

Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting

Thursday, June 20, 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. webupdates@theideafactory.us.com
c/o Theresa Badovich & Robin Carlascio.

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; Edward Dabrowski, IT Director.

Others: Doug Van Ramshorst, Highland Community Foundation; Drew Hart, USDA, Forest Service; Jennifer Birchfield, NIRPC; Rebecca Koetz, Lake County Purdue Extension Educator; Connie Wachala & Cathy Perrin, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability; Mélina Blanc, Delta Institute; Phil Graf, Great Lakes Urban Forest Management; 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 May 16, 2024.

Old Business:

- a. **Zoom Meeting:** Highland IT Director Ed Dabrowski wasn't able to set up this meetings on Zoom.

- b. 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.

New Business:

- a. NW Indiana TPC: TreeKeeper Canopy Planning Software Training, Wednesday, June 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM.** This is a 90-minute virtual training to learn about Davey Resource Group's Urban Forestry Management System. "TreeKeeper Canopy is a unique and user-friendly tool that allows the user to visualize canopy assessment results. With TreeKeeper Canopy, you can also set measurable canopy goals by applying user-defined variables and scenarios to help guide future community forest management and reforestation efforts. The tool enables you to prioritize new planting locations, project and estimate future tree canopy benefits, and budget for tree planting costs to reach set goals within the community." A registration link was sent June 12 to Board Members. If you missed it, go to https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fJN-cnuRTfWHFPZCWosfzA#/registration.
- b. IAA Apprenticeship Program, Thursday, June 27, 10 AM to 1 PM.** This will be an in-person meeting at the Lakefront Pavilion at the end of the Riverwalk, 100 Riverwalk Drive in Portage for those who desire to learn more about becoming a participating employer for an Arborist Apprentice. Lunch will be provided at 12 noon. If you have any questions or desire more

information call or email ISA Certified Municipal Arborist Phil Graf, Phone: (219) 380-9770 or e-mail: phil@gluf.net.

- c. **Wednesday, July 3, 2024 Parade:** Tree Board Members have been invited to join Highland Neighbors for Sustainability on a flatbed truck. Meet on 45th Street at Gordon Drive at 4 p.m. Use the second driveway and stay to the left of the concrete divider in the parking lot. Coolers with water bottles will be available; bring trash bags for disposal of used water bottles.

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. **Meet with Merrillville and Valparaiso Forestry Staff:** Ron Jackowski reported he will 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. **Action Plan:** The Board may review, change and update 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 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. Resume Zoom Meetings - Ed Dabrowski offered to set them up 5-16-24.
8. Post a Tree of the Month and Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site - Assigned to Colias.
9. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics - Assigned to Colias. A first session about Cicada Information occurred 5/21/24.
10. Attend Chamber of Commerce lunch meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick.
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 4:00 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 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: July 18, 2024. The Board does not meet in June.