

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Thursday, May 16, 2024

Time and Place of Meeting: Chair Jim Colias called the monthly meeting of the Tree Board to order at 7 PM at Town Hall in an Upstairs Meeting Room. No one participated in a Zoom component of the meeting.

Roll Call:

Present: Board Members Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, J.T. Mackey, Richard Underkofler.

Absent: Arleen Sandrick, Blane Roberts, Alex Robertson 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 is a roll call:

- Minutes: Mary Ann Brunt made a motion to approve minutes of the meeting held April 18, 2024. J.T. Mackey seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Old Business:

- a. **Zoom Meeting:** Highland IT Director Ed Dabrowski was thanked for setting up this meeting on Zoom.
- b. **Cicada Presentation:** Robin Carlascio was thanked for this nice article that appeared in the May publication of Gazebo Express, "Following a nap that lasted for more than a decade, two broods of ravenous cicadas are preparing to emerge, focusing their mating and feeding on a large swath of the Midwest that includes Lake County. Both broods will emerge at the same time in a rare, synchronized event that last occurred in 1803. The 2024 dual arrival is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Join the Tree Board and DNR Entomologist Kallie Bontrager at 7 p.m. May 21 in Room 116 at the Lincoln Center for a presentation and question-and-answer session about cicadas and their emergence. Learn how it can impact your neighborhood, trees and landscape."
- c. **CommuniTree Grant Trees:** Underkofler received an email from Drew Hart of the Forest Service reporting there will not be a Spring grant this year, but one is scheduled for the Fall. Notice was given to homeowners who were expecting a Spring distribution. Cynthia Batka, 3430 43rd Street, sought permission to privately purchase two Maple Trees for her parkway. An updated 2024 tree request list and a new Public Works Tree Request Form was distributed with the agenda.

Discussion Topics:

- a. **Meet with Merrillville and Valparaiso Forestry Staff:** Ron Jackowski reported he did not meet with Merrillville Storm Water Manager Matt Lake and Valparaiso Arborist Matt McBain to secure answers to questions he identified about their community forestry operations.
- b. **Jackowski Nursery Trees:** Bernie Zemen requested a transplanted tree at 2736 43rd Street. A fall planting date will be scheduled.
- c. **Community Presentation:** Mary Ann Brunt reported staff of the Morton Arboretum is willing to make a presentation about the benefits of trees in August or September. The Lincoln Center will be asked to reserve a room.
- d. **Warren School Tree Damage:** Ron Jackowski reported the trunk of the Arbor Day Tree at Warren School has been damaged by operation of a string trimmer (weed wacker). Central office school facility maintenance employees provide lawn care services.

- e. **Action Plan:** The Board updated its 2024 Action Plan.
1. Monthly idea sharing of 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. Completed 1/23/24 by Jackowski and Underkofler.
 3. Seek Town Council appointments to expiring Board Member terms. Completed 3/11/24.
 4. Cancel Board Meetings again in July and December – Decided 4-18-2024.
 5. Participate in Park Pride Day – Completed 4/20/24.
 6. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance – Assigned to Underkofler; completed 4/26/24.
 7. Post a Tree of the Month and Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site - Assigned to Colias.
 8. Attend Chamber of Commerce lunch meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick; the first meeting was 5-14-24.
 9. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics - Assigned to Colias. A first session about Cicada Information is scheduled for 5/21/24.
 10. Resume Zoom Meetings - Ed Dabrowski offered to set them up 5-16-24.
 11. Review whether the Approved / Unapproved Species List needs an update. Assigned to Jackowski.
 12. Secure utility clearance and transplant Jackowski nursery trees. Assigned to Jackowski. Requests received: Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street.
 13. Participate in the Fourth of July Parade with Highland Neighbors for Sustainability to be coordinated by Mary Ann Brunt - Wednesday, 7/3/24 6:30 PM.
 14. 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 a Town Council Budget Request.
 15. Renew Arbor Day Foundation membership – Assigned to Underkofler 8/10/24.
 16. Renew application for 2024 Tree City USA recognition before December 31. Assigned to Underkofler.
 17. 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, June 20, 2024.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7:45 PM on a motion of Blunt, second by Mackey and approved by unanimous consent of the members in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Underkofler, Secretary