



**VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK – Work Session  
1650 Highland Park Drive North  
Wednesday, February 28, 2024, 6:00 pm.**

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK, FLORIDA MET IN REGULAR SESSION AT THE VILLAGE OF HIGHLAND PARK ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 1650 NORTH HIGHLAND PARK DRIVE, ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2023, AT 6:00 P.M. WITH THE FOLLOWING COMMISSION MEMBERS AND STAFFPERSONS PRESENT:

Derek Camann, Commissioner (Seat 1)  
Brandon McWhorter, Mayor-Commissioner (Seat 2)  
Amanda Updike, Commissioner (Seat 3)  
Lita O’Neill, Village Clerk  
Mary Bradley, Treasurer  
Jamie Stoughton, Resident  
Linda Salisbury, Resident  
Jim Salisbury, Resident

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

The Village Clerk called the roll. Commissioner Derek Camann, Mayor-Commissioner Brandon McWhorter, and Commissioner Amanda Updike were present.  
A quorum was present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Jamie Stoughton, 1845 Highland Park Drive South, thanked the Commission for getting the new speed bump on his street. He explained that the speed bump was moved up the hill recently, but he stated that it should have been moved down the hill for safety reasons. He commented that it appears to be helping only two homes up the hill because it slows people down at the top of the hill, but as soon as they make it past the speed bump, drivers speed up.

Commissioner Updike agreed with Mr. Stoughton. The Village Clerk, Lita O’Neill, mentioned that the City Manager was not able to attend the meeting, but his report did note that a third speed bump could not be installed because a missing part is on order. The Clerk suggested that the third speed bump may be installed on Mr. Stoughton’s street, but she was not sure of the intended locations. Mayor McWhorter then responded that he did not think that the third speed

bump was intended to be installed on Mr. Stoughton’s street, but rather closer to the entrance. Mayor McWhorter noted that two of the three speed bumps had been installed. Commissioner Updike commented that the Commission can check with the City Manager about placement.

Linda Salisbury, 1640 Highland Park Drive South, was in attendance. Linda asked about the runoff and erosion issue. She explained that a lot of sand runs down the hill when it rains. Mayor McWhorter responded and explained that survey work has been done to determine ownership of the hill. The area will be sodded and irrigated to keep the sand out of the road. Ms. Salisbury asked about the time frame, and the Commission responded that the time frame is March/April.

Jim Salisbury, 1640 Highland Park Drive South, asked about the tax bill and why it is so high. The Mayor explained that our percentage of the gas tax, which goes into the Road Fund, is based on the percentage of the County roads in Polk County that the Village owns. The amount we receive each year has been decreasing due to County growth. The Mayor asked the Treasurer to report how much we received from the gas tax last year, and she told the Commission \$5,200. Ms. Salisbury asked how many residents are here. The Village Clerk noted that there are about 270 registered voters and 111 water customers. The Mayor explained that the roads will need to be repaved eventually, likely in the next 5-6 years, so it is important to keep the millage rate where it is to generate funds to cover those costs.

### **CITY MANAGER’S REPORT**

Ric Busbee, who could not attend the work session, had provided his report to the Village Clerk in advance of the work session. The Village Clerk presented the report:

- 1) The water plant upgrade is complete. The new system is working perfectly.
- 2) Duke Energy is removing and replacing a power pole. They will add an additional pole on Highland Park Drive South. Tree trimmers were here last week to clean up the area, and this was the first step in the upgrade.
- 3) Two of three speed bumps have been replaced. The third was missing a piece, and it will be installed when the part arrives. ETA is mid-March.

### **TREASURER’S BUDGET-TO-ACTUAL REPORT**

The Treasurer had provided the Commission with budget-to-actual reports. The Mayor asked Ms. Bradley about insurance premium costs and utilities costs. Commissioner Updike asked whether the Commission did a budget amendment during the past year. Mayor McWhorter responded that no budget amendment was done. The Treasurer commented that budget amendments need to be done only if the actual budget exceeds the adopted budget. The Mayor noted that the fiscal year ends September 30, 2024, so the Commission will continue to monitor the budget-to-actual reports.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Elections Update – The Mayor asked the Village Clerk to provide an update on the municipal election process. The Village Clerk stated that during the election qualifying period, February 12-16, only Ms. Amanda Updike submitted qualifying papers. As a result, no election is necessary. The Polk County

Supervisor of Elections office was prepared to assist Highland Park with an election, per the agreement signed. The Village Clerk congratulated the incumbent, Amanda Updike (who will formally take her oath of office at the next regular meeting.)

Form 6 Questions – The Village Clerk demonstrated for the Commission how to access the EFDMS website and offered to assist the Commissioners as needed with the process.

VHP Historical Marker – The Mayor asked the Village Clerk to provide an update on the historical marker. Commissioner Camann noted what a great job Mayor McWhorter did on the news piece ([Link here to Tampa Bay 10](#)) where he noted the historical significance of Highland Park and that we were being considered for a historical marker. The Clerk reviewed the application process and sought direction from the Commission in terms of the language that will go on the marker. The Clerk shared the draft text. The Commission agreed that the context was good -- to focus on Irwin Yarnell's contributions to the development of Highland Park. Commissioner Updike noted a needed grammatical change, which was made. The Clerk will connect with Blair Updike and the Historical Commission to ensure the application continues to move forward.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

The Mayor invited the Commissioners to address any Village issues. Commissioner Updike mentioned that a water fountain would make a nice addition. The Commission agreed it was something worth pursuing. Mayor McWhorter commented that we need to let the City Manager know to add this item to the list of things to do. The Mayor commented that the City Manager has been doing an excellent job. The work with the water plant and ensuring that security measures are in place are great improvements.

The Mayor also commented that he has asked the City Manager to discuss the water rate with the City of Lake Wales to see if the rate could be re-negotiated for a lower rate.

Mr. Stoughton was concerned about a dead palm tree on his property. Discussion ensued about a palm disease called lethal bronzing. Suggestions were made to reach out to the Polk County Extension Service to diagnose the cause of palm death.

### **QUESTIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no questions or announcements.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor-Commissioner McWhorter adjourned the meeting at 7:02pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lita O'Neill, Village Clerk