

## **CANCELED FOR LACK OF A QUORM WHEN COLIAS, JACKOWSKI AND ROBERTS WERE ABSENT**

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will be held at 7:00 PM, Thursday, August 17 2023 in the second-floor meeting room at Town Hall. Chair Jim Colias will be out of town and absent. The meeting may **not** be joined remotely. Vice-Chair Ron Jackowski has been asked to convene the meeting.

Richard Underkofler  
Secretary

### **Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting Thursday, August 17, 2022 – 7 PM**

#### **Roll Call:**

**Board Members:** Jim Colias, 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; Trever Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director

**Others:** webupdates@theideafactory.us.com c/o Theresa Badovich; Doug Van Ramshorst, Highland Community Foundation; 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 June 19, 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. Recruitment has failed to identify a successor. *Consider asking the Town Council to amend the Tree Board Ordinance to enable qualified nonresident board members.*

b. Transplanting Trees: Schedule an acceptable date to transplant sugar maple nursery trees from the home of Ron Jackowski at the homes of Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen.

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 participated in an inaugural remote consortium meeting held June 20, 2023. The next Tree Planting Consortium meeting will be September 12, 2023 at 11am CST. Use this link to join the zoom meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86232373212>. *Decide whether a proposed Memorandum of Understanding shall be approved. It is distributed with this agenda.*

e. Thursday Market: Board members staffed a pop-up tent June 22 at the Municipal Parking Lot, Highway & Kennedy Avenue. This was intended to acquaint the community of our endeavors, identify homeowner planting sites and recruit volunteers for our board, tree planting and care projects. One person, James Dills, 9028 Cottage Grove Ave, 219-742-4061 requested 2 trees in his front yard easement. *Decide if there was sufficient return on investment to staff another market and, if so whether a banner will be acquired to identify*

## the Tree Board.

f. CommuniTree Spring Inventory. On 7/5/23 Colias, Jackowski and Underkofler planted a yellow birch tree on the northwest side of the office of Attorney Kerry C. Connor, 8320 Kennedy Avenue.

g. Invasive Species: Highland Neighbors for Sustainability hosted an invasive species workshop at Highland Library August 2, 2023 led by Mandi Glanz, a Regional Specialist Serving Northwest Indiana, the State Cooperative Invasives Management Entity. The title of the program was **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas: Partnering for Conservation**. About 18 persons participated 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 that she would ask Mandi 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.

### **New Business:**

a. CommuniTree Fall 2023 Plantings: Highland Neighbors for Sustainability requested fall plantings in the embankment area on the hillside west of the Municipal Parking Lot at Highway & Kennedy Avenue. 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. 20 trees were sought for homeowner distribution from the Public Works Yard. For the Embankment Area, 10 Rhu Aromatica Rhus ground cover species, 5 Multi-stemmed Redbud, 3 Multi-stemmed Serviceberry and 2 Witch Hazel were requested. Distribution of plantings granted will occur 9/7/23 after a planting and care workshop beginning 9 AM at the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) Offices, 6100 Southport Road, Portage, IN 46368.

b. Tree Steward Training Workshop: NIRPC is hosting a Tree Steward training workshop Sept. 18-19 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT at its offices at 6100 Southport Rd, Portage, 46368. This workshop is for representatives of northwest Indiana tree boards, local municipalities, and volunteers. Only 30 spots are available for this event. The registration link is at <https://forms.office.com/g/sbi3zjVH42>.

c. Community Educational Session: The Tree Board is hosting another community presentation at Highland Library led by Arborist Sharon Anderson on 9/27/23 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. The title of the program is **How to Prepare your Trees and Shrubs for Winter**. The event is free with the only requirement to pre-register. Sign up at [www.lcpln.org/events](http://www.lcpln.org/events) or call 219-838-2394.

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

### **January – 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 Merkle 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, and recruit volunteers: Thursday Market, Fourth of July Festival, Fall Festival. Assigned to Roback as Lead. Park Pride Day completed 4/22/23; Thursday Market completed 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 renewed 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:** September 21, 2023.

**Adjournment**