

**Topics Tentatively Scheduled for Study Session Discussion
and
Topics Requested for Action at Future Business Meetings of the
Thirtieth Town Council of Highland**

This meeting will be convened as an in person meeting.

Topic: Town of Highland, IN - Town Council Study Session

Time: January 27, 2025 Immediately after adjournment of the January 27, 2025 plenary meeting

This meeting contributes to Agenda building for the plenary meeting. Please, also be aware of the running enrolled list of matters that are likely for the plenary meeting, subject to review by the municipal executive. By practice and local ordinance, study sessions are distinguished from plenary (regular business) meetings of the Town Council "as they shall be conducted with less formality and with no votes or final actions of a dispositive nature unless provided otherwise by proper notice, pursuant to IC [5-14-1.5](#) et seq." (Confer HMC Section 2.05.130(3))

x. Discussion: Appointments.

Unless otherwise noted, all terms expire on the 1st Monday in January 2025 and until a successor is appointed or qualified, not exceeding ninety (90) days.

• Statutory Boards and Commissions

Executive Appointments (May be made in meeting or at another time)

- 1. Municipal Plan Commission** (1) appointment to be made by Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by Toya Smith, (D) term ending 1st Monday January 2025.) No more than two (2) of any party. Current composition is two (2) Republicans, one (2) Democrat. Term is four (4) years.*

*Toya Smith (appointed by the Plan Commission to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals)
(Term co-extensive with her Plan Commission term – 1st Monday in January 2025)*

- 2. Redevelopment Commission** (3) appointments to be made by Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by George Georgeff, Alex Robertson and Tom Black, all expiring 1st Monday in January 2025 and up to 90 days after term expires if no action)*

- 3. Waterworks Board of Directors:** (1) appointment to be made by Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by Peggy Phillips (R), term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) year. Current composition of the board is two Republicans and three Democrats. No more than three of any one party under state law.*

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4. **Board of Sanitary Commissioners:** (2) appointments to be made by Town Council President. *(Currently held by Greg Cieslak (R) and Richard Garcia (D), term ending 1st Monday January 2025 and up to 90 days after term expires if no action.) Term is for four (4) years. Current composition of the Board is three (3) Democrats and two (2) Republicans. There can be no more than 3 from any one party.*

Regional Statutory Appointments.

5. **Economic Development Commission.** (1) Appointment to be made by the municipal executive, but requiring nomination from the Town Council. *(Currently held by Blane Roberts, term ending 1st Monday February 2025 and up to 90 days after term expires if no action)*
6. **Northwestern Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC).** (1) No action necessary unless a change is desired. Town Council President is appointment authority. Must be an elected official who resides in the Town. *(Current serving: Tom Black.) Must be a member of the Town Council. Term is co-extensive with term on council unless legislative body acts otherwise*
7. **Joint Board of Delegates of the Interlocal Ethics Entity.** (1) Appointed by Municipal Executive *(Current serving: Tom Black)* No term. Notifying in case the Council President wants to recall and appoint someone else. *Must be a member of the Town Council. Term is co-extensive with term on council unless legislative body acts otherwise*
8. **Lake County Convention and Visitors Bureau Board of Directors.** (1) Appointment by Town Council President. **(NOT DUE UNTIL JUNE 30 2025)** *(Currently serving Christine Cash) Appointing authority must give sole consideration to individuals who are knowledgeable about or employed as executives or managers in Hotel, Motel, Banking, Real Estate and hospitality. Cannot hold an elected or appointed political office*

Home Rule Commissions or Boards

9. **Main Street Bureau Board of Directors.** Town Council President appointment. (1) Appointment. Town Council Representative must be a member of the Town Council. *Term co-extensive with term of appointee. (Note: Currently serving is Alex Robertson)*
10. **Tree Board.** (2) Appointments to be nominated by the Town Council but appointed by the Town Council President. *(Note: Currently held by Richard Underkofler and Blane Roberts, term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years Richard Underkofler; Blane Roberts)*
 - a. Nomination by the Town Council. *(The council would pass a motion to nominate.)*

b. Appointment by executive. (If nominee is acceptable, the Town Council President may appoint.)

- **Tree Board Chairperson.** The Town Council President also appoints the Chairperson to be selected from the membership of the board. (See HMC Section 8.25.030 (C)) (Currently held by James Colias.)

11. Committee and Liaison Assignments. Assignments made by Town Council President. (Custom and Convention)

Legislative Appointments

1. **Municipal Plan Commission** (Note: Appointees may be elected or appointed official or employees of the Town. No action necessary as incumbents continue to serve unless the legislative body acts to change. Currently serving: Morgan Wright (municipal employee); Bernie Zemen (appointed official, he is a member of the Water Board); Doug Turich (elected official). The term of office of a member (who is appointed from the membership of a legislative body, a public board or commission or as an employee) is co-extensive with the member's term of office on that body, board, or council, or term of employment, unless the appointing authority appoints, at its first regular meeting in any year, another to serve as its representative. (Pursuant to IC 36-7-4-217)

2. **Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals:** (1) appointment to be made by Fiscal Body. (Note: Currently held by David Helms, term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years.

Toya Smith (appointed by the Plan Commission to the Advisory Board of Zoning Appeals)
(Term co-extensive with her Plan Commission term – 1st Monday in January 2025)

3. **Park and Recreation Board.** (1) appointment to be made by the Town Council. (Note: Current appointee is Carlos Aburto (D), term ending 1st Monday January 2025) Term is for four (4) years. (Current composition is 2 democrats and 2 republicans. Not more than 2 members may be of the same party.)

4. **Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners.** (2) appointments to be made by the Town Council. (Note: Current appointees are Mike Danko (R) and Larry Moses (R), term ending 1st Monday January 2025). Term is for three (3) years. (Current composition for these five citizen positions is three democrats and two republicans)

5 **Redevelopment Commission.** (2) appointments to be made by the Town Council. (Note: current

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appointees are Doug Turich and Philip Scheeringa.)

Regional Statutory Appointments

6. **Lake County Solid Waste Management District Board of Directors.** (1) No action necessary unless a change is desired. (Note: Currently serving Tom Black) Must be a member of the Town Council. Term is co-extensive with term on council unless legislative body acts otherwise.

Home Rule Commissions

2. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council. (*Note: Current Appointees are: Renee Reinhart, Ben Reinhart, Diane Barr-Roumbus, James Roumbus, Sandy McKnight, Al Simmons, Sandy Ray, Ben Tomera, Laura Pilewski and Desiree Biro, term ending 1st Monday January 2025*). Term is for two (2) years.
4. **Traffic Safety Commission:** (5) appointments, which must be comprised of 1 representative from the Fire Department, (1) representative from the Public Works Department (Agency), (1) member from the Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners, and (2) members from the Police Department. Also note, HMC Chapter 10.45 provides that the Police Chief serves as Chief of the Commission regardless of being a member of the commission. (Currently serving, Mike Pipta, Fire Department Representative; Mark Knesek Public Works Department (Agency) representative; Steve Jurczak, Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners representative; Commander John Banasiak, Police Department representative; and Chief Ralph J. Potesta, Police Department representative.)

“The commission shall also consist of a representative from the town council, which may be held by a single member or alternating between several members of the town council as the town council may direct. Only one member at any given time may participate in a meeting of the traffic safety commission.

x. **Discussion:** Revisit the Town’s policy regarding paid time off and care for workers who may have tested positively for the virus, those who have tested positively and dealing with (full-time) worker who is not symptomatic but has been possibly exposed. It is desirable to have the worker quarantine outside the workplace, *emphasis desirable, as once the government declared the pandemic was over, we can no longer force employees to stay home, when they don’t feel good or running a fever.* The Council instituted in 2020, a provision in the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance commonly called the Employee Handbook providing for an administrative paid leave of up to ten (10) days that is renewable (Confer Section 5.11.02) when testing positive for covid. Unfortunately, some

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departments are still following, whereas, others aren't. This discussion is to get guidance from the Council as to whether they want to keep the policy as is, or change it to what other towns are doing. In checking with other Towns, such as:

- 1). Crown Point treats covid as any other illness. The employee is required to use personal or vacation days, if they are off of work and want to get paid.
- 2). Griffith no longer has a covid policy regarding paid time-off. They, like Crown Point, treat it like the flu or cold. Employees are required to use personal or vacation days if they want to get paid, if they call off from work.
- 3). Munster treats an employee who tests positive for covid, the same as the County.
- 4). The Town of Schererville advises employees that if they don't feel good or have a fever, please stay home. Once the government declared the pandemic was over, they can no longer force employees to stay home.
- 5). The County requires employees who test positive for covid, to stay home, taking vacation or personal time.

It is this Office recommendation to the Council, to change the covid policy regarding paid time-off for employees who test positive for covid and treat it like our neighboring communities, suggesting that if the employee doesn't feel well or is running a fever, to stay home. If time is taken off, require the employee to use their personal or vacation time. This change will make it consistent throughout the Town.

x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. 1813, reconstituting the Council of Community Events under the jurisdiction under IC 36-10-3-17. You will repeal the creation of the Council of Community Events under the Town Council and re-establish the chapter in Parks & Recreation incorporating the Council of Community Events under Parks & Recreation. When preparing the agenda, I wasn't sure the Council would adopt on 1st reading.

x. Discussion: Wheel Tax – this was briefly discussed with the Council by the Public Works Director at the Council's January 6, 2025 Study Session. Since that time, HB1461 was introduced that would require each local municipality to pass a wheel and vehicle excise tax in order to be eligible for CCMG funding. It also asked that tolling be allowed on the interstates. The bill was read and referred to the Road Committee. They have a hearing next Tuesday. In speaking with AIM, the reason behind the bill is because of electric vehicles and hybrid's has caused an impact of

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the gas tax.

x. Discussion: Meeting with the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability . (Resolution 2024-06 sunset on 12/31/2024)

• **Plenary Business Meeting of Monday February 10, 2025**

- Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, January 27, 2025.
- Appointments
- Community Crossings Matching Grant Fund – Financial Commitment Letter January 2025 call.
- Proposed Ordinance No. 1813
- Payroll Docket

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