reach out to the Mayor's office and Alanah Melton with the Mayor's homelessness program to ask for more attention to these encampments and help the unhoused populations. She also reminds us that simply being homeless is not a crime, but if you do see something illegal happening, call 911 immediately so the police can have a paper trail at minimum. [Click here](#) to learn more.

UPDATES FROM COUNCILOR JOSH VASA

Councilor Josh Vasa provided a few updates. First, he wanted to address the encampment issue we were just discussing. He said that there are several entities at City Hall working on this such as Alanah Melton's office at City Hall, the HEART program and Urban Alchemy, Birmingham Police Department, City Council, neighborhood leadership, etc. to solve the problem of public encampments.

Vasa reminded us that the City Council voted a couple of weeks ago to pass an ordinance against encampments. Whether you have a home or not, public encampments and in right of ways are not allowed in Birmingham. Vasa said the paper trail with the police department, Mayor's office, etc is very important. Continue emailing and letting the appropriate entities know when you see an illegal encampment. Vasa agreed with Captain Quigley-Vining from before about how it has been increasingly difficult to manage because once an encampment is moved, one will pop up again in a different location. Homelessness is an epidemic across the nation, and Birmingham is working to address it through many different avenues with various partners. Long-term solutions include more beds in shelters, the [Home for All](#) program, etc. Vasa said this is an important issue for the Council, the City and the neighborhood.

Vasa reminded us to **also** use [My Bham 311](#) and/or call 311! He asks that you give the case 30 days to be resolved and if it is not, email Vasa and his staff with the case number and they will follow up. Reminder to copy his chief of staff antoINETte.king@birminghamal.gov and community outreach coordinator tonyddistrict3@gmail.com when emailing Vasa.

Vasa had a few more announcements:

- The [St. Elias Food Festival](#) is in Glen Iris April 17-18.
- The HVAC has finally been approved for the Highland Park Golf Course / Pro Shop
- City Council approved the [Greenway and Road Diet project](#) on Richard Arrington Blvd between

Homewood and Birmingham, which will include bike lanes and walking lanes! This is an incredible project that will encourage connectivity and bringing people into the city!

- Sidewalk repair projects are happening in District 3! This was one of the major issues discovered in the survey Vasa and his team conducted earlier this year and he has committed to them happening. Sidewalks that have not been repaired in decades are being repaired. Unfortunately, sometimes that may mean some removal of trees. This will NOT be the first choice, but sometimes it may be necessary. Stay tuned to Vasa's social media for more about this.
- Birmingham Folk Fest is May 16 at Avondale Park

A resident asked about the short term rentals ordinance. Vasa said in March there was a vote during Committee of the Whole, and the vote was to ask PEP to address a few things such as: short term rentals exempted from single family areas, spacing on how close and clustered STR can be or not be, a "two strikes you're out" policy, etc. City Council will vote in May or June on this.

A resident asked if the 15 tiny homes with the Home for All program for the unhoused are all occupied and Vasa said they are. This is for Phase 1, and there will be 45 additional homes as part of Phase 2, with more after that. Vasa said he would be around after for any additional questions. Sanfelippo gave a shout out to Toni King and Tony Diliberto with Vasa's office.

OLD BUSINESS

- Sanfelippo gave a shout out to Art Edge, a resident in the neighborhood, who started a lawsuit which led to the sale of the Sisters Houses and we are so grateful for that!
- We have seen some movement with George's and it is expected to open within the next few months.
- Round two of the giant recycling bins have been ordered and should be delivered soon. [Click here](#) to fill out the form. And remember: do not use plastic bags for your recycling!
- Sanfelippo is working on a few funding requests through the city and trying to get updates, but hasn't yet.
- There is another meeting of the Southern Framework Plan happening in May. There will be an update at the next meeting.
- Reminder to continue using [My Bham 311](#) so that there is a paper trail and Sanfelippo can follow up / get notifications

UPDATE FROM JUDY JONES

The 2026 legislative session has ended. Primary elections are May 19. Pay attention to how your elected officials voted in this last session! We are in District 55 and we have 3 candidates for House Representative. Do your homework!

Another thing: pay attention at the polling locations. The League of Women Voters will be looking for volunteers for poll watchers.

There are two migrant check in locations in our city, one is in our neighborhood. They are currently detaining people when they check in. Residents have witnessed this and are concerned. MigrantWatch is looking for volunteers to get trained to work shifts at the check-in. If you are interested in this, please let

Judy Jones know. A lot of this would be checking out car tags, helping with family notifications, etc.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Bulk trash** is on April 17
- **April 18** - weeding of the medians! Free chips and salsa at Rojo for volunteers
- **April 18** - [Gumbo Gala](#) benefiting Episcopal Place! Thank you to them for letting us have our meeting here!
- **April 25** - Earthbound Earthfest
- **April 26-28** - Magic City Art Connection
- **April 26** - Jewish Food and Culture Fest
- **April 28 at 9:30 am** - data center ordinance hearing at Birmingham City Council
- **May 5 at 9:30 am** - City Council public hearing on Tramont voting change
- **May 14 at 2:30 pm** - height variance on Tramont hearing
- **May 31-** [Darter Fest](#) at Cahaba Brewing
- **Glass recycling:** [Half Glass Full](#) or you can take to: Red Cat, Birmingham Breadworks, Red Cat Pepper Place, Finches Wine. Note: do not leave boxes at Bham Breadworks if bins are overloaded.
- **October 18 - 3rd annual It's Nice to Have You in Highland Park!**
- Our Town is starting at Virginia Samford Theatre next week!

The meeting was adjourned at around 7:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kelly Marshall
Secretary, Highland Park Neighborhood Association