

**Special Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Thursday, September 26, 2024**

On 9/21/24, Board Member Arleen Sandrick requested a special meeting of the Tree Board to discuss a proposed seedling species planting plan on the south side of the Little Calumet River. In an email Arleen wrote, "I feel like we all have some good thoughts and input, and it might be a good idea to hash out everyone's thoughts after the 9/19/24 walkthrough with Aren Flint."

Time and Place of Meeting:

Chair Jim Colias called the special meeting of the Tree Board to order at 7 PM. Since Town Hall doors were locked, the members met outside behind Town Hall to avoid Ridge Road traffic noise.

Roll Call:

Present: Board Members Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, Blane Roberts, J.T. Mackey, Arleen Sandrick and Richard Underkofler.

Guest: Connie Wachala, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability.

Absent: Alex Robertson and other invited employees of the Town.

Documents Reviewed:

- Little Calumet Trail Planting Zone Maps sent by Jacob Lovett, Davey Resource Group, Inc.
- Species Available from State Nursery, Slitworm PDF sent by Aren Flint, Davey Resource Group, Inc.
- Proposal: Create a Public Riverwalk Along the Little Calumet and the Rookery with Cherry Trees, Handout by Arleen Sandrick with photos of four species of cherry trees.

Discussion:

- Arleen Sandrick favors a cherry species under-canopy.
- Jim Colias won't provide a truck to pull a water trailer due to liability concerns; he believes volunteers won't be able to plant the number of proposed seedlings citing only 4 trees have historically been planted per 3-hour volunteer operation; only a contractor will have sufficient labor and equipment to undertake planting and watering of so many seedlings.
- Mary Ann Brunt suggested consideration of an offer of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church at 1115 N Cline Avenue in Griffith for a seedling nursery that is reported to have an irrigation water source.
- J.T. Mackey and Ron Jackowski favor the "Wildlife Species Package" of the State Nursery.
- Blane Roberts favors any seedling planting and watering proposal acceptable to other board members.
- Connie Wachala suggested seeking a grant from the Little Calumet River Basin Commission for the Town to retain a contractor to plant and water a much smaller quantity of seedlings.
- Rich Underkofler favors the Wildlife Species Package and grouping the seedlings in groves to reduce the turf mowing area. Underkofler finds the zone maps anticipate plantings that are too close to the levee; he contends planting sites should be at least 20 feet from the toe of the levee to secure approval of the Little Calumet River Basin Commission and the Corps of Engineers.
- All believe the project should be delayed at least two months to formulate better plans for the number of seedlings, their planting and watering.

Motion:

- Blane Roberts made a motion to delay implementation of the seedling project until the Board's November 21 Meeting pending a decision whether the Little Calumet River Basin Commission will approve a grant for the Town to retain a contractor to plant and water a much smaller quantity of seedlings. Ron Jackowski seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members.

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 17, 2024.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 8:22 PM on a motion of Roberts, second by Jackowski and approved by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Underkofler", written in a cursive style.

Richard Underkofler, Secretary