

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will begin at 7:00 PM, Thursday, March 21, 2024 at Town Hall in an upstairs meeting room.

Richard Underkofler
Secretary

**Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2024 – 7 PM**

Roll Call:

Board Members: Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, John Mackey, Blane Roberts, Arleen Sandrick, Richard Underkofler. Alex Robertson is the Town Council’s Tree Board Liaison. The Town Council nominated, and Council President Philip Scheeringa appointed John Mackey and Arleen Sandrick to board terms expiring January 2027 at its March 11, 2024 meeting.

Invited Town Staff: Philip Scheeringa, 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; Jennifer Birchfield, NIRPC; Rebecca Koetz, Lake County Purdue Extension Educator; Connie Wachala, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability; Mélina Blanc, Delta Institute; Nina Brown & Monica Kurz, Teacher/Co-Sponsors Highland High School Sustainability Club.

Minutes: A motion is requested to approve the minutes of the last meeting held February 15, 2023.

Introduction of New Board Members: An updated Board Directory is emailed with this agenda.

Old Business:

- a. 2023 Tree City USA Application: Highland’s recognition for the fifth consecutive year was approved 2/29/2024 by the Arbor Day Foundation.
- b. 2024 Arbor Day Event: On 2/21/24, Highland Recreation Supervisor Alyce Van Drunen sent an email, “My preschool (Lincoln Little Learners) along with the Kids First’s Preschool, would love to be part of the tree planting on April 26 at 9:30 a.m. It would be approximately 41 students all together.” On 3/11/24, the Town Council approved, and Council President signed a **“Proclamation Recognizing Friday, April 26, 2024 as Arbor Day in Highland”**. Thanks to Clerk-Treasurer Mark Herak for drafting the proclamation.
- c. Arbor Day Poster Contest: On 2/28/24, Jim Colias sent a letter to principals and art teachers at the public and private elementary schools in an attempt to recruit 5th grade students, art and science teachers to participate in this year’s IDNR Forestry poster contest.
- d. NIRPC CommuniTree Meeting: A Planning Meeting for the CommuniTree Grant Program will be held Monday, 3/18/2024 from 9:30 to 11 AM at the NIRPC Office in Portage.

- e. NWI Tree Planting Consortium: A Consortium Meeting will be held remotely as a Microsoft Teams Meeting Tuesday, 4/9/2024 from 1:00 PM-2:00 PM. Meeting ID: 252 974 646 97 Passcode: HzSwz4. Secretary Underkofler has been invited to make a presentation about the work of the Highland Tree Board.

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.

- a. Cicada Information: Blane Roberts asked to discuss the issue of cicadas and young tree protection. Jim Colias replied "Purdue has a variety of online information regarding cicadas. If you'd like further information, I think this is a good start: www.extension.entm.purdue.edu/cicadas/.
- b. Speakers for Future Meetings: After our February meeting, Ron Jackowski sent an email to board members suggesting we should invite Merrillville Storm Water Manager Matt Lake and Valparaiso Arborist Matt McBain to one of our monthly meetings to make presentations about their community endeavors. Jim Colias contacted Matt Lake by telephone and discussed with him attendance at one of our meetings. He was receptive but explained that his schedule is very busy, and he may have difficulty attending. He did say that a Zoom meeting may be an option. He asked for information as to what we wanted to discuss with him. Jim asks Ron Jackowski to share his thoughts as to how we may interact with Matt Lake and Matt McBain. What should they be prepared to discuss?
- c. The Board may review, change and update its 2024 Action Plan.
 - 1. Monthly idea sharing, new ideas to keep the Board moving forward. All Board Members.
 - 2. Become a member of the Indiana Arborist Association and participate in the IAA Annual Conference. Done 1/23/24 by Jackowski and Underkofler.
 - 3. Seek Town Council appointments to expiring Board Member terms. Completed 3/11/24.
 - 4. Decide whether to resume Zoom Meetings.
 - 5. Confirm whether Board Meetings will be canceled again in July and December.
 - 6. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance – Assigned to Underkofler.
 - 7. Post a Tree of the Month and Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site. Assigned to Colias.
 - 8. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics. Assigned to Colias
 - 9. Update Approved / Unapproved Species List. Assigned to Jackowski.
 - 10. Secure utility clearance and transplant Jackowski nursery trees. Assigned to Jackowski.
 - 11. Decide on community events in which we will participate to acquaint the community of our endeavors, identify homeowner planting sites and recruit volunteers: Park Pride Day is Saturday, 4/20/24, 9:00 to 11:30 AM; the Fourth of July Festival is 7/3/24 to 7/7/24.
 - 12. Formulate an RFP for a tree care contractor to provide pruning services that would contain specifications, a schedule for a multi-year project by geographical area, budget by year and method of compensation. Assigned to Underkofler for Town Council Budget Request.
 - 13. Renew Arbor Day Foundation membership.

14. Maintain community partnerships with Chamber of Commerce. Assigned to ???.
15. Renew application for 2024 Tree City USA recognition before December 31. Assigned to Underkofler.
16. Establish a list of 2024 accomplishments/key facts and publish an Annual Report for a media release to the Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB. Assigned to Underkofler.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 18, 2024.

Adjournment