

**Highland Tree Board
Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, January 16, 2025 – 7 PM
Upstairs at Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road**

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; Trevor Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment 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 & Laura Oltmanns, 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; Joe Moore, Erosion Construction Services; Arborist Scott Polster; Dan Repay, Little Calumet River Basin Commission; Mike Repay, Lake County Commissioner; Tim Skimina, St. Timothy's Griffith Episcopal Church.

Minutes: A motion is requested to approve the minutes of a rescheduled meeting held December 2, 2024. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

Board Member Appointments: The terms of Blane Roberts and Richard Underkofler have ended. Roberts seeks reappointment; Underkofler does not. Highland Arborist Scott Polster (Email: arborscott@sbcglobal.net; Phone 219-365-6778) has applied for the vacant position. The Town Council is scheduled to nominate, and the Council President is scheduled to appoint two members at its 1/27/25 meeting.

Appointment of Officers for 2025:

- **Chairperson:** The Town Council President is scheduled to appoint a chairperson from the board members at its 1/27/25 meeting.
- **Other Officers:** If appointed, the Chairperson will make a motion to appoint a Vice Chairperson and Secretary at this meeting.

Old Business:

a. Tree Inventory: At its 12/9/2024 meeting the Town Council approved and authorized the Public Works Director to sign a professional services contract for a tree inventory update with Great Lakes Urban Forestry, Inc. for a fee not to exceed \$55,000. This project will be funded by a grant from Lake County initiated by Commissioner Mike Repay with no outlay required from the Town.

b. Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project: Seedlings are scheduled to be planted during the week of Arbor Day 2025 from April 19 to April 25, when we hope to have photo opportunities and assistance from volunteers from schools and Highland Neighbors Sustainability. Dan Repay reported the Little Calumet River Basin Commission approved a \$15,000 reimbursable grant for Highland Public Works to contract with Erosion Construction Services (ECS) to plant 200 seedlings and to water them during drought conditions. ECS has ordered the seedlings, will call for the utility locations and will arrive a few days before planting to pre-dig the holes. Rich Underkofler will be on-site to ensure the holes are dug in the appropriate locations and will be the point of contact for coordinating with volunteers.

c. 2024 Tree City USA: Highland's application for consecutive 6-year recognition has been approved; a new flag and plaque should be received by April.

d. Spring 2025 CommuniTree Grant: On January 8th, a draft copy of the application for 20 trees was submitted to all board members. If acceptable, it will be submitted to NIRPC. A tree planting/care workshop and tree pickup date will occur at NIRPC, Thursday, April 10th.

New Business:

- a. **IAA Annual Conference:** Agenda and registration links for the Indiana Arborist Association Annual Conference in Indianapolis were mailed to board members on 11/15/24 and again 1/13/2025. Tree City USA communities will receive a 50% discount of the registration fee for Urban Forestry Day on 1/21/2025.
- b. **Tree Planting:** Select a date and time for volunteers to transplant Jackowski nursery trees at homeowner yards of Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street and Chuck Haber, 8417 Cottage Grove Avenue.
- c. **Crown Point & Merrillville Tree Board Operations:** Ron Jackowski will report to the board on a meeting planned with Matthew Lake (who is a member of the Crown Point Tree Board and employed by Merrillville Public Works) about questions he identified about their community forestry operations. Phone: (219) 472-8668; E-mail: mlake@merrillville.in.gov.

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.

Action Plan: The Board may formulate its 2025 Action Plan at the conclusion of this meeting.

Next Meeting: February 20, 2025.

Adjournment