

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
May 19, 2022

1. Time and Place of Meeting: President Colias called the monthly meeting of the Tree Board at 7:00 PM, May 19, 2022 at Town Hall and as a Zoom Meeting.
2. Roll Call:

Present: Board Members James Colias, Ron Jackowski, Richard Underkofler and Bernie Zemen, who participated by Zoom. Cathy Perrin and Chris Magley, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability. Park Board Member Carlos Aburto arrived at 8:10 PM at the conclusion of another meeting.

Absent: Board Members Elizabeth Herrejon, Joan Roback, Laura Steyer and other invited employees of the Town and agencies.
3. Presentation: Cathy Perrin and Chris Magley presented a letter and information about a May 9th meeting with Carlos Aburto “regarding his vision for the beautification of the Ridge Road embankment around the new municipal parking lot”. *This is the recently renovated lot at the southwest corner of Kennedy and Highway Avenues. This area includes an undeveloped portion of the Jewett Street right-of-way along the south side of property owned by the American Legion.* Highland Neighbors for Sustainability desires to collaborate with the Park Department and Tree Board to seek a grant to acquire and plant trees after the area has been cleared of scrub trees and invasive vegetation. After the clearing is completed, “evergreen and native trees are desired to stabilize the slope and provide shelter for birds. This will be a blank slate that we can plant with beautiful and useful native plants for people and for pollinators. As a volunteer organization with interest and some expertise in native plants, our role will be to plant various native flowers, sedges, and other low growing plants in the understory.” Discussion was deferred until Carlos Aburto could join our meeting at the conclusion of his Park Board meeting. Carlos reported Park Board members may be willing to assume future maintenance expense of the area and one-third of the clearing cost by Dave’s Tree Service, the Town’s contractor for tree removal and trimming. The Board requests a financial contribution by the Redevelopment Commission and/or Town Council (acting as the Board of Works). Members of the Tree Board agreed to ask the Student Conservation Association (SCA) d/b/a Calumet Tree Conservation Corps to acquire and plant native evergreen trees in Fall 2022.
4. General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided - record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call:
 - **Motion**: Underkofler moved to approve minutes of the last meeting held April 21, 2022; seconded by Colias and approved by unanimous consent of the members present.
5. 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 2022. The SCA has been asked to replace two trees this Spring for SCA 2020 plantings that died: an oak across from a vacant lot on the north side of 42nd Street at Merkley School; and an oak on the west side of White Oak Park. We’ve been asked to suggest other Fall 2022 planting locations.
 - b. CommuniTree Spring 2022 Plantings: 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. The Spring planting location inventory was not available from Tim Gembala by the time of the meeting because he was out of town.

- c. Tree Signs: At the last meeting, Underkofler offered to fund the \$49 expense for the first year of the plantsmap.com application. Underkofler gave Jackowski \$25 cash with an understanding Ron will fund the balance.
 - d. Board Introduction/Solicitation Letters: Colias reported to date no responses have been received to our letter mailed to community service clubs, businesses and churches.
 - e. Arbor Day Events: Colias thanked the students and staff of Our Lady of Grace School and all who helped stage the 2022 event. He said he was pleased with the celebration. The Norway Spruce tree planted at Main Square Park will be watered by the park irrigation system. Jackowski weeded and mulched the Sugar Maple on Parrish Avenue and the Dogwood planted at Warren School last year. He reported both are budding and look healthy.
 - f. Highland High School Sustainability Club: Teacher/Sponsor Heather Oaks sent an email, "The HHS Sustainability club has put in five seedling trees into containers in the ground in the courtyard by the wildflower garden. Two oaks, two tulips and a redbud. They are all first-year trees about 6" tall and we're hoping they grow so can be planted around town in a little bit!"
 - g. Tree Board Directory: An updated table was forwarded listing members with home addresses, phone numbers and term expirations as a separate transmittal to preserve confidentiality.
6. New Business:
- a. Streetscape Trees: At last month's meeting Ron Jackowski said he has some trees growing in his backyard that are ready for donation and transplanting. Public Works was asked if street projects scheduled for this year where streetscape is needed. Tim Gembala replied, "We really do not need any more trees." Board member Elizabeth Herrejon asked for a replacement tree at her house in Sandalwood Subdivision. By a phone call forwarded from Lance Ryskamp, Barb VanderBoegh requested a parkway tree last fall, but did not receive one. Ron met with the lady and discovered the site at 3932 Highway Avenue has overhead wires requiring a smaller tree, which he does not have. We will seek a small blooming tree for fall planting.
 - b. AT&T Fiber Optic Installation: Ron Jackowski reported utility locate flags are appearing all over town where fiber is likely to hamper future tree planting in parkways. He inquired if maps are available showing where fiber is or will be installed.
 - c. Community Tree Planting/Pruning Seminars: Jim Colias reported he will secure speakers and coordinate sessions in the fall at Highland Library.
7. 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.
8. Next Meeting: June 16, 2022. The Board is not scheduled to meet in July or August.
9. Adjournment
- **Motion**: Jackowski moved to adjourn at 8:25 PM; seconded by Zemen and approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Underkofler, Secretary