

**Highland Tree Board  
Agenda for Regular Meeting  
Thursday, November 20, 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 Kneseck, 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](mailto: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 October 16, 2025. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

**Old Business:**

- a. **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project.** Chair Jim Colias invited Joe Moore to a future meeting to discuss an offer to replant seedling project.
- b. **Duluth & Parrish Street Sanitary District Tree Planting:** Following discussion with Liaison Alex Robertson, Board Member Blane Roberts volunteered to review town regulations regarding planting standards and report back to the Board for further consideration.
- c. **Review Approved/Unapproved Tree Species.** Board Members Scott Polster and Ron Jackowski agreed to connect and draft an update to Highland’s Approved/Unapproved Tree Species list.
- d. **Arbor Day Foundation Trees –** Rich Underkofler has ordered 10 eastern redbud trees for planting around November 2025. Vice Chair Ron Jackowski to follow up with Rich regarding Arbor Day Foundation trees and look into steps necessary for a spring tree distribution

**New Business:**

- a. **Role of Highland Tree Board.** Board Member Arlene Sandrick drafted the following outline to clarify the role of the Tree Board and opportunities for Board Members to carry out our work.

The board is comprised of seven voting members, each appointed by the Town Council to serve a 4-year term. Meetings are held at 7 pm on the third Thursday of every month in the council chambers, 3333 Ridge Rd. Highland, In. 46322.

Currently we are an advisory board with duties to study, investigate, counsel, develop and advise the town on the care, preservation, pruning, planting, replanting, removal of trees and shrubs in parks, alleys, along streets as well and in public areas. A written plan, if needed, could be created and presented to the town council every four years for acceptance and approval to constitute an official comprehensive tree plan goal for Highland.

1. One suggestion is to develop a 50/50 program, similar to the town's sidewalk program which would apply to Highland homeowners.
2. Develop a shaded greenway path for biking and walking along the Little Calumet River and the rookery.
4. Appoint a town arborist for professional tree care practices, proper placement and maintenance standards as outlined in Highland's tree ordinance Jan. 2025.
5. Participate in Arbor Day, Tree City, school and community events to beautify Highland.
6. Create and provide information and educational pamphlets, develop relationships to exchange information and ideas with neighboring towns/cities, Indiana DNR and federal forestry programs.

**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 43<sup>rd</sup> 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:** Either Thursday, December 18, 2025, or Thursday, January 15, 2026.

Adjournment