

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Monday, September 21, 2026

The agenda for this meeting listed the Board Members, whether they are executive or legislative appointments and their terms of office as required by a new state statute.

Time and Place of Meeting: Chair Blane Roberts called the monthly meeting of the Tree Board to order at 6:35 PM in a meeting room at the Lincoln Community Center.

Roll Call

Present: Board Members: Mary Ann Brunt, Teresa Lekan, Secretary JT Mackey, Scott Polster, Chair Blane Roberts, Arlene Sandrick, David Taylor, and Council Liaison Alex Robertson.

Additional guests present: Ron Jackowski, Parks Superintendent Mindi Ray

Absent: Other invited staff

General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided – record of all votes taken if there is a roll call.

- Mary Ann Brunt made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held June 15, 2026. Scott Polster seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.
- Blane Roberts made a motion to move forward with watershed tree planting. Seconded by Dave Taylor. Votes in favor: Mary Ann Brunt; Teresa Lekan; Scott Polster; Blane Roberts; J.T. Mackey; Dave Taylor. Votes against: Arlene Sandrick.

Old Business:

- **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project.** Blane reviewed that Tree Board members walked the site on June 22nd and identified several tree species they would like to see planted including: scarlet oak, bald cypress, willow, sycamore and river birch. The state nursery ordering system opens October 1st and Blane will work with Joe Moore to place order for the project. Blane shared Joe Moore would like to walk the site with Board members. As noted above, Board voted to move forward with replanting the watershed seedling project.

New Business:

- **Town Council Liaison Update.** Alex Robertson provided an update on the clean up effort following the August 11 storm. As of the meeting, the town had incurred over \$3 million in clean up costs so far. FEMA is anticipated to cover 75% of reimbursable

costs and the state of Indiana is expected to cover a majority of the remainder and the Town will be responsible for a small portion. Residents are encouraged to report their time cleaning up debris as it could lower the Town's responsible portion. Volunteers were available to help homeowners but the crews were likely concluding their work soon.

- **August 11 Storm Discussion.** David Taylor shared he visited Wicker Park and observed throughout the community, that many of the downed trees were maples and pines on North and south streets fared the worst. Board members discussed how the clean up effort will respond to stumps as FEMA will only cover removal of uprooted trees. Board identified the need to find grants or other creative financing to help cover expense of stump removal and to seek grants to help replace the trees lost due to the storm.
- **Upcoming Events.** Board reviewed upcoming educational events.

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.

Ron Jackowski noted the honorary tree planted in Main Square Park had been relocated. Blane shared the Parks Department Maintenance Crew asked if they could relocate the tree related.

Arlene Sandrick shared she has developed an app of the approved tree species to give a visual tool for residents and plans to share it as a resource.

Alex Robertson has shared the Board's recommended species list with legal to turn the list into municipal code language.

- a. Action Plan: The Board may adopt a 2026 Action Plan:
 1. Monthly 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 2026 IAA Annual Conference. **Completed via Scott Polster.**
 3. Town Council appointments to expiring Board Member Terms. **Completed 2/9/26.**
 4. Board Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary Appointments. **Completed 1/26/26.**
 5. Update the Approved /Unapproved Species List. **Completed 6-15-26.**
 6. Organize an annual Arbor Day Event. **Completed 4-25-26.**
 7. Participate in Park Pride Day. **Completed 4-25-26**
 8. 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.
 9. Secure 1 or 2 expert speakers per year for community educational sessions on pertinent topics. **Completed 4-25-26.**

10. Attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and NWI Urban Waters Partnership to maintain community relations and become aware of urban forestry grants.
11. Recruit new Board Members for terms ending in January 2027.
12. Renew application for Tree City USA recognition before December 31, 2026.

Next Meeting: Monday, October 19, 2026.

Adjournment: Arlene Sandrick made a motion to adjourn at 7:24 pm. Mary Ann Brunt seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Respectfully submitted,
J.T. Mackey, Secretary