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May 1, 2024



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Featured Business of the Week: Babydreams



Kay Schwartz's first granddaughter inspired her to open Babydreams eighteen years ago. Today, it's a vibrant spot for one-of-a-kind baby goods. Described as a "sisterhood spanning generations," [Babydreams](#) aims to offer exceptional customer service, personalized assistance, and gift wrapping. Out of town? Call or text for a virtual store tour and nationwide shipping. Every week brings new, exciting products, all sourced from women creators, including local North Shore moms.

448 Central Ave. / 847.432.4704 / shopbabydreams.com

3 Ways to Observe National Small Business Week

Share your story

- If you are a small business story, proudly share your story on social media to encourage others to be self-employed or to simply learn from your experience. Tag [@enjoyhighlandpark](#) on Instagram and Facebook and use the hashtags [#EnjoyHP](#) [#EnjoyHighlandPark](#) [#DineHighlandPark](#) [#ShopHighlandPark](#) so we can amplify your message.

Thank the people who've supported you

- Remember the customers, investors, and other stakeholders who supported your business and stayed loyal to you. Use this week to acknowledge their support, and be the same type of support for another business.

Invest in education

- The best investment is always in education. If you have extra money, use it to invest in the future by sponsoring someone's education. Make someone's future sustainable.
- Resources like [SCORE](#), the [Small Business Administration](#) (SBA), and [Hello Alice](#) are great resources to invest in business education for little to no cost. Continue reading to learn more about how these organizations can support your growth.

Connect with Fellow Businesses at the HP Chamber



Looking to expand your network and engage with other Highland Park businesses? Look no further than the Highland Park Chamber of Commerce.

The HP Chamber holds several events to help businesses connect and thrive. Check out some of their upcoming events...

Monthly Networking Events: held on the first Wednesday of every month to help business exchange ideas and forge connections. See their full schedule [here](#). \$15 for members and \$25 for non-members.

- Upcoming event: May First Wednesday Connections today, May 1, at [Perlis Medspa & Wellness Center](#) - [Register Here](#)

Ribbon Cuttings: welcome new businesses to the Highland Park community by mingling at their opening. Free event to attend.

- Upcoming event: [Wayfarer](#) Reopening on May 15 at 3:30pm

Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Mid-March - May

The Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project began on Monday, March 18. Below you will find the most recent update regarding the Second St. Parking Lot Reconstruction Project.

Reconstruction of the lot is anticipated to be complete in late May. The project will enhance available parking for customers accessing businesses along Second St. The project includes reconstruction of the pavement to convert it from an asphalt pavement to an environmentally friendly permeable pavement. Other improvements include LED lighting and conduit for future EV Charging Stations.

The City has been in direct communication with impacted businesses that rely on the parking lot for customer parking, deliveries, and refuse, recycling, and compost containers. Construction fencing will be placed around the perimeter of the lot, including the sidewalk in front of the parking lot.

Access to businesses and customer parking along Second Street will be maintained throughout the reconstruction of the parking lot. Parking options include:

- On-street parking (with the exception of two 15-minute parking spots in front of Terry's Toffee, which have been designated for use by the construction team for placement of recycling containers)
- Parking in the Renaissance Place Garage

To learn more about the reconstruction of this parking lot, and to explore additional improvements planned for Second Street during spring/summer 2024, please visit cityhpil.com/construction.

If you're interested in receiving updates about the project, you can sign up for the dedicated project email list by emailing cityhp@cityhpil.com.

Central Business District Resurfacing Project

As part of the City's core priorities of infrastructure investment and economic development, a number of exciting projects are underway in the Central Business District! This spring and summer, the City will be undertaking a streets resurfacing project in Downtown Highland Park. When complete, this work will enhance access to businesses.

Here are the resurfacing project

limits listed below and on the map.

- 1) Elm Place (From Green Bay Road to St Johns Avenue)
- 2) Green Bay Road (From Elm Place to Laurel Avenue)
- 3) Central Avenue (From Green Bay Road to Linden Avenue)
- 4) Laurel Avenue (From Green Bay Road to St Johns Avenue)
- 5) Second Street (From Central Avenue to Laurel Avenue)
- 6) First Street (From Green Bay Road to Laurel Avenue)
- 7) St Johns Avenue (From Elm Place to Laurel Avenue)
- 8) Sheridan Road (from Elm Place to Central Avenue)



The majority of the work will be done overnight to minimize disruption to businesses. Improvements will include pedestrian crosswalk enhancements, curb replacement and repair where needed, storm/sanitary grate updates as warranted, and ADA Upgrades to sidewalks at corners where warranted. Work is tentatively scheduled to start at the beginning of May 2024 with completion by September 2024.

For questions about the project, please call the Public Works Department at 847.432.0807.

Please note: Starting this week, the City will be reaching out to businesses impacted by the construction to assist with promotional initiatives. The City will start with businesses directly impacted by the Second Street resurfacing. For more information, please contact Marketing Coordinator, Diane Larson at: dlarson@cityhpil.com.

Old Skokie Road Construction to Begin Mid-May

Construction of Old Skokie Valley Road will begin in mid-May and last through late summer as part of the Briergate Business District Improvements Project. The upcoming project plans to convert existing gravel parking spaces to an environmentally friendly permeable pavement, clear vegetation, improve roadway lighting with new LED lighting, and improve drainage.

For more information and updates on this project and other key infrastructure improvements, visit the [Capital Improvement Program \(CIP\) dashboard](#).

Update to the City's Alcoholic Beverages Code

There have been several recent amendments to the City's Alcoholic Beverages Code (Chapter 119), including updates to hours of business and beer keg tags, the codification of cocktails "to go," new license classifications, and amendments to existing classifications.

In regard to license classification, the city approved a new licensing for caterers ([Ordinance 019](#)), provisions for BYOB establishments, service of complimentary alcohol at a place of business where the sale of alcoholic liquor is incidental or secondary to the primary activity and pop-up dining ([Ordinance 033](#)), as well as amendments to regulations regarding hours of operation ([Ordinance 020](#)).

The following ordinances were approved at the February 12, 2024 City Council Meeting: [Ordinance 019](#) and [Ordinance 020](#). [Ordinance 033](#) was approved at the April 10, 2024 City Council Meeting.

Have any questions or concerns? Please call 847.926.1034 or send email inquiries to apalbitska@cityhpil.com.

Exterior Improvement Grant Program



The ***Exterior Improvement Grant Program*** offered by the City is designed to provide both assistance and encouragement to commercial property owners and sales-tax-generating local businesses citywide to improve their storefronts' appearance and functionality. The program has the following key features:

- The cost of eligible improvements is shared equally between the applicant and the City.
- The maximum grant is 50% of the project cost up to \$20,000 per year for up to five consecutive years or a total of \$100,000; however, a grant for

the same improvement would not be considered within the same five-year period.

- The eligible improvements must be visible from the right-of-way.

The annual program budget is \$100,000 and is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The program is an excellent opportunity for local businesses and property owners to revamp their storefronts, enhance their appeal, and lessen the financial burden. Please visit [Exterior Improvement Grant Program](#) to learn more and download the [application](#).

If you have questions about the program, please contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at 847.926.1027 or via e-mail at chersch@cityhpil.com.

Featured image: [Norton's Restaurant](#) used the exterior improvement grant program to obtain new outdoor furniture.

SCORE Mentoring at the Highland Park Public Library & Free Webinars

SCORE offers in-person or virtual sessions using phone, email, or video



All sessions are free and confidential. SCORE mentors are successful business professionals, some retired, some working, from all industries and experiences.

SCORE recently added a new [YouTube channel](#) where all previously recorded webinars can be accessed.

To schedule an in-person or virtual session, visit score.org/northchicago and register to “Find a Mentor”. You will be asked to provide the nature of your business interest. Please include whether you prefer in-person or virtual mentoring (phone, email, video) and note the **Highland Park Public Library** even if you prefer a virtual session.

Upcoming Free Webinars:

Financial Series 1: Basic Finances for Your Business - May 2 11:00am CT

This class will help business owners understand how their sales volume relates to their profitability after fixed and variable costs are calculated.

[Reserve your spot.](#)

Making Sense of the Grant World - May 2 6:30pm CT

Learn effective strategies and the importance of funding research under the guidance of expert Linda Bowen, who brings extensive experience in grant management and compliance.

[Reserve your spot.](#)

Community Navigator Business Support Program

[Community Navigators](#) is a support program to assist small businesses, particularly minority, women, rural, and veteran-owned businesses. They provide outreach to raise awareness on federal and state programs, and provide 1:1 technical assistance, etc. For more information, please click [HERE](#).

Small Business Development Center: Low and No-Cost Business Services



[Small Business Development Centers](#) (SBDC) are located throughout the state and provide information, confidential business guidance, training, and other free resources for start-ups and existing small businesses. If you need help with a business plan, marketing, financial bookkeeping, finding grants, starting and growing a business, click [HERE](#). To find a Center near you, click [HERE](#). Please note that many SBDCs do provide Spanish assistance. If you need help finding an SBDC that provides Spanish assistance, please contact Diana Alfaro at diana.alfaro@illinois.gov.

Hello Alice Small Business Grant Program



Discover small business grants for every stage of your small business adventure. Grant opportunities are recommended based on your unique profile and delivered to your inbox weekly. The search for free money doesn't get any easier! In partnership with the Global Entrepreneurship Network (GEN) and with funding from Etsy and Progressive, [Hello Alice](#) is a free online platform that helps businesses launch and grow through every step of their entrepreneurial journey. The Small Business Growth Fund provides small business owners with knowledge, funding, networking opportunities, and peer-to-peer connections with more than one million small business owners.

Contacting the Office of Business Development

This newsletter is produced by the City of Highland Park's Office of Business Development. The City encourages business owners and managers to share information regarding upcoming events, promotions or news for possible inclusion in the City's marketing modalities, including [The Weekender](#), [Enjoy Highland Park](#), and [social media](#). Please send these items to the City via email to: businessdevelopment@cityhpil.com. The City reserves the right to edit and/or filter submissions.

For general business inquiries and assistance, contact Business Development Manager Carolyn Hersch at chersch@cityhpil.com or 847.926.1027.

Additional Resources

[Available Commercial Space](#)

[Business Directory](#)

[City of Highland Park Business Development Strategic Plan](#)

[Chamber Of Commerce](#)

[College of Lake County Small Business Development Center](#)

[Hello Alice](#)

[SCORE](#)

[SCORE YouTube Channel](#)

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

[Job Center of Lake County - Business Services](#)

[Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity:](#)

- [Small Business Development Centers of Illinois](#)
- [Community Navigator Business Support Program](#)
- [Grant Opportunities](#)

[Visit Lake County](#)

[Women-in-Business Resources](#)

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