

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Thursday, June 20, 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.

Roll Call:

Present: Board Members Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, J.T. Mackey, Blane Roberts, Arleen Sandrick, Richard Underkofler. Ron Jackowski arrived at 7:05 PM after the minutes and old business had been considered.

Absent: 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 May 16, 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 out of the office and unable to set up this meeting 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 missed it, go to https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_fJN-cnuRTfWHFPZCWsfzA#/registration. Sandrick and Colias said they will participate.
- 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. Underkofler and Jackowski will participate; Public Works Operations Director Tim Gembala and Parks Director Trever Kinley will be invited by Underkofler.
- c. **Wednesday, July 3, 2024 Parade:** Tree Board Members have been invited to join Highland Neighbors for Sustainability walking and on a truck. Mary Ann Brunt and Underkofler will participate.

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 Valparaiso Forestry Staff:** Ron Jackowski reported by the time of the next meeting he will meet with Valparaiso Arborist Matt McBain to secure answers to questions he identified about their community forestry operations.
- b. **Community Presentation:** Mary Ann Brunt reported a staff person from the Morton Arboretum is willing to set up a zoom meeting on a "Benefits of Trees" topic at 6 PM on August 19th or 28th. Blane Roberts preferred August 19th. Mary Ann will reserve the library meeting room. Once confirmed, notice will be given on the Board Facebook site and requested in the NWI Times, the Town Newsletter and Website.
- c. **Hazardous Trees:** Arleen Sandrick asked how can dead trees and limbs be removed. If on a Street Parkway, Public Works Operations Director Tim Gembala should be called at (219) 972-5083 or email tgembala@highland.in.gov. If on private property, it is the owner's responsibility.
- d. **Action Plan:** The Board reviewed and 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 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 - A first session booked by Colias about Cicada Information occurred 5/21/24. Another is planned by Blunt in August as a zoom meeting of the Morton Arboretum.
 10. Participate in the Independence Day Holiday Parade with Highland Neighbors for Sustainability to be coordinated by Mary Ann Brunt - Wednesday, 7/3/24.
 11. Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick; the next meeting is a Tuesday, July 9th Breakfast Meeting at Andorra Banquet and Catering; register at the HighlandGriffith Chamber Website.
 12. Review whether the Approved / Unapproved Species List needs an update. Assigned to Jackowski.
 13. Secure utility clearance and transplant Jackowski nursery trees in Fall 2024. Assigned to Jackowski. Requests received: Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street.
 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 future year budget requests.
 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, August 15, 2024. The Board does not meet in July.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7:50 PM on a motion of Blunt, second by Roberts and approved by unanimous consent of the members in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Underkofler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "U".

Richard Underkofler, Secretary