

**Highland Tree Board  
Agenda for Regular Meeting  
Thursday, April 17, 2025 – 7 PM  
Upstairs at Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road**

**Roll Call:**

**Board Members:** Mary Ann Brunt, Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, John (JT) Mackey, Scott Polster, Blane Roberts, Arleen Sandrick. 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; Trever Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director.

**Others:** Richard Underkofler, 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, 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; Dan Repay, Little Calumet River Basin Commission; Mike Repay, Lake County Commissioner;

**Minutes:** A motion is requested to approve the minutes of a rescheduled meeting held March 20, 2025. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

**Old Business:**

- a. **Tree Inventory:** Phil Graf on behalf of Great Lakes Urban Forestry provided a written update report of the status of updating Highland's Tree Inventory for the March Tree Board Meeting. Phil Graf has been invited for Board members to learn more.
- b. **Spring 2025 CommuniTree Grant:** A tree planning/care workshop and tree pickup date occurred on April 10<sup>th</sup> followed by a distribution to homeowners at Public Works on April 12 from 9-11 AM. Tree Board members who participated will provide an update.
- c. **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project:** Ron Jackowski and Rich Underkofler met with Delta Institute on April 4<sup>th</sup> to coordinate the event. The event is tentatively scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup> but is dependent on weather and when the state nursery releases trees. Rich Underkofler previously requested an Arbor Day Proclamation from the Council President via Mark Herak. Tree Board Members will make final preparations during meeting.
- d. **Discussions with and questions for Alex Robertson regarding Town Council.**
- e. **Highland Twilight Parade – July 3<sup>rd</sup>:** Last year the Highland Tree Board was represented on the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability float. Call for volunteers to participate in the 2025 Highland Twilight Parade on July 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- f. **Review Approved/Unapproved Tree Species.** A copy of the approved/unapproved Tree Species list is distributed with this agenda. Board member Scott Polster expressed interest in reviewing the list.
- g. **Jackowski Nursery Planting.** Ron Jackowski will select a date to transplant trees to homeowner yards of Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street and Chuck Haber, 8417 Cottage Grove Avenue.

- h. **Town Tree Removal.** Clerk Mark Herak shared the town's tree removal contract with the Tree Board. Tree Board will review to make recommendations for Town's consideration.

**New Business:**

- a. 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. Action Plan: The Board may adopt a 2025 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 1/21/25 by Jackowski and Roberts.
  - 3. Seek Town Council appointments to expiring Board Member terms.
  - 4. Seek Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary appointments.
  - 5. Cancel Board Meetings in July and December.
  - 6. Participate in Park Pride Day.
  - 7. Board member distribution of CommuniTree Grant Trees to homeowners at the Public Works Yard. Scheduled Saturday, April 19th from 9 to 11 AM.
  - 8. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance – Scheduled week of April 20 to April 25.
  - 9. Post a Tree of the Month and Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site - Assigned to Colias.
  - 10. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics - Assigned to Colias.
  - 11. Attend Chamber of Commerce and NWI Urban Waters Partnership Meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick.
  - 12. Review whether the Approved / Unapproved Species List needs an update. Assigned to Jackowski.
  - 13. Secure utility clearance and transplant Jackowski nursery trees. Scheduled Spring 2025. Requests received: Bernie Zemen, 2736 43rd Street and Chuck Haber, 8417 Cottage Grove Avenue.
  - 14. Recruit new Board Members for terms expiring in January 2026.
  - 15. Renew application for 2025 Tree City USA recognition before December 31.
  - 16. Establish a list of 2025 accomplishments/key facts and publish an Annual Report for a media release to the Town Council, Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB

**Next Meeting:** May 15, 2025.

Adjournment