

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
November 18, 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: Richard Underkofler at Town Hall. Michael Burns, James Colias, Joan Roback and Mark Schocke, Town Council Liaison participated by Zoom.
Absent: Ron Jackowski, Sarah Krick, Terry Krooswyk, 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 September 16, 2021; seconded by Roback and approved by unanimous consent of the members present. The October 2021 monthly meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum.
4. Old Business:
 - a. Student Conservation Association (SCA) Plantings: Funding for SCA plantings is provided from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi-Cal Rivers Fund; its grant funding has been approved again for next year. A spreadsheet was presented documenting addresses and species for 20 plantings by the SCA crew completed November 3 and 4, 2021. Three more trees were planted in a downtown municipal parking lot at the southwest corner of Highway Avenue and Kennedy Avenue in the Spring of 2021. Each benefited property owner has pledged to water and care for these trees. The SCA has been asked to replace trees next Spring upon verification for SCA 2020 plantings that may have died – 3 at Merkley School and 3 at White Oak Park.
 - b. CommuniTree Fall 2021 Application: Funding for the CommuniTree 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 were anticipated, but only 43 were received. A list identifying the species and planting locations was presented at the meeting.
 - c. Tree Signs: Jim Colias and Ron Jackowski are still discussing the signs reported in the minutes of our September meeting. Ron will proceed with a test of the online software using demonstration trees planted at the Lincoln Center and the Police Station.
 - d. Community Forestry Presentations: Jim Colias is working with Purdue Urban Forester Lindsey Purcell to organize use of his videos for a potential zoom educational meeting; an "ask the expert" segment on our Facebook site; and if these are successful, a live community presentation.
 - e. Introduction/Solicitation Letters: At previous meetings Colias and Underkofler distributed draft letters to members for suggested changes. Copies were distributed with this agenda. At the last meeting, Jim Colias expressed thoughts about the two letters which have been suggested to introduce our group to various service organizations, vendors and contractors in town. "This will be the first time many people in those organizations have heard of the Tree Board. In the letter dated June 17th, my focus was to introduce our group, share why we exist, our successes, give

some insight into our future plans and ask for their help in promoting us through the community. Personally, I thought this was important in our first contact with others. I don't disagree with the October letter, the information in it can be shared in the future. My apprehension is that as our first communication, I don't feel it lays sufficient foundation as to who we are, what have we done and where we are going. Given that, I definitely feel it is too soon to introduce ourselves by asking for a check. I prefer introducing ourselves before we ask for money."

- **Motion:** Roback moved to send the introduction letter rather than a solicitation; seconded by Colias and approved by unanimous consent of the members present. Mark Schocke said he would ask Council members to include funding in the Town Council's budget for Tree Board mailings and other operating expenses.
5. **New Business/Successor Board Members:** Terms of Terry Krooswyk, Richard Underkofler and Michael Burns end January 2022; the term of Sarah Krick ends January 2024. If members whose terms are expiring desire a subsequent 3-year term, notice is desired by an email to Clerk/Treasurer Michael Griffin. Michael and Sarah expect to be leaving town to further their education in fall 2022 before expiration of their terms. Sara reports no success at recruiting other High School Sustainability Club members to succeed them. Underkofler said he will seek another term.
 6. **Discussion Topics:** Comments from Board Members, the Public and/or Visitors: This item of business is confined to announcements of intention to bring a future action, or requests for the preparation of administrative work product for future consideration. In no instance may a matter for final action be taken up under this item of business. Colias reminded the members the Board does not meet in December.
 7. **Next Meeting:** January 20, 2022.
 8. **Adjournment**
 - **Motion:** Burns moved to adjourn at 7:30 pm; seconded by Roback and approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Underkofler, Secretary