

**PROPOSED MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON
REGULAR MEETING OF THE HIGHLAND PARK CITY COUNCIL**

October 20, 2025

Council convened at 7:05 p.m. with Council President Thomas presiding.

Present: Council Pro Tem Robinson, Councilwoman Manica, Councilwoman Martin, Councilman Ash-Shafii, Council President Thomas (5).

Absent: (0).

A quorum being present, Council was declared in session.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Councilwoman Martin

Supported by Councilman Ash-Shafii

To approve the agenda with the addition of a resolution from City Council requesting online publication of all full ordinances for public access. Yeas (3) Thomas, Manica, Martin, Nays (2) Robinson, Ash-Shafii, Absent (0).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Moved by Councilwoman Manica

Supported by Council President Thomas

To approve the minutes of the In-Person and Virtual Regular meeting held October 6, 2025. Yeas (3) Thomas, Manica, Martin, Nays (2) Robinson, Ash-Shafii, Absent (0).

VETO

10-20-25 V

The following veto was received from Mayor McDonald.

At their meeting on October 6, 2025, Highland Park City Council passed an untitled walked-on Resolution that would purportedly extend an existing moratorium on the City's rental ordinance.

The resolution was in writing and provided to City Attorney at the beginning of the meeting. Council formally added the item to the agenda as a walked-on Resolution. The City Attorney present expressed no objection to the Resolution's form or the way it was added-to the agenda.

Highland Park City Council is hereby on notice that pursuant to the authority vested in the Mayor under Charter Section 6-3, I am vetoing this Council action for the following reasons:

- 1) The Resolution is attempting to "continue and affirm" a moratorium that no longer exists. By its own admission the original and only moratorium was for "approximately 90 days." The October 6, 2025, meeting was 140 days after the enactment of that moratorium.
- 2) The Resolution makes several references to an "existing ordinance" but never identifies it as the original pre-moratorium, currently of legal effect Non- Owner Occupied Ordinance or the amended version that passed first reading and also "existed" as of October 6, 2025.
- 3) The "BE IT RESOLVED" paragraph would enact a moratorium "for at least 120 days" and after "no less than 4" workshops. That is an indefinite and potentially infinite length of time. Rescinding enforcement of the City's rental ordinance for a period up to "forever" would jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Highland Park, particularly those that reside in Non- Owner Occupied properties.

This Veto hereby suspends the operation of the above-referenced Council action which shall have no legal effect unless the City Council shall, at the next regular meeting, vote to adopt the Council action by the affirmative vote of four (4) of its members.

**** NO ACTION TAKEN AGAINST VETO ****

ADMINISTRATION 10-20-25 VI

The following resolution was submitted for approval.

RESOLUTION TO APPOINT WILLIE JOHNSON TO THE RECREATION COMMISSION

Moved by Councilwoman Martin
Supported by Councilman Ash-Shafii

WHEREAS, in accordance with Chapter 262 of the City Ordinance, the City established a Recreation Commission to oversee the policies & procedures of the Recreation Department; and,

WHEREAS, in accordance with Chapter 262.01 the Commission is to consist of 5 (five) residents of the City of Highland Park appointed by the Mayor; and two (2) vacancies exist; and,

WHEREAS, the appointments of the Recreation Commission are subject to Council approval; and,

WHEREAS, the Administration is seeking to improve, redevelop and grow the Recreation Department by increasing Senior, Youth and Community programming.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Highland Park City Council approves the Mayoral appointment for the Recreation Commission as follows:

Willie Johnson Term ending January 27, 2027

Yeas (5), Nays (0), Absent (0).

ENGINEERING
10-20-25 VII

The following resolution was for approval.

Moved by Councilwoman Manica
Supported by Councilwoman Martin

WHEREAS, the City of Highland Park is committed to pursuing innovative, sustainable, and equitable solutions to enhance the city's energy infrastructure, foster economic development, and improve the quality of life for its residents; and

WHEREAS, both Solar Tonic, LLC, a Michigan-based leader in solar energy technology, and Soulardarity, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to energy democracy and advocating for community-owned renewable energy, have each received grant funding to install Solar Tonic solar streetlights in the public Right-of-Way, at no cost to the City of Highland Park, as part of a 5-year pilot program, including 50 solar streetlights owned by Solar Tonic and 10 solar streetlights owned by Soulardarity, for a combined donated value of approximately \$1.8 million, which includes the physical solar streetlights, foundations, site engineering, ground works, installation, project management and permitting; and

WHEREAS, as part of their commitment to the community of Highland Park, Solar Tonic and Soulardarity have agreed to guarantee operations and maintenance (O&M) services for the solar streetlights at no cost to the City during the 5-year pilot program, at a donated value of \$195,000, with the intent of providing time for the City and other community stakeholders to develop a sustainable model for operating, maintaining, and expanding residential street lighting in Highland Park; and

WHEREAS, the successful implementation of these grant-funded solar streetlight projects align with the City of Highland Park's Master Plan and Sustainability Framework, which prioritizes the integration of renewable energy and resilient infrastructure in future development.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of Highland Park hereby approves a 5-year pilot program for Solar Tonic and Soulardarity to install, operate and maintain 60 new solar streetlights in the public right-of-way (ROW), all at no cost to the City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council authorizes the City's Engineering Department [or CED Department] to take all necessary actions to facilitate permitting approvals for Solar Tonic's installation of solar streetlights within the public right-of-way.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council authorizes the Mayor to negotiate and execute Agreements with Solar Tonic and Soulardarity regarding the provision of solar streetlight operation and maintenance (O&M) services for the duration of the 5-year pilot program in which all O&M costs, insurance and liability for the solar streetlights shall be borne by Solar Tonic and Soulardarity, and that on or before the end of the pilot program, consideration shall be given towards the transfer of ownership of the poles from Solar Tonic and/or Soulardarity to the City of Highland Park, contingent upon the ability of the City to pay O&M fees for the continuance of operations and maintenance by Solar Tonic LLC.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take immediate effect upon its adoption. Yeas (3) Thomas, Manica, Martin, Nays (2) Robinson, Ash-Shafii, Absent (0).

**CITY COUNCIL
10-20-25 VIII**

The following resolution was submitted for approval.

**RESOLUTION REQUESTING ONLINE PUBLICATION OF ALL ORDINANCES FOR
PUBLIC ACCESS**

Moved by Councilwoman Manica
Supported by Council President Thomas

To table. Yeas (2) Thomas, Manica, Nays (3) Robinson, Martin, Ash-Shafii, Absent (0).

Moved by Councilman Ash-Shafii
Supported by Councilwoman Martin

WHEREAS, the citizens of Highland Park have the right to know and understand the laws and ordinances they are governed by in the city where they live and work;

WHEREAS, the City Council of Highland Park recognizes that transparency and accountability are important and essential for public trust;

WHEREAS, many ordinances of the City (e.g. non-owner occupied properties, blight, special events, etc.) do not have their full legal text readily available and are currently enforced through administrative processes (forms, applications, etc.) which denies citizens access and understanding of the enforced rules and regulations;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of all City officials, including the Mayor to uphold the rights of citizens and to ensure that ordinances are published and accessible;

WHEREAS, failure to publish ordinances publicly undermines due process, creates confusion, and risks the unlawful enforcement of regulations leading to unnecessary lawsuits;

WHEREAS, the City Council has the affirmative responsibility to proactively provide full transparency in all matters of law and regulation so that the citizens of Highland Park can hold the many institutions of government and the administration of the city accountable;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that

- 1.** The Highland Park City Council requests that all relevant City departments publish all City ordinances in full online, including any ordinances currently enforced or scheduled for enforcement;
- 2.** Publication shall be done in a manner that is complete, searchable, printable, and clearly indexed by chapter and section on the City's official website (<https://www.highlandparkmi.gov/how-do-i/look-up/ordinances/>) and/or via MuniCode;
- 3.** The City Council explicitly asserts the rights of Highland Park citizens to know the full content of any ordinance before it is enforced against them, and any failure by City officials to comply will be noted in the public record as a denial of transparency and a violation of citizens' rights;
- 4.** The Council urges all City officials to recognize that full publication of ordinances is a duty to the citizens, and that continued withholding of full ordinance text will be treated as an actionable failure of government accountability and a willful neglect of duty;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be distributed to the Mayor, City Administrator, Building Department, Community of Economic Development Department, City Clerk, the City Council, and made available on the City website immediately so that citizens can be informed of this demand for transparency. Yeas (3) Robinson, Martin, Ash-Shafii, Nays (2) Thomas, Manica, Absent (0).

* Council Pro Tem Robinson left the meeting at 8:45pm.

* Councilman Ash-Shafii left the meeting at 8:45pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Councilwoman Manica

Supported by Councilwoman Martin

To adjourn the meeting, meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the attached is a copy of the minutes of the In-Person and Virtual Regular Meeting held the 20th day of October 2025 and that said minutes are available for public inspection at the address designated on the posted public notice.



Cidia Wicker-Brown, Deputy City Clerk