

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

Roll Call:

Board Members:

Chair Jim Colias	Executive Appointment	1/1/2023 – 1/1/2026
Vice Chair Ron Jackowski	Executive Appointment	1/1/2023 – 1/1/2026
Secretary JT Mackey	Executive Appointment	1/1/2024 – 1/1/2027
Mary Ann Brunt	Executive Appointment	1/1/2024 – 1/1/2027
Scott Polster	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2028
Blane Roberts	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2028
Arlene Sandrick	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 -1/1/2028
Alex Robertson	Town Council’s Board Liaison	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2026

Invited Town Staff: George Georgeff, Council President; Mark Herak, Clerk/Treasurer; Mark Knesek, Public Works Director; Tim Gembala, Public Works Operations Director; Tim Diamond, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Department; Trever Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director; Webupdates@theideafactory.us.com c/o Theresa Badovich & Robin Carlascio.

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 August 21, 2025. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

Old Business:

- a. **Tree Inventory:** A copy of the Tree Inventory report is attached to the August 21, 2025, meeting minutes. Tree Board encourages Town Council to review the report. Highlights include over 11,000 trees could be planted throughout the town as only 58% of the available tree spaces are currently planted. Highland needs greater tree diversity as most of the trees inventoried are silver maples.
- b. **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project.** Update on the trees planted through the Little Calumet River South Watershed seedling project: most of the saplings planted are dead – dried out twigs remain. Board members have been copied on emails from Rich Underkofler, Ron Jackowski and Tim Diamond with potential follow up.
- c. **Duluth & Parrish Street Sanitary District Tree Planting:** Tree Board plans to ask Alex Robertson to present info to the Town Council on the Duluth & Parrish Streets sanitary district tree planting. Want to know status of deficient trees and Council’s plans, if any, about these trees.

- d. **Review Approved/Unapproved Tree Species.** Scott Polster, Phil Graf and Ron Jackowski continue 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](#)
- e. **Arbor Day Foundation Trees** – Rich Underkofler has ordered 10 eastern redbud trees for planting around November 2025. Tree Board members would like to further discuss where to plant and believe education is needed. Ask Alex to present tree inventory data to the Town Council.
- f. **NIRPC Invasive Tree Replacement Program** – Property Owners can receive a native tree to replace Callery/Bradford Pear trees, Tree of Heaven, or other non-native invasive trees. More information available here: [Program Information](#). Tree Board members would like to learn more about the program including length of program and any costs.

New Business:

No new business 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 ideas to keep the Board moving forward. **All Board Members.**
 - 2. Become a member of the Indiana Arborist Association and participate in the 2025 IAA Annual Conference. **Completed 1/21/25 by Jackowski and Roberts.**
 - 3. Town Council appointments to expiring Board Member Terms. **Completed 2/24/25.**
 - 4. Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary Appointments. **Completed 2/24/25.**
 - 5. Board member distribution of 20 CommuniTree Grant trees to homeowners at the Public Works Yard. **Completed 4/12/25.**
 - 6. Update the Approved /Unapproved Species List. **Completed by Jackowski 4/24/25, but consideration delayed for a more "user friendly" document by Scott Polster, Phil Graf, and Jackowski.**
 - 7. Organize an annual Arbor Day Event. **Completed 4/25/2025.**
 - 8. Participate in Park Pride Day. **Completed 4/26/25.**
 - 9. Secure utility clearance and transplant three Jackowski nursery trees to yards of Chuck Haber (8417 Cottage Grove Ave) and Bernie Zemen (2736 43rd St). **Completed 5/19/25.**
 - 10. Post a Tree of the Month and/or Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site and the Tree Board Page on the Town of Highland Website. **Assigned to Colias.**
 - 11. Secure 1 or 2 expert speakers per year for community educational sessions on pertinent topics. **Assigned to Colias.**
 - 12. Attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and NWI Urban Waters Partnership to maintain community relations and become aware of urban forestry grants. **Assigned to Sandrick.**
 - 13. Recruit new Board Members for terms ending in January 2026. **All Board Members.**
 - 14. Renew application for Tree City USA recognition before December 31. **Assigned to Secretary.**

15. Identify 2025 accomplishments, key facts and publish in an Annual Report for a media release to the Town Council, Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB. **Assigned to Secretary.**

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 20, 2025.

Adjournment