

HIGHLAND PARK PLANNING BOARD  
 Highland Park Borough Hall-Council Chambers  
 221 So. 5th Ave.  
 Highland Park, NJ 08904  
 MEETING DATE – January 9, 2020 7:30 P.M.  
 ANNUAL REORGANIZATION MEETING

**Call to Order**

The reorganization meeting of the Highland Park Planning Board was called to order in accordance with the rules for the Open Public Meetings Act by Roger Thomas, Esq. at 7:31 pm; Mr. Thomas indicated the location of the fire exits.

**Roll Call**

Present	Kim Hammond, Scott Brescher, Matthew Hale, Rebecca Hand, Alan Kluger, Paul Lanaris arrived at 7:38 pm, Padraic Millet, Judi Shade Monk, Stephen Nolan, Jeffrey Perlman, Allan Williams
Absent	Alan Kluger, Coretta Pinelli
<u>Board Professionals</u>	Roger Thomas, Esq. Board Attorney, Jim Constantine, Planner, Bruce Koch, Borough Engineer, CME Board Engineer

**Selection of Officers**

**Election of Chairperson:** Mr. Thomas called for a nomination for Chairperson. Mr. Millet nominated Ms. Hammond with a second from Ms. Hand and hearing no other nominations, a roll call was taken.

Roll call

Ayes	Brescher, Hale, Hand, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond
Nays	None
Abstain	None
Absent	Kluger, Lanaris, Pinelli

Kim Hammond was unanimously chosen to serve as Chairperson.

Ms. Hammond accepted the position as Chairperson for the Planning Board and resumed the meeting in that capacity.

**Election of Vice-Chairperson:** Ms. Hammond nominated Mr. Kluger as Vice-Chairperson with a second from Mr. Williams and hearing no other nominations, a roll call was taken.

Roll call

Ayes	Brescher, Hale, Hand, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond
Nays	None
Abstain	None
Absent	Kluger, Lanaris, Pinelli

Mr. Kluger was unanimously chosen to serve as Vice-Chairperson.

**Election of Board Secretary:** Ms. Hammond nominated Mr. Williams as Secretary with a second from Mr. Millet and hearing no other nominations, a roll call was taken.

Roll call

Ayes	Brescher, Hale, Hand, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond
Nays	None
Abstain	None
Absent	Kluger, Lanaris, Pinelli

Mr. Williams was unanimously chosen to serve as Secretary to the Planning Board

Mr. Williams accepted the position as secretary to the Planning Board.

**Appointment of Professionals and Staff**  
**Board Attorney, Board Planner, Board Engineer**

Ms. Hammond made a motion to appoint Roger Thomas as Board Attorney, Jim Constantine as Board Planner, Bruce Koch as Board Engineer and Ms. Santiago as Board Clerk. Mr. Millet made a second to the motion.

Roll call

Ayes	Brescher, Hale, Hand, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond
Nays	None
Abstain	None
Absent	Kluger, Lanaris, Pinelli

Motion approved.

**Setting of 2019 Meeting Dates and designation of 2019 Official newspaper(s):**

Ms. Hammond read the 2020 dates into the record:

There was a motion from Mr. Millet with a second from Mr. Perlman to approve the Planning Board meeting dates for 2020 as the following: January 9, 2020, February 13, 2020 March 12, 2020, April 2, 2020, May 14, 2020, June 11, 2020, July 16, 2020, August 13, 2020 September 10, 2020, October 15, 2020, November 12, 2020 and December 3, 2020 meetings begin at 7:30 pm in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 221 South Fifth Ave. the official newspapers are Home News Tribune and the Star Ledger and with a voice vote by all present the motion was approved.

**Adopt Rules of Order:**

There was a motion from Ms. Hammond with a second from Mr. Williams to adopt the rules of order and with a voice vote, motion was approved.

**Public comment on any item not on the agenda.**

Ms. Hammond opened the floor to the public. No one appearing Ms. Hammond closed public discussion.

The reorganization part of the meeting ended at 7:38 pm and went into the regular meeting.

**Public Hearing**

Bike/Pedestrian Plan – August 22, 2019

Mr. Thomas indicated that this was the public hearing with regards to the Bike/Pedestrian Plan dated August 22, 2019, this matter has been previously reviewed by the Board.

Ms. Hammond asked if there was anyone from the public who was interested in commenting on this item.

Peter Bilton, 422 Cedar Avenue, sworn and affirmed. He reminded the Board about all of the work that went into this plan and how it integrates and supports the work that the Borough Planner and the Borough did for the Master Plan that will adopted soon and they work closely together. At meetings like this sometimes you will only see a few in the audience but if you look at the plan you will see all the outreach that was done by the Consultant and by the Borough in support of the plan and shows that there is public support and encouraged the Board to adopt the plan when the time comes.

Shawn Meehan, 123 So. Adelaide Avenue sworn and affirmed also wanted to show is support in the adoption of the plan, he thinks it establishes a vision for a way for our community to continue to grow and accommodate different types of travel, and there is no reason that everyone who lives in Highland Park needs to own multiple cars and drive everywhere they are going. This establishes a vision for moving forward, new development accommodating different kinds of people and there was a lot of public outreach and he did not hear any complaints. His general experience in going to these events was that people in the community definitely supported this plan.

Neil Fein, 101A Hill Street sworn and affirmed. He indicated that he did a lot of cycling, ride to work, takes his daughter to school and it's a pretty okay place to do that, the few problems that he has had is that drivers

were not aware of him, and anything that we can do that will make drivers more aware cycling is a valid form of transportation would definitely help and he supports this plan.

Susan Welkovits, 433 Cedar Avenue sworn and affirmed and encouraged the Board to vote for this plan. Since she came on Council there has been a push towards the Borough becoming complete street compliant, this happen the year after the County adopted the same sorts of pedestrian and bicycle safe measures. This whole complete streets is a nationwide initiative, championed also by the State. The Safe Walking and Cycling Committee has earned in excess of \$660,000 since 2016 to make improvements to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure , a grant which applied to the NJDOT for and they gave the Borough for free the consulting firm WSP, and they did the same plan for Princeton and for Metuchen as well. It was a yearlong comprehensive study, there were several subcommittee meetings, public meetings and the whole point is to improve safety for everybody even people in vehicles. One of the key directives in town is to reduce taxes or at least stabilize taxes and the one way they believe they could do it, is by economic development having more buildings on the avenue, retail on the bottom and apartments on top because we have no ratable. How do we accommodate more people if everyone has to be driving. They have already approved two redevelopment plans last year that involved reduced parking or off-site parking and that is the first time they have done that. She feels that if the services and infrastructure people will use different modes of transportation. Three years ago when the Mayor and the Borough were talking with Rutgers about another Shuttle Bus, their transportation department said they were not going to do a shuttle they wanted to do a bike share and Rutgers is moving ahead with a bike share program, so here in Highland Park we will have bike share. She encouraged the Board to adopt this plan.

Ms. Hammond thanked everyone for coming out and speaking about the plan, the Board has had a couple meeting reviewing the plan. WSP was a major firm who consulted on the this project, with a lot of community input, and was a very well vetted plan. It has come to the Board in the same fashion as the Master Plan does which is this is a blue print of something that could be but there is further work that may or may not be needed depending on the scope.

Mr. Nolan said that the Borough and the people who live in this town are very interested in this sort of thing, they want to ride their bikes and he thinks and we are in a position to make improvements and make things better. These safety improvements do make a difference, if we show people where the bikes are, slow people down and it will save lives and make it a more attractive and better place to live and attract people who are looking for that sort of life style. He said that this being one of the best reports he has seen, and congratulated those involved.

Mr. Perlman said he supported everything Mr. Nolan stated. It is an important plan, the public engagement was fantastic. He has a 3 year old and a 6 year old and he wants his kids to be able to walk and bike to school, to friends' houses and thinks this plan will allow that.

Mr. Williams said as a visionary statement some of which may be years in the making the concept of bicycle boulevard he has a problem with. For particular streets: Madison Avenue between Cleveland Avenue to Madison Avenue, North 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue essentially says you will have one lane for traffic both ways on commute route where people cut through town, it seems to ignore public safety, how would you get a fire truck up and down if there were traffic. Ms. Hammond said that these are goals; the goal would be to have these corridors but made it clear that there are still time and attention given to looking at each project as it comes. The idea is, is the goal the right goal to what to move people on bicycle to point a to point b and if that is our goal it is safe to move the plan because there is then further vetting to determine how does that happen safely and reasonability. Mr. Williams said that he agreed but was concerned with some of the potential economic impact this will have one the development of the community. The idea of better pedestrian safety and bicycle safety he agrees with but some of these things strike him, despite having professionals look at, as unpractical and unsafe. He said he supports the vision but has concerns with implementation.

Mr. Perlman said that on page 46 and 74 provides a menu of interventions and those specifics measures would be addressed when we get to that period.

**Memorialization of resolutions**

Resolution P2020-01

The Adoption of the 2019 Master Plan Reexamination Report and Master Plan Land Use Element

It was MOVED by WILLIAMS and seconded by MILLET that Resolution P2020-01 be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Brescher, Hand, Lanaris, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond  
Nays – None  
Abstain – Hale

There being eight (8) ayes, and one (1) abstention motion passed.

Resolution P2020-02

Borough of Highland Park Planning Board Resolution to Adopt a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as part of the Borough of Highland Park Master Plan

It was MOVED by PERLMAN and seconded by WILLIAMS that Resolution P2020-02 be approved.

ROLL CALL: Ayes – Brescher, Hand, Lanaris, Millet, Nolan, Perlman, Williams, Hammond  
Nays – None  
Abstain – Hale

There being eight (8) ayes, and one (1) abstention motion passed.

**Correspondence and reports.**

Zoning/Building Officer report – Scott – None

Rehabilitation Screening Committee report – Kim

Ms. Hammond said that there was a screening meeting, and the charter is being looked into for this group. She will continue on the committee and Matt Hale who chairs that committee will be the second Board member and the Planner is always presented as well.

Mt. Laurel status update - Roger/Jim

Mr. Thomas reported that the Borough was in compliance by order of the Judge, there are implementations that will need to be done eventually and that he and Jim Constantine would keep the Board apprised as they come before the Board.

Fair Share Housing Obligation report - Jim/chair of FSHO committee - None

**Action on any other business and work session.**

Ms. Hammond mentioned to that for any new members there is mandatory training. Mr. Thomas said that he did have a training scheduled for February 1, 2020.

**Public comment on any item not on the agenda.**

Ms. Hammond opened the meeting up to the public.

Susan Welkovits, 433 Cedar Avenue thanked the Planning Board for doing two tremendous projects in the same year, finalize the Borough's fair share housing obligation which was 20 years of litigation, and the Master Plan review.

There being no one further, public comment was closed.

**Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn from. Millet with a second from Nolan and at 8:10 pm, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Santiago, Board Clerk