**City of Highland Park Code of Conduct and Protocols for Public Meetings**

These guiding principles, protocols and procedures for meetings of the City Council and all City boards, commissions, and advisory groups have been established to promote and protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the City of Highland Park by creating an efficient, effective forum and a positive and professional atmosphere within which the business of the City can be conducted. This shared purpose is acknowledged and affirmed, despite the divergent opinions of the individual members of the City Council and of each City board, commission, and advisory group, and the inevitable disagreements among members on specific issues.

The primary purpose of public meetings is to conduct the business of the Council, board, commission, or advisory group, as the case may be.

All public meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act, these protocols, and such additional, non-conflicting rules and regulations that may, from time-to-time, be adopted by the Council, or by any City board, commission, or advisory group, as the case may be.

1. **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The salvation of the community is watchfulness of the citizen. Accordingly:

### All persons appearing at public meetings will be treated with respect.

### The City Council, and all appointed City officials, and all City employees, will represent their respective office and the City with dignity and professionalism.

### The City Council, and all appointed City officials and City employees, will build a capacity to work effectively together by:

#### 1. depersonalizing issues,

#### 2. establishing a vision and setting goals, and

#### 3. building team expectations and teamwork.

### The good of the community is greater than the weight of any individual opinion or personal interest.

1. **GENERAL STANDARDS OF DECORUM AND CONDUCT**

### Chairperson. The chairperson has the responsibility and authority to control the meeting. All members must respect the decisions of the chairperson. ***Public business is conducted more efficiently and effectively with proper leadership****.*

### Use of Titles. Members are encouraged to titles when referring to other members, such as “Mayor” or “Councilmember” or “Commissioner,” and when addressing staff, such as “Manager” or “*Director*.” ***Use of titles is a simple way to assure consistency and respect, and to provide guidance for observers.***

### Civility. Members should, at all times, be respectful of each other, of staff, and of all visitors attending a meeting. All oral discourse should be polite and civil. Members should never be belligerent, impertinent, threatening, or disparaging. Comments of a personal nature are never appropriate**. *Opinions and positions are more persuasive when expressed civilly.***

### Preparation for Meetings. Members should prepare for meetings in advance. Background and informational questions should be addressed with staff members during working hours rather than during public meetings, unless the answers to such question will have an educational value of broad and general applicability. ***Thorough preparation improves focus on policy matters and fosters effective, efficient meetings****.*

### Focus on Business. Members should maintain focus on the matters of business before them, keeping in mind the principal role of each public body as policymakers and advisors, rather than administrators. Discussion of matters not relevant to pending business should be avoided. ***Members should be respectful of the roles of others and should be good stewards of the time spent during public meetings.***

### Respect for Staff. Members should be respectful in every contact and communication with City staff, recognizing the scope and weight of the staff’s duties and responsibilities. ***Positive interactions with others promote greater achievement.***

### Respect for Speakers. Members should be fair, patient and respectful of all individuals who speak before, or make presentations to, the public body at public meetings or public hearings. No signs of disrespect should ever be evident on the part of any individual member. ***Making the public feel welcome is an important part of the democratic process.***