

**MINUTES OF A THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING  
OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK  
HELD ON DECEMBER 09, 2025, 5:02 PM.**

A motion was made by Vice President Freeman and seconded by President Grossberg to allow Commissioner Labrador to participate by electronic means.

**Present:** Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

**Absent:** None

**Also, Present:** Executive Director Romes; Director Peters, Director Smith, Director Voss, Director Gogola, Director Baird, Assistant Director Acevedo, Coordinator Hejnowski

**Guest Speaker:** None

**Additions to the Agenda**

None.

**Heller Nature Center Update**

Executive Director Romes reported that Resident John Cooper, owner of 2700 Point Lane, submitted a proposal for City of Highland Park consideration to permit property tours as a special use. If approved, this would lead to a special use permit application.

The proposed “Experience Greatness” program aims to inspire personal transformation through themes of mindset, action, and service, offering mentorship to youth from all economic backgrounds.

The proposal seeks a partnership with Heller Nature Center as the access point, including a small trail extension, funding for improvements, shuttle service, and insurance coverage. The partnership would provide financial support, program integration, and event access for the Park District.

John Cooper will present the proposal to the City Council on December 15, 2025, with potential referral to the Plan and Design Commission in January 2026.

It was the consensus of the Park Board to allow the Executive Director to engage in conversations with Mr. Cooper in effort to explore the possibility of a partnership with Champions Point that would provide public benefit to the community.

It was the consensus of the Park Board President to authorize two Park Board Commissioners to act as liaisons to these discussions.

It was the consensus of the Park Board to direct all official communications to residents, media, or staff regarding the proposal from Mr. Cooper be delegated to the Executive Director.

It was the consensus of the Park Board for an initial statement from the Executive Director as follows “The Park District has received a proposal from resident Mr. Cooper at 2700 Point Lane, and the Park Board has

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authorized the Executive Director to explore the possibility of a partnership with Champions Point that would provide public benefit to the community, congruent with the districts stated Mission Statement and board approved policies.

**Other Business**

Commissioner Greenberg requested to discuss Sheridan Park at a future Lakefront, Parks, and Natural Areas Committee Meeting to discuss the idea of clearing the invasive species and planting a pollinator garden.

Commissioner Beck asked if there are any updates regarding the Sheridan Road Sidewalk project. Director Smith has a meeting this week with engineers, he does not have any added information since the last updated shared at the November 11 Finance Committee Meeting.

**Open to the Public to Address the Board**

None.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary