

Meeting Minutes

Town of Highland Tree Board

Thursday, November 16, 2023

Time and Place of Meeting: Jim Colias called the monthly meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. in the Highland Town Hall. The meeting start was delayed due to Mary Ann Brunt's late arrival after confusion over access to the Town Hall meeting room.

Roll Call:

Present: Board Members: Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, Joan Roback, Blane Roberts

Absent: Board members Richard Underkofler and Bernie Zemen and other invited employees of the Town and agencies.

General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided: record of all votes taken by individual members if there's a roll call:

Minutes: Joan Roback motioned to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2023 meeting. Ron Jackowski seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Old Business:

- A. **Board Member Terms:** Mary Ann Brunt will serve until January 2026.
- B. **Transplanting Trees:** Ron Jackowski announced that tree transplanting work is completed for calendar 2023.
- C. **Invasive Species:** Nothing new to report.
- D. **NWI Tree Planting Consortium:** Town Council approved our MOU with Delta Institute at the 10/23/2023 meeting. Next consortium meeting takes place on Tuesday, November 21, 2023 at 1 p.m. Microsoft Teams meeting invitations sent. Meeting ID: 249 417 461 329 Passcode: YYMJuf.
- E. **Approved/Unapproved Tree Species:** Nothing new to report.
- F. **Highland Neighbors for Sustainability Plantings:** No update.
- G. **Tree Pruning Workshop:** Ron Jackowski questioned the timing of tree pruning. The Board questioned whether Town of Highland funds were available to handle this cost. At this point Town of Highland Clerk-Treasurer Mark Herak popped in after overhearing the mention of Town funds. Herak volunteered to put the matter before the Town Council. He assured the Tree Board the necessary funds could be reappropriated from other funds to accommodate tree pruning next calendar year. The Tree Board will ask Rich Underkofler to make a formal appeal to the Town Council. Jim Colias will bring brochures from the workshop to the next meeting.
- H. **2024 Arbor Day Event:** Mary Ann Brunt reported that despite repeated emails and telephone messages, there has been no reply from Johnston Elementary School Principal Amy Harrington concerning the acceptance of a free tree and its planting. Principal Harrington is "very busy" per the school secretary. Mary Ann Brunt asked if Johnston Elementary is not interested in the tree to please inform her so that another site can be selected. This issue is to be discussed at the next

regular meeting to ensure a site can be selected and all necessary approvals secured before planting in time for the Arbor Day celebration.

Mary Ann Brunt also reported that there was no response from Principal Harrington about the Arbor Day poster contest. Jim Colias volunteered to send a flyer to all schools with fifth graders. Mary Ann Brunt suggested sending the flyers directly to the art teachers as the elementary school principals have not responded to our solicitations.

New Business:

- A. 2024 Indiana Arborist Association Conference: Ron Jackowski reported that event attendance is usually good, and people come from all over the country. He will probably attend. Blane will try to attend for one day. Board assumes Rich Underkofler will attend. Jim Colias will verify registration dates and attendance costs and if Town of Highland will reimburse attendance costs.
- B. Update Board Action Plan: Jim Colias said he was pleased with the recent Tree Board meeting attendance. He asked Board members to review the events of calendar 2023 to determine which events should be continued/discontinued/etc. Suggestions should be given at the next Tree Board meeting so the 2024 goals can be established.
- C. Updates on 2023 Goals:
 - 1. Seek Town Council appointments - Mary Ann Brunt appointed to Tree Board.
 - 2. Become member of Indiana Arborist Association and participate in IAA Annual Conference.
Done
 - 3. July and December regular Tree Board meetings cancelled.
 - 4. Arbor Day Observance – 2023 events completed. Mary Ann Brunt reaching out to Johnston Elementary for tree planting in 2024. Jim Colias to contact all elementary schools about Arbor Day poster contest.
 - 5. Select speakers for educational forums. Jim Colias to work on obtaining speakers for 2024 events.
 - 6. Ron Jackowski has trees remaining in his nursery and they will be available for 2024 planting.
 - 7. Determine 2024 participation in community events such as Park Pride Day and Thursday market.
 - 8. Update unapproved/approved species list – completed by Ron Jackowski. Information is available on the Tree Board Facebook page. How to publicize this information?
 - 9. Maintain community partnerships with Chamber of Commerce – Blane working on it.
 - 10. Rich Underkofler applied for available grants and kept a running tally of trees. Will ask about 2024.
 - 11. Renew Arbor Day Foundation membership – Underkofler?
 - 12. Post a tree of the month and tree care tips – Jim Colias posted 9th most popular tree. Mary Ann Brunt asked if fresh Christmas tree care and safety tips could be posted on our Facebook page. Perhaps also reminding residents about the ability to mulch discarded trees and 12th Night Celebrations. Also ask residents to buy a balled and burlapped live tree to plant while purchasing cut trees for indoor use.
 - 13. Annual idea sharing – continuing.
 - 14. Establish a list of goals/accomplishments and publicize them. Handled by Underkofler

15. Review the Action Plan – continuing.

16. Renew application for Tree City USA before 12/31/2023. Rich Underkofler is applying.

Adjournment: Jim Colias motioned to adjourn the meeting. Joan Roback seconded, and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Next meeting: December 2023 meeting is cancelled. Next Tree Board meeting is on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 7 p.m. at Highland's Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Brunt, Acting Secretary