

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Thursday, October 17, 2024

Time and Place of Meeting: Vice Chair Ron Jackowski 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, Ron Jackowski, Arleen Sandrick, Richard Underkofler.

Absent: Jim Colias (out of town trade show), Blane Roberts (out of town funeral), J.T. Mackey (out of town PTO), Alex Robertson and other invited employees of the Town and Agencies.

Guests: Cathy Perrin, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability.

General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided - record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call:

- Minutes: Arleen Sandrick made a motion to approve minutes of the regular meeting held September 19th and a special meeting held 26th. Mary Ann Brunt seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Old Business:

- a. **NW Indiana Tree Planting Consortium Meeting:** Adobe slides from the October 3rd meeting of the NW Indiana Tree Planting Consortium, which included links to upcoming events and funding opportunities, were emailed with the agenda.
- b. **Seedling Donation:** The Little Calumet River Watershed Seedling Planting Project has been delayed until the Board's November 21st 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 them during drought conditions. The application is awaiting a species planting plan from Davey Resource Group. There was no objection to Secretary Underkofler's recommendation to propose Joe Moore d/b/a Erosion Construction Services as the contractor since the firm has offered to donate State Nursery seedlings and dig holes for the project.
- c. **Partners in Community Forestry Conference:** This year's Arbor Day Foundation Conference will be held at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago, November 20-21, 2024. Notice of the agenda was forwarded to Board Members 8/13/24.
- d. **2024 Urban Forestry Symposium, Dec. 3-4:** Notice of this symposium by the Indiana Community Forestry Council (IN-CFC) and IN DNR, Community & Urban Forestry was emailed to Board Members via a newsletter 9/18/24. The conference is open to anyone interested in urban forestry in Indiana, including representatives of tree boards, local municipalities and volunteers. This symposium is a great way to network with other individuals involved with urban forestry, from Indiana and regionally. Thanks to sponsors, this year's event is FREE to attend, with snacks provided on the first day and breakfast and lunch served on the second. This year's symposium will be at Crown Hill National Cemetery and Arboretum, 700 38th St., Indianapolis, IN, 46208. With more than 11,000 inventoried trees and 137 unique species, the arboretum is accredited by the Arboretum Accreditation Program for achieving particular standards of professional practices deemed important for arboretums. This massive inventory of trees serves as the architectural backbone of this beautiful urban green space, providing shade for the historic structures and shelter for a variety of wildlife.

New Business: No topics identified.

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. **Downtown Tree Removal:** Carlos Alberto forwarded an email from Elizabeth Popovich of Highland Neighbors for Sustainability expressing concern about four Highway Avenue trees removed: two in front of Yaya Sisters and Milestone Therapy and another across the street by the library parking lot. On inquiry Public Works Director Mark Knesek reported one tree was split and the others were dead ash trees. Ron Jackowski reported other dead trees on Jewett Avenue.
- b. **Nursery Land Offer:** Mary Ann Brunt will invite a representative of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church at 1115 N Cline Ave in Griffith to our next meeting to discuss a tract of land behind the church, previously a garden with a water irrigation source, that might be used for a tree or plant nursery.
- c. **Potential New Board Member:** Arleen Sandrick will invite Highland Arborist Scott Polster to our next meeting to recruit him to become a board member for a 3-year term beginning January 2025. Phone (219) 365-6778; Email: arborist@forevergreenlc.com.
- d. **Merrillville and Crown Point Tree Board Operations:** Ron Jackowski will meet with Matthew Lake to secure answers and report to the board on questions he identified about urban forestry operations. Phone: (219) 472-8668; E-mail: mlake@merrillville.in.gov.
- e. **Postscript Replacement Tree Request:** On 10/18/2024, Chuck Haber requested a replacement parkway tree for one that appeared unhealthy on the southside of his driveway 8417 Cottage Grove Avenue. Ron Jackowski drove by on the 19th and confirmed its death. Its replacement from Ron's backyard nursery will be scheduled for this fall.
- f. **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. 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. A first session about Cicada Information occurred 5/21/24.
 9. Attend Chamber of Commerce lunch meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick.
 10. Review whether the Approved / Unapproved Species List needs an update. Assigned to Jackowski, who confirmed an update is not necessary.
 11. Participate in the Fourth of July Parade with Highland Neighbors for Sustainability. Completed.
 12. Secure utility clearance and transplant Jackowski nursery trees. Assigned to Jackowski. Fall 2024 Requests received: Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street and Chuck Haber, 8417 Cottage Grove Avenue.
 13. Recruit new Board Members to succeed Blane Roberts and Richard Underkofler.

14. Renew application for 2024 Tree City USA recognition before December 31. Assigned to Underkofler.
15. Establish a list of 2024 accomplishments/key facts and publish an Annual Report for a media release to the Town Council, Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB. Assigned to Underkofler.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 21, 2024.

Adjournment: The meeting ended at 7:45 PM on a motion of Sandrick, second by Blunt 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".

Richard Underkofler, Secretary