

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
September 16, 2021

1. Time and Place of Meeting: President Colias called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The meeting was held in the Building Department Meeting Room at Town Hall. Since insufficient space was there to maintain pandemic social distancing, a Zoom Meeting was scheduled for persons invited to observe and participate.
2. Roll Call:
Present: Michael Burns, Sarah Krick, Terry Krooswyk, Richard Underkofler & Mark Schocke, Council Liaison. James Colias, Ron Jackowski & Joan Roback participated via Zoom. Munster High School students Elizabeth Fesko and Charles Morton were present to observe the meeting for an AP Government assignment.
Absent: Invited employees of the Town and other agencies.
3. General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided - record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call:
 - **Motion**: Burns moved to approve minutes of the last meeting held June 17, 2021; seconded by Krick and approved by unanimous consent.
4. Old Business:
 - a. Student Conservation Association (SCA) Plantings. The SCA pledged to water and care for trees they've planted for as long as it receives grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi-Cal Rivers Fund. In the future, property owners receiving trees must pledge to water and care for them. The SCA will be requested to replace trees that died at Merkley School and White Oak Park. Brent Hart of the Forest Service reported a tree was dead at the downtown parking lot, but Underkofler observed it to be alive. The SCA plans Fall 2021 plantings behind the Central Fire Station, along the 4th and Conduit Street parkways near the Fire Station and along Highway Avenue and in Sandalwood Subdivision. Ron Jackowski and Jim Colias were thanked for walking the streets to update Reforestation Plan Address Planting Lists. Joan Roback was thanked for her donation of envelopes, paper, printing and postage for mailing a transmittal and questionnaire asking whether residents desire a tree planted in their parkways. Joan mailed the questionnaire to 145 addresses. 34 homeowners replied "Yes, I want a new tree planted in my street parkway and I pledge to properly water, prune and care for it". A few homeowners requested more than one tree if granted and space is available. On Highway Avenue, 31 trees were requested. 18 trees were requested in Sandalwood Subdivision including 6 in the Gazebo Park Area subject to approval of the Homeowners Association. On 9/9/21, Resource Management, the Management Company for the HOA, forwarded a message from Cathy Jacobson, Board President at Sandalwood, "The Board took a vote and unanimously decided to not plant any more trees in the Gazebo open space. Homeowners can individually decide about trees being planted in their parkway."
 - b. CommuniTree Fall 2021 Application: Funding for the CommuniTree Community Tree Grant Program is made possible through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant awarded to the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission by the USDA Forest Service. 48 trees will be received of these species: Sugar Maple (3); Serviceberry (5); American Hornbeam (5); Hackberry (5); Redbud (5); Pagoda Dogwood (4); Cockspur Hawthorne (3); Tulip (5); Tupelo (3); Ironwood (5); & Chinquapin Oak (5). Street Department crews will be asked to replace two trees that died on the 44th Street boulevard and at parkway locations requested by homeowners on a list maintained by Public Works

Director Mark Knesek. If Mark's list does not identify 48 addresses, the trees will supplement the SCA plantings on both sides of Highway Avenue parkways from Delaware Street to Cline Avenue. A Tree Planting & Care Workshop for homeowners and new Public Works and Parks Department staff is scheduled for Monday, October 6th from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at the NIRPC office, 6100 Southport Road Portage, IN. A tree pickup time by a Public Works crew will be scheduled following the workshop.

- c. Seedlings: At the last meeting High School Sustainability Club Teacher/Sponsor Heather Oaks reported she has a lot of baby seedlings popping up in her yard. Heather asked, "Will Club members relocate and care for them in the high school greenhouse so they could plant them eventually on School Town property?" Michael Burns and Sarah Krick reported club members will do it.
- d. Tree Signs: On 6/24/21, Jim Colias sent an email reporting, "At the last meeting we discussed tree signs. I have done some searching and found that a number of companies make such signs, in a variety of sizes and types. In general, \$6.00 to \$14.00 per sign seems to be a workable range though of course we can find signs higher than this. The links below show examples.

<https://www.nationalband.com/arboretum-tags/>

<https://myplantlabel.com/gallery>

<https://help.plantsmap.com/article/76-interactive-nfc-qr-code-plant-tags-signs>

Jim asked Ron Jackowski for his general thoughts as to which of these types, if any, he feels would be best, where we would use them and a guess as to how many we would need. Ron replied by an email, "QR codes are great for flexibility, but require having a site to link to for the descriptions. Of the three examples Jim presented, the NationalBand and MyPlantLabel are static signs, whereas PlantsMap is a completely different product. PlantsMap is a content organizer so no need to build a site behind the QR codes. Its signs can double as descriptive and memorial. PlantsMap is a world apart as it can showcase the town's inventory as the others can't. You can take a tree tour of the town from your home. I set up a free trial account and it was pretty easy to use; here's the URL:

<https://www.plantsmap.com/organizations/highland-tree-board>. There are more "premium" subscriptions with annual fees, but they offer discounts on the signs with those. For starters on actual signs, I'd suggest Lincoln Center and the Police Station, which are good plantings. I think there may be memorial signs at both, but not on all trees. The free option allows for 24 entries and signs are full price - \$4 for the sign + \$6.50 for the stake. NationalBand is about \$10 for the sign and \$6 for the stake, plus \$35 setup, but no annual."

- **Motion**: Krooswyk moved to approve the Jackowski PlantsMap recommendation; seconded by Krick and approved by unanimous consent.
- e. 45/5th Street Park: On 7/8/2021, Underkofler asked Trever Kinley and Alex Brown to consider using the \$9,300 received for trees and the irrigation system at the 45th/5th Memorial Park for replacing the aggregate material on the pedestrian walkway with permeable pavers. This would mitigate walkway maintenance expense. Krooswyk reported BP will not approve placing permeable pavers over its pipeline easement.
- f. Community Forestry Presentations: Until the pandemic has ended, scheduling will be postponed for presentations at Highland Library by Urban Forester Lindsey Purcell on the watering and care of newly planted trees and Arborist Alan Ross on pruning techniques.
- g. Tree Board Email Address: An email account has been created for the Board. Only Colias and Underkofler have access to the username and password to keep the account secure.

- h. Solicitation Letter: A draft letter was submitted which identifies groups to solicit; our achievements; the Board's relationship to the Public Works and Parks Departments; how donated monies may be submitted, collected and expended. It will be considered at our next meeting.
5. New Business:
- a. Approved/Unapproved Tree Species: Jackowski work is in progress on updating the Board's list of approved/unapproved tree species with links enabling a visual identification of the species.
 - b. 2021 Tree City Application: Underkofler will submit Highland's application after the quantity of SCA and CommuniTree Program trees are confirmed and planted. The deadline is 12/31/2021.
 - c. Successor Board Members: Michael Burns and Sarah Krick expect to be leaving town to further their education before their terms expire. Sara reported she would recruit other High School Sustainability Club members to succeed Michael and her. She said the club presently has 43 members.
6. Discussion Topics: Ron Jackowski reported the Arbor Day Dogwood Tree at Warren School is doing well. Thank you Michael Burns, Sarah Krick and Jim Colias for watering and caring for it.
7. Next Meeting: October 21, 2021.
8. Adjournment:
- **Motion**: Krick moved to adjourn at 8:01 pm; seconded by Burns and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Underkofler, Secretary