

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will be held at 7:00 PM, Thursday, June 15, 2023 in the second-floor meeting room at Town Hall. The meeting may **not** be joined remotely.

Richard Underkofler
Secretary

**Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, June 15, 2022 – 7 PM**

Roll Call:

Board Members: James Colias, Elizabeth Herrejon, Ron Jackowski, Joan Roback, Blane Roberts, Richard Underkofler, Bernie Zemen.

Invited Town Staff: Tom Black, Council President; Mark Herak, Clerk/Treasurer; Mark Knesek, Public Works Director; Tim Gembala, Public Works Operations Director; Alex Brown, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Department; Trevor Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director

Others: webupdates@theideafactory.us.com c/o Theresa Badovich; Doug Van Ramshorst, Highland Community Foundation; Heather Oaks, Teacher/Sponsor Highland High School Sustainability Club; Drew Hart, USDA, Forest Service; Samuel Vergara, The Student Conservation Association; Jennifer Birchfield, NIRPC; Rebecca Koetz, Lake County Purdue Extension Educator; Connie Wachala, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability; Mélina Blanc, Delta Institute.

Minutes: Request for a motion to approve minutes of the last meeting held May 18, 2023.

Old Business:

a. Board Member Terms: Elizabeth Herrejon serves until her successor is appointed. Natalie Stromberg of the High School Sustainability Club was appointed to succeed Elizabeth, but she failed to apply. An invitation was sent to Sarah Beagle encouraging her to become a member, but Sarah also declined to apply. *Consider asking the Town Council to amend the Tree Board Ordinance to enable qualified nonresident board members such as Arborist Sharon Anderson of Evans Tree Care.*

b. Transplanting Trees: A June 7th date to transplant sugar maple nursery trees at the homes of Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen was canceled by Ron Jackowski due to a schedule conflict. These plantings will be rescheduled for Fall 2023. A recently transplanted tree at Merkley School was vandalized. Since this was the second planting at Warren School that has been damaged, Jackowski requests a decision whether a tree will be replaced at this site.

c. Federal Inflation Reduction Act Funds Appropriated to Forest Service: The State DNR Forestry Department received IRA funds that it may subgrant to local governments for urban forestry projects. A state grant application may become available in September.

d. Lake County Tree Planting Consortium: Ron Jackowski and Blane Roberts are encouraged to participate in an inaugural remote consortium meeting to be held Tuesday, June 20, 2023 from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81677499103>. A copy of a proposed Memorandum of Understanding is distributed with this agenda.

e. Farmers Market: Board members will staff a pop-up tent Thursday, June 22 from 4-9pm at the Municipal Parking Lot, Highway & Kennedy Avenue. This project is intended to acquaint the community of our endeavors, identify homeowner planting sites and recruit volunteers for our board, tree planting and care projects.

New Business:

- a. Invasive Species: Highland Neighbors for Sustainability and the Highland Branch of the Lake County Library are co-hosting an invasive species workshop. It will be held August 2, 2023 led by Mandi Glanz, a Regional Specialist Serving Northwest Indiana, the State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management Entity. The title of the program is **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas: Partnering for Conservation**. Participate to learn why invasive plants are a problem, how to identify and manage commonly found invasives, and how Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) are formed to collectively combat the problem of invasive species spreading across the landscape. Rebecca Koetz emailed she will ask Mandi Glanz to conduct a site visit to identify invasive species at sites in Highland. Rebecca wrote Mandi has a great report system to prioritize invasive plant control.

- b. CommuniTree Fall 2023 Plantings: Highland Neighbors for Sustainability has requested fall tree plantings in the embankment area on the hillside west of the Municipal Parking Lot at Highway & Kennedy Avenue. If the Park Department or volunteers will assume responsibility for watering the plantings, the group will ask the Student Conservation Association to plant the trees. These trees will be in addition to tree distribution at the Public Works Yard in the fall for homeowners to collect and plant in their yards to improve tree canopy on private property.

- c. Update Board Action Plan: The Board may review, change and update its 2023 Action Plan.

January 2023 – December 2023

- 1. Seek Town Council appointments to update expiring Board Member terms. Done 1/23/23.
- 2. Become a member of the Indiana Arborist Association and participate in the IAA Annual Conference. Done 1/24/23 by Jackowski and Underkofler.
- 3. Cancel Board Meetings in July and December. Done 2/16/23.
- 4. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance - Assigned to Colias at Highland Christian School. Completed 4/28/23.
- 5. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics. Assigned to Colias. The first community presentation was held at Highland Library 3/29/23; another is scheduled 9/27/23.
- 6. From the approximately 13 Jackowski nursery trees, secure utility locates and replace dead trees at the Merkley and Warren Schools, in parkways and street medians; plant new trees in yard locations requested by Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen. Assigned to a weekend crew consisting of Jackowski, Underkofler, Roberts, Zemen and Colias with help from Highland Neighbors for Sustainability. 11 trees completed by 4/2/23; remaining two to be planted in Fall 2023.
- 7. Decide on events in which we will participate to acquaint the community of our endeavors, identify homeowner planting sites, recruit volunteers: Farmer's Market , Fourth of July Festival, Fall Festival. Assigned to Roback as Lead. Park Pride Day completed 4/22/23; Farmers Market scheduled 6/22/23.
- 8. Update Unapproved / Approved Species List with photos of recommended tree species. Assigned to Jackowski (Last done for unapproved species 9/6/22).
- 9. Identify streets where there are open planting sites due to removal of dead trees; then survey the homeowners to inquire if they are willing to water and care for a replacement tree. Assigned to Roberts as lead with Roback for survey.
- 10. Maintain community partnerships with Chamber of Commerce & Highland Businesses. Assigned to Roberts as Lead.
- 11. Apply for available grants and keep a running tally of trees that we procure. Assigned to Underkofler.
- 12. Update the tree inventory for tree removals, pruning and new plantings. See Underkofler's Federal Inflation Reduction Act Funding Proposal. A State Department of Forestry IRA grant may be available

September 2023.

13. Renew Arbor Day Foundation membership and share new ideas from this participation. Underkofler's membership renews 8/1/23.
14. Post a Tree of the Month & Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site. Assigned to Colias.
15. Periodic review of ordinances that need updating. Assigned to Underkofler
16. Annual idea sharing, new ideas to keep Board moving forward. All Board Members.
17. Establish a list of goals/accomplishments/key facts and publish in a media release to Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB. Assigned to Underkofler.
18. Review the Action Plan and make any adjustments to assure commitment to goals and objectives of plan for the next year. Assigned to monthly board review.
19. Renew application for Tree City USA before December 31. Assigned to Underkofler.

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.

Next Meeting: August 17, 2023. The Board will not meet in July.

Adjournment