

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will begin at 7:00 PM, Thursday, April 18, 2024 at Town Hall in an upstairs meeting room; and as a Zoom Meeting:

ID: 878 8478 2568;

Passcode:825525

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87884782568?pwd=xLONolGawny34kjAbKNnEXx3hXMwTQ.1>

Richard Underkofler Secretary

**Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 18, 2024 – 7 PM**

Roll Call:

Board Members: Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, John (JT) 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 (JT) 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; Cathy Perrin, 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 March 21, 2023.

Old Business:

a. 2024 Arbor Day Event - Friday, April 26, 9:30 AM.:

Amber Horbovetz (ahorbovetz@nisource.com) confirmed NIPSCO will donate a Lilac Tree and provide a “Right Tree, Right Place” coloring page and crayons for preschool students, their instructors and parents. NIPSCO “Right Tree, Right Place, Right Way” pamphlets will be provided for participant distribution for planting seedlings donated by State Senator Dan Dernulc from the Indiana State Nursery. Parks Director Trever Kinley flagged a location where the Lilac Tree will be planted near an irrigation system on the Lincoln Center Campus and secured 811 utility clearance for the site. A forester on site presentation about how to plant and care for a new tree and seedling has been requested. In the alternative, a staffed booth with NIPSCO’s Tree Line Utility Banner may be provided. Members of the Tree Board will help plant the donated tree during the event. The Parks Department will provide shovels, mulch and a PA system for speaker presentations. The printed program is delayed awaiting whether State Representative Mike Andrade will make a presentation and Town Council President Philip Scheeringa will read the Town’s proclamation.

- b. NWI Tree Planting Consortium: A Consortium Meeting was held 4/9/2024 remotely as a Microsoft Teams Meeting. Underkofler and Jackowski contributed to a presentation about the work of the Highland Tree Board, asked questions and received replies from representatives of other communities about tree care budgets, equipment and procedures. Connie Wachala and Cathy Perrin participated from Highland Neighbors for Sustainability. Board members were emailed the meeting's PowerPoint slide deck, which included hyperlinks for more information on grants and upcoming training events. Another copy is distributed with this agenda. Mélina Blanc reported, "A TreeKeeper Canopy software project is currently underway, marking significant progress in our quest to update maps utilizing various data layers. The overarching goal is to pinpoint priority planting locations. Thanks to TPC, you'll have free access to the TreeKeeper Canopy. A forester will also be available to analyze your maps, conduct site visits if necessary, and create some planting plans with specified species and exact locations for planting. These plans can serve as references for both immediate and long-term planting goals in your community depending on your needs, priorities, and capacities."
- c. Park Cleanup Day: Tree board members can go to Main Square for Park Cleanup Day Saturday, April 20 at 9:00 a.m. Only Mary Ann Brunt and her husband have confirmed an intent to participate.
- d. Tree Planting and Maintenance Training: Tree board members, Parks and Public Works Tree Care Staff are invited to a free online Tree Planting and Maintenance Training on Monday, April 22 from 9 to 10:30 am. This 90-minute online training is catered towards NW Indiana's private tree owners, and anyone interested in maintaining their community's urban forest. This training will be hosted by Davey Resource Group Senior Urban Forester and ISA Certified Arborist, Aren Flint. Topics include tree planting planning, planting techniques, pruning and a 30-minute Q&A. Direct questions and register by sending an email to Lucas Chamberlain [mail: lchamberlain@delta-institute.org].
- e. 2024 NIPSCO Environmental Acton Grant: Rich Underkofler applied on behalf of Highland Community Foundation, a nonprofit corporation, for a \$10,000 project for 200 trees to be direct mailed to Highland Homeowners, who order a 1-gallon tree online from the Arbor Day Foundation's Community Canopy Energy Saving Trees Program. The Community Foundation has pledged \$5,000 to match a \$5,000 NIPSCO Grant. The project would enable homeowner plantings in Fall 2024. Notice should be received by Arbor Day whether the grant will be approved. Kristen Bousquet kbousquet@arborday.org emailed "Our mailed tree program averages to about \$55 per tree these days which includes trees, tree delivery and technology. Due to this average price, I would estimate around 200 trees total for the budget you are detailing. If you would like to use 1-gallon trees and host a pickup event (instead of having trees direct delivered), then your cost would land around the \$30/tree mark."
- f. Public Works Tree Removal and Plantings: Ron Jackowski sent an email to board members reporting 95 trees were removed and stumps ground last month on both sides of Duluth Street from Parrish Avenue to 81st Street. More tree removals are planned in Homestead Park and areas east for an extensive, deep storm sewer and pump station capital improvement project scheduled over the next three years. This project will mitigate the reoccurrence of storm water overflows into the Little Calumet River. In minutes of a 3/11/24 Council Meeting Public Works Director Mark Knesek said, "Most of these trees were aging and well beyond their useful life. When the project is over, we are going to replant trees, giving

everyone an opportunity to choose a nice parkway tree that's not going to raise up their sidewalks." *Inquire about the number and species of replacement trees to be planted this year along Parkway Drive for last year's water main replacement project.*

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: Jim Colias may schedule a community education session by a Purdue Entomologist about the issue of cicadas and young tree protection.

- b. 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. Done 4/18/24.
 5. Confirm whether Board Meetings will be canceled again in July and December.
 6. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance – Assigned to Underkofler; Scheduled 4/26/24.
 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, May 16, 2024.

Adjournment