

**Highland Tree Board  
Agenda for Regular Meeting  
Thursday, June 19, 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](mailto:webupdates@theideafactory.us.com) c/o Theresa Badovich & Robin Carlascio.

**Invited Town Staff:** George Georgeff, 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; 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 meeting held May 15, 2025. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

**Old Business:**

- a. **Tree Inventory:** Phil Graf on behalf of Great Lakes Urban Forestry previously reported the inventory updated has been complete and quality control measures are underway before the report will be complete.
- b. **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project.** Cathy Perrin submitted a report on review of the plantings along the southeast section of the project. Of 124 seedlings observed as of 5-15-25: Deer nibbled 14 sticks; 5 were not found; 3 were uprooted and replanted; 44 were leafed out; 58 had buds forming. Unopened sacks of mulch still remain along the bike trail that need to be placed around the seedlings when weather and ground moisture conditions are suitable.
- c. **Duluth & Parrish Street Sanitary District Tree Planting:** Phil Graf provided a tree evaluation and arborist report providing an assessment of the planting along Duluth Street following a infrastructure rebuild project. Derek Snyder, the Town’s Arborist Engineer of NIES Engineering disagreed with some of the recommendations. Alex Roberston said work may be in progress for replacing some, but not all of the deficient trees.
- d. **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>.
- e. **Review Approved/Unapproved Tree Species.** Scott Polster, Phil Graf and Ron Jackowski are working together to make the document more ”user friendly.” Indiana DNR has released an updated Tree Selection Guide and Tree Species list.
  - i. [Tree Selection Guide](#)
  - ii. [Tree Species List](#)

- f. **Spring 2025 CommuniTree Grant:** Blane Roberts will perform a windshield survey of the trees planted by homeowners to monitor their care.
- g. **Delta Institute Great Lakes Basin Tree Planting Consortium.** Delta Institute is seeking a grant from Daybreak Fund to start a Great Lakes Basin Tree Planting Consortium similar to the Northwest Indiana consortium. The Consortium has helped Highland and other communities in Lake County with canopy mapping, planning, planting trees, best practices and more. The grant from Daybreak Fund would allow Delta Institute to continue this model in more communities. Secretary Mackey submitted a letter of support on behalf of the Highland Tree Board.

**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. **Completed 2-24-2025**
  - 4. Update the Approved / Unapproved Species List - **Completed by Jackowski 4-14-2025, but consideration delayed for a more “user friendly” document by Polster and Phil Graf.**
  - 5. Seek Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary appointments. **Completed 2-24-2025**
  - 6. Cancel Board Meetings in July and December.
  - 7. Participate in Park Pride Day. **Assigned to Mary Ann Brunt 4-26-2025.**
  - 8. Board member distribution of CommuniTree Grant Trees to homeowners at the Public Works Yard. Scheduled Saturday, April 19th from 9 to 11 AM. **Completed Saturday, 4-12-25.**
  - 9. Organize an annual Arbor Day Observance – Scheduled week of April 20 to April 25. **Completed 4-25-25.**
  - 10. Participate in Park Pride Day. **Completed by Brund and husband 4-26-25.**
  - 11. Post a Tree of the Month and Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site - Assigned to Colias.
  - 12. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics - Assigned to Colias.
  - 13. Attend Chamber of Commerce and NWI Urban Waters Partnership Meetings to establish community partnerships and sponsorships. Assigned to Sandrick.
  - 14. 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. **Completed 5/29.**
  - 15. Recruit new Board Members for terms expiring in January 2026.

16. Renew application for 2025 Tree City USA recognition before December 31.  
**Assigned to Secretary.**
17. 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.  
**Assigned to Secretary.**

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, August 21, 2025.

Adjournment