

**Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting (Convened Electronically/Hybrid)
Twenty-Ninth Town Council of Highland
Monday, November 14, 2022**

The Twenty-Ninth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, November 14, 2022**, at 6:30 O'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

*This meeting was convened as both an in person and an electronic meeting. Some persons were participating remotely on a Zoom platform that allowed for real time interaction between and among all of the Town Council and supported the public's ability to observe and record the proceedings. People were able to participate in person and remotely, allowing for all councilors to be simultaneously seen and heard. When the agenda item provided for public comment, this was supported as well. Councilor Toya Smith, Councilor Mark Schocke, Councilor Tom Black, Councilor Roger Sheeman, Councilor Zemen all participated in person.

The meeting was streamed live on the Town of Highland, Indiana Facebook page and participation was supported by the Zoom on-line communication platform.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Toya Smith, Mark Schocke, Tom Black, Roger Sheeman, were present in person as indicated. The Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was present to memorialize the proceedings. *A quorum was attained.*

Officials Present: Pete Hojnicky, Metropolitan Police Chief, Pat Vassar, Metropolitan Assistant Police Chief, Ed Dabrowski, IT Director, Mark Knesek, Public Works Director were in person.

General Substance of Matters Discussed.

Discussion: Proposed wage and salary Ordinance 1774 for 2023/ Employee Handbook. The Clerk-Treasurer asked the Council for clarification on the Council's intention regarding the following:

(1) Regarding the compensation for regular part-time, non-temporary employees, seasonal, street crossing guards, fire fighters: No official action or decision was made until after the department heads were consulted but the general consensus was that the Fire Fighters would receive a \$0.25 increase from \$17.50 per hour to \$17.57 and all others a 4% increase.

(2) The Town Council advised the Clerk-Treasurer to create in Salary Ordinance 1774 to increase the number of Deputy Commander's position from 1 to 2 and they approved the Police Commission's request to fill both positions.

- (3) The Town Council advised the Clerk-Treasurer to re-instate the position of Assistant Public Works Director in Salary Ordinance 1774.
- (4) No official action or decision was made pending the effect on those employees within the Clerk-Treasurer's office who are seeking various accreditations, to remove the various accreditations. Currently there are 2 employees seeking their certifications.
- (5) The Police Commission requested a change in the overtime policy (found in the Employee Handbook) as it pertains to the Police Department. The Police Commission wants the police department overtime policy to be the same as other Town Employees. Whereas no decision or action was taken, the general consensus of the Council was to grant the request and the Clerk-Treasurer was asked to draft changes such language as it pertains to the Employee Handbook.
- (6) The Police Commission requested a change in the hours worked per day policy (found in the Employee Handbook) as it pertains to the Police Department. The Police Commission wants the police department hours worked to be the same as other Town Employees. Currently, the police department works an 8.5-hour day. Whereas no decision or action was taken, the general consensus of the Council was to grant the request and the Clerk-Treasurer was asked to draft such changes to the language as it pertains to the Employee Handbook.
- (7) The Police Commission requested a change in the comp time police for FTO's. Currently the FTO's receive a ½-hour of comp time for every day they train. The Police Commission would like to see the comp time increased from ½-hour to 1 full-hour for each day they are involved in training. This is found in the Employee Handbook. There was no general consensus on this matter, however, the Clerk-Treasurer was asked to draft such changes to the language as it pertains to the Employee Handbook.
- (8) Adding to the Employee Handbook, a section for new hire, full-time employees with multiple years of previous experience, who after successfully completing the Employees orientation period of ninety (90) day, is awarded Personal Time Off (PTO). All PTO must be used during the Employees 1st of year of employment with the Town.

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>PTO Eligibility</u>
One (1) thru the Second (2)	Four (4) days of PTO
Three (3) thru Four (4)	Eight (8) days of PTO
Five (5) or greater	Ten (10) days of PTO

Whereas no decision was made or action taken, there was general consensus of the Council to grant the request and the Clerk-Treasurer was asked to draft such changes to the language as it pertains to the Employee Handbook.

(9) Amending the Employee Handbook, reducing the number of continuous years of service an employee must have with the Town before they receive twenty-five (25) days of vacation. Currently the Employee Handbook reads, "Beginning with January 1 in the calendar year in which you celebrate twenty (20) years of continuous service you will receive twenty-five (25) days of vacation" and will be changed to read, "Beginning with January 1 in the calendar year in which you celebrate fifteen (15) years of continuous service you will receive twenty-five (25) days of vacation. Whereas no decision was made or action taken, there was general consensus of the Council to grant the request and the Clerk-Treasurer was asked to draft such changes to the language as it pertains to the Employee Handbook.

(10) Amending the Employee Handbook, as it pertains to previous municipal, county or state employment of one or more years, will be treated as continuous service after completing one (1) full consecutive year of service with the Town of Highland for all purposes where length of service affects a group employment benefit, with the exception of INPRS pensions, which is governed by state law. This will be effective for all full-time hires that occur after January 1, 2024.

The proposed change would read, " All like, full-time service of previous municipal, county or state employment of one or more years, will be treated as continuous service after completing one (1) full consecutive year of service with the Town of Highland.

DISCUSSION: ORDINANCE NO. 1772: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 12 OF THE HIGHLAND MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER WORKS BY AMENDING SECTION §12.05.120 (B) REGARDING RATES AND CHARGES, ALL PURSUANT TO I.C. 36-1-4, IC 36-1-5, IC 8-1.5-3-8.1 AND IC 8-1.5-4 ET SEQUITUR. (CANNOT BE ACTED UPON BEFORE A PUBLIC HEARING)

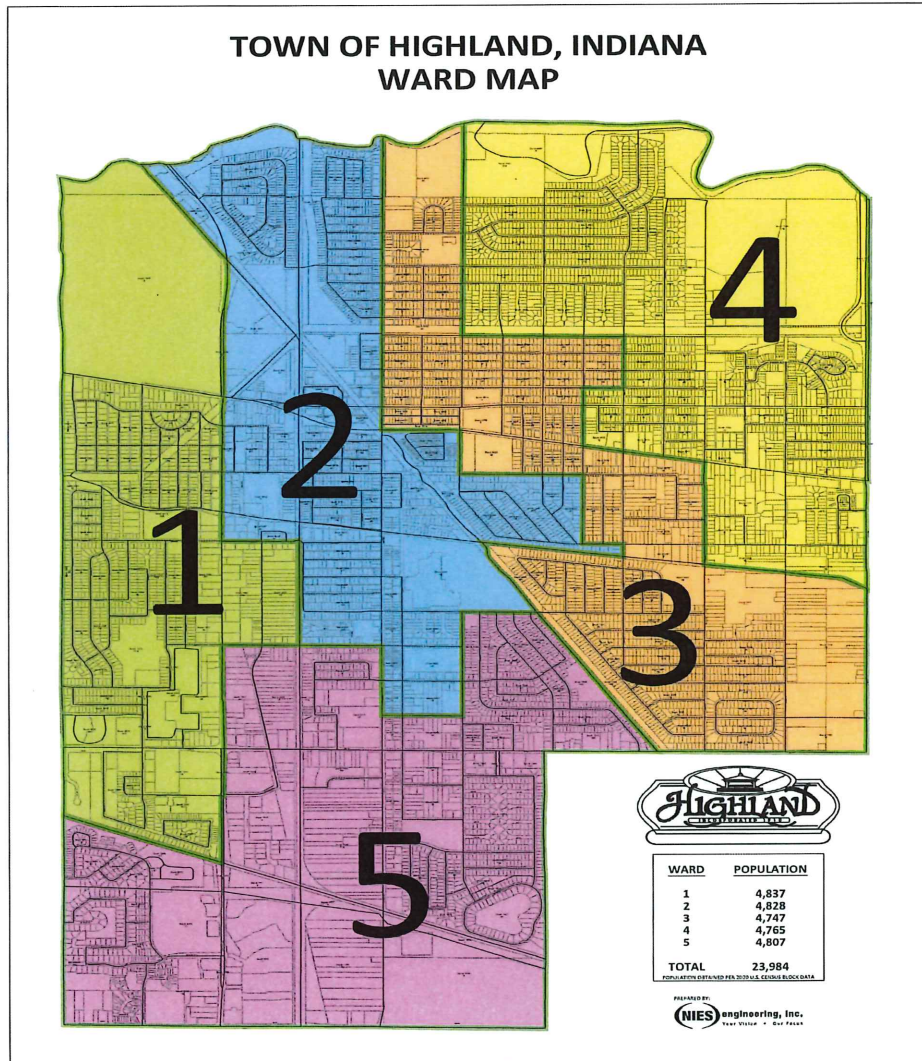
WATERWORKS BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECOMMENDS TO THE TOWN COUNCIL THESE REASONABLE, JUST, NON-DISCRIMINATORY AND REDESIGNED RATES AND CHARGES FOR THE OPERATION OF THE WATER UTILITY. AT ITS MEETING OF THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2022, THE BOARD APPROVED THESE RATES AND CHARGES CONTAINED IN THE ORDINANCE AS PROPOSED. THESE WERE DETERMINED FOLLOWING A RATE AND COST OF SERVICE STUDY. THE LAST GENERAL RATE INCREASE WAS APPROVED NOVEMBER 1990.

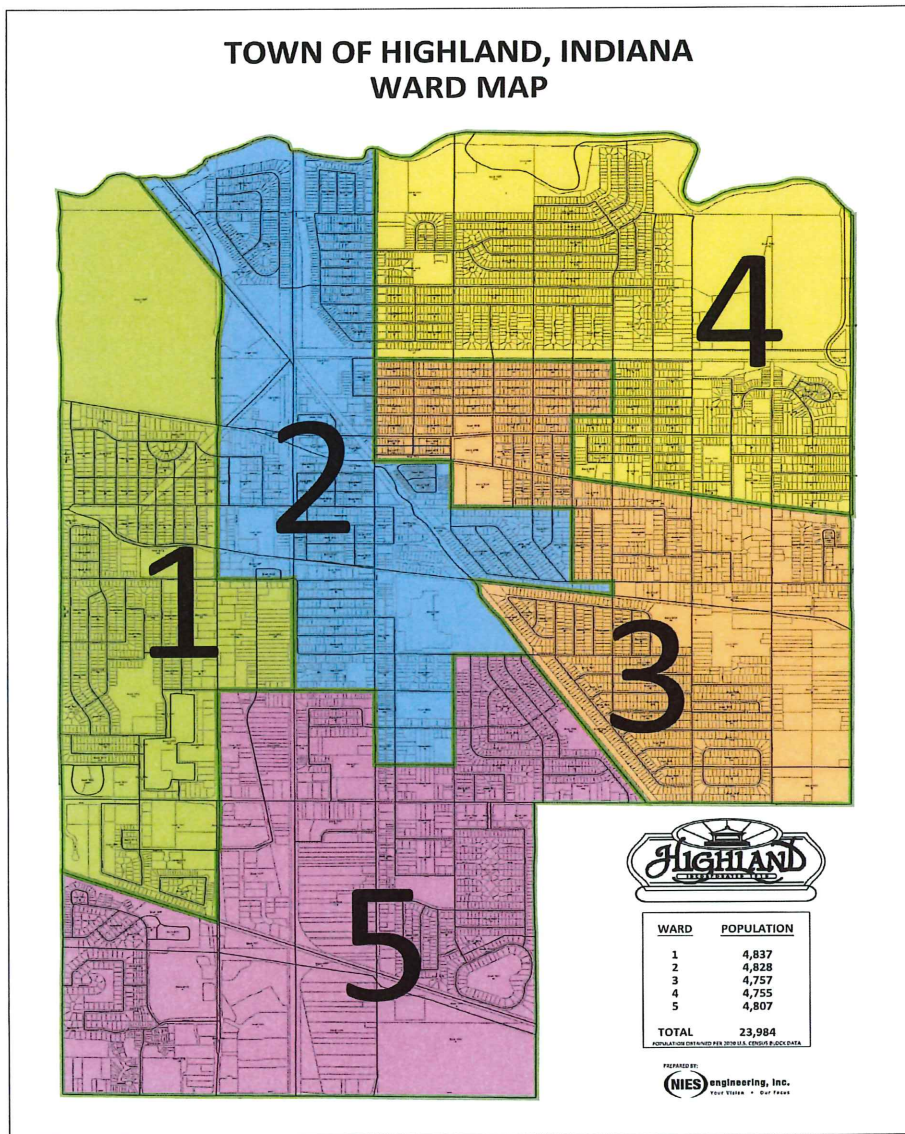
The general consensus of the Council is to approve Ordinance 1772 as submitted, with the public hearing set for December 12, 2022. There was no further discussion by the Council.

Discussion: Ordinance No. 1773: IC 36-5-2-4.1 (g)(1), provides that the Town Council of the Town of Highland, Indiana is required in 2022 to perform a reapportionment of its legislative districts, based upon the 2020 Census, but provides that the division of the legislative districts may be made in any other year;

Nies Engineering was contracted on 9/26/2022, under Works Board Order No. 2022-30, to perform professional engineering services for the 2022 Redistricting – Ward Map Update and Boundary Descriptions Project in the amount not-to-exceed \$6,900.

Derek Snyder of Nies Engineering was in attendance, at the meeting and presented 2 maps.





There was general discussion amongst the Council members but no decision made or action taken as to which map was favored. The Council asked the and the Clerk-Treasurer to have the 2 maps uploaded on to the Town's website. The maps were sent to the Idea Factory and uploaded onto the Town's website for the residents to review and comment. The Ordinance will be taken up at the December 12th, 2022 meeting.

X. Discussion: Ordinance Number 1771: An ORDINANCE CREATING A WHEEL TAX FUND AND MUNICIPAL SURTAX FUND AND IMPOSING A MOTOR VEHICLE LICENSE EXCISE SURTAX AND A MUNICIPAL WHEEL TAX ON MOTOR VEHICLES IN THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND.

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ORDINANCE 1771 WAS INTRODUCED ONLY AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF OCTOBER 10.2022.

Vehicle Types Subject to Proposed Excise Wheel Tax or Municipal Wheel Tax

Vehicle Type	Tax Type	Qty	Rates per Ordinance			Other Proposed Rates and Impact		
			Rate	Total	Notes	Rate	Total	Variance
Motorcycle	Excise Wheel Tax	819	25	20,475.00		25	20,475.00	-
Passenger	Excise Wheel Tax	18635	25	465,875.00		25	465,875.00	-
Trailer 3,000	Excise Wheel Tax	908	25	22,700.00		25	22,700.00	-
Trailer 9,000	Excise Wheel Tax	254	25	6,350.00		25	6,350.00	-
Off Road	Excise Wheel Tax	3	25	75.00		25	75.00	-
Truck 11,000	Excise Wheel Tax	3588	25	89,700.00	up to 11,000lbs?	25	89,700.00	-
Church Bus	Excluded	3	0	-	Tax Exempt	0	-	-
School Bus	Excluded	20	0	-	Tax Exempt	0	-	-
Snowmobile	Excluded	7	0	-	likely towed with Trailer	0	-	-
Watercraft 13	Excluded	79	0	-	likely towed with Trailer	0	-	-
Watercraft 26	Excluded	323	0	-	likely towed with Trailer	0	-	-
Watercraft 40	Excluded	14	0	-	likely towed with Trailer	0	-	-
Watercraft 40+	Excluded	3	0	-	likely towed with Trailer	0	-	-
Bus	Municipal Wheel Tax	4	40	160.00		40	160.00	-
Farm Truck 16,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	10	40	400.00		40	400.00	-
Farm Truck 26,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	4	40	160.00		40	160.00	-
Farm Truck 36,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	2	40	80.00		40	80.00	-
For-Hire Bus 11,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	2	40	80.00		40	80.00	-
Other Bus	Municipal Wheel Tax	2	40	80.00		40	80.00	-
RV	Municipal Wheel Tax	201	40	8,040.00		40	8,040.00	-
Semi Tractor 26,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
Semi Tractor 66,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
Semi Tractor 78,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
Semi Tractor 78,000+	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
Semi Trailer	Municipal Wheel Tax	96	40	3,840.00		40	3,840.00	-
Trailer 12,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	57	40	2,280.00		40	2,280.00	-
Trailer 16,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	23	40	920.00		40	920.00	-
Trailer 22,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	4	40	160.00		40	160.00	-
Trailer 22,000+	Municipal Wheel Tax	8	40	320.00		40	320.00	-
Truck 16,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	46	40	1,840.00		40	1,840.00	-
Truck 26,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	88	40	3,520.00		40	3,520.00	-
Truck 36,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	6	40	240.00		40	240.00	-
Truck 66,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
TRUCK 78,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	9	40	360.00		40	360.00	-
Recovery Vehicle 16,000	Municipal Wheel Tax	7	40	280.00		40	280.00	-
Recovery Vehicle 16,000+	Municipal Wheel Tax	1	40	40.00		40	40.00	-
Special Machinery	Municipal Wheel Tax	3	40	120.00		40	120.00	-
TOTAL		25,234		628,295.00			628,295.00	-

The data as provided by the State BMV and using the proposed fees in ordinance was converted into the above spreadsheet for discussion purposes. Per the ordinance, school buses, non-profit buses, trailers, municipal vehicles will be exempted out. If nothing else changes, the projected revenue to the

Town starting in 2024 would be \$628,000 annually. Per the Ordinance and requirement of the State BMV, in order to pass the Wheel Tax, the must use a transportation asset management plan approved by the Indiana Department of Transportation.

Councilor Schocke passed out the Asset Management Plan as submitted by Public Works Director Mark Knesek and approved by the Indiana Department of Transportation. He explained that all of the streets in Highland and rated based upon their condition and then placed on an excel spreadsheet and submitted to the INDOT. It goes from worst to best, with the lower numbers representing the street in the worst condition to the higher numbers which reflects streets recently paved. He proceeded to say how many streets fell within each category. He provided the data so the Council could get an idea of the current conditions of our streets and what to expect the next couple of years prior to the Council voting on the Wheel Tax. He went on to say, by looking at all the streets that have a rating of 2 or below, it looks rather nasty. He wanted the Council to have this information before making a determination.

Councilor Sheeman asked if the Clerk-Treasurer know how much the State will provide in MVH funds for next year. The Clerk-Treasurer said he did not off the top of his head but he would get that information and provide it to Councilor Schocke.

Mark Knesek said that if the Water Board proceeds with Parkway Drive (estimated \$1.3M) there won't be much money remaining to pave streets. The residents like to see paved streets. He explained that it doesn't make sense to pave a street and not replace the water main at the same time because a in years your going to have to replace the water main and tear up a perfectly good street. It makes sense to do both at once. People don't think cracks pose a problem but once water gets into the cracks and the water freezes, the cracks grow larger and your street that was a 4 quickly becomes a 2. We did 22 streets this year, all rated a 3. We have many streets in Councilor Black's district that are rated a 2 and need to be repaved.

Councilor Sheeman asked the Public Works Director how many miles of streets did we pave this year. Was it 2 or 3 or 4 miles. I know what Councilor Schocke described earlier and you right now but don't we measure streets but miles of streets. Can you take the spreadsheet that Councilor Schocke referenced and let me know how many miles of street fall under a rating of 2 and 3.

The IT Director was asked to compile those numbers during the meeting from the excel spreadsheet but there was a lock on the program which prevented him from getting the numbers.

Councilor Schocke re-emphasized that the need is significant as we want good streets and with reduction in State funding, it makes it harder to keep up with the paving requirements.

Councilor Sheeman said he is opposed to it but wants to make an educated decision so he wants to know what decreases in State funding? What is the projection for MVH for 2023? How many miles of roads fall within the categories of 2 & 3's? How many miles of roads did we do last year? How many roads we did this year?

Councilor Schocke said he is not crazy about the wheel tax but he wants to have good street.

Councilor Black said he is opposed to it. He's concerned the residents are going to say, what about all those cars and trucks who pass through Highland, using Highland's streets and aren't paying a wheel tax. What about all those cars that have Illinois plates and have not registered their cars in Highland. He said I have brought this up before about motorcycles who use the roads maybe 6 months out of the year or trailers for boats and campers which are used less but yet all are being required to pay \$25 at registration.

Councilor Sheeman says he keeps hearing complaints from residents on the number of cars with Illinois plates that drop their children off at the public schools. Think about the senior citizens on a fixed income who have 2 cars. He said he pays \$330 in fees when he registers his car and now you want me to pay an additional \$25. The State has a \$6B surplus and going up because of the rising prices of gasoline. I just don't want to keep taxing our residents. They're not going to be happy. I'm concerned about the small business with 5 or 6 trucks to operate their business and were charging them an additional \$25 per vehicle. I might consider it if we charged less.

Public Works Director Knesek said if we don't do it this year, we won't be able to do it again until 2025. The Council really needs to make a decision.

Councilor Schocke asked about a sunset provision as the ordinance said it will be revisited in 5 years. Maybe revisit it every 1 year and if we find out it doesn't work, it goes away. He said I hate taxes but I also hate crumbling streets. So given the choice between a \$25 fee and crumbling streets in disrepair, I'll pay the \$25.

Councilor Sheeman said he will check with his contacts to see if there might be money available from the State.

The Council asked the Clerk-Treasurer to find out from the BMV if the wheel tax can be adopted for 1 year increments, forcing the Council to renew the Wheel Tax annually.

Cathy Perrin began by saying I get so excited to find out that Park Forest is gonna save a million dollars over twenty years by putting solar panels on their waste water plant. Doesn't that blow your mind. I mean, it's not even just good for the earth. It's good for our budgets. I'm really excited to try to bring more sustainable ideas to Highland because I know you guys and lady are all super busy all the time and since I'm retired, I have time to surf the Internet and to find out what everybody else is doing. Michigan City just got their City declared a solar smart community which helps people get solar power. I'm thinking there's probably a lot of people in Highland who might be interested in learning about solar power. South Bend has a long history of electric vehicles. Highland recently installed charging stations. I know they weren't free but I feel if people knew about the things that are available, they would be willing to try new things. You've all seen the benefits of sustainability from the material that I sent you. It's possible to prevent damage to property and infrastructure from flooding and storms. And I don't know if anybody saw 60 minutes a couple of weeks ago of a community in Florida that was hit directly by the hurricane but the damage wasn't as severe as they had put all the utilities underground. So, when it rained and the floods came, it did not impact any houses but went through the streets and drained into retention ponds. They designed their community that way. It is cheaper to build something right the first time than having to rebuild it. Bloomington, Indiana has a sustainability commission and they are working with their local utility, telling residents what they can do to cut down on their energy bills. I know Nipsco is very eager for people to cut down on their energy bills and they have all sorts of programs that can do that. Several years ago, I had them come out and they went through my whole house and provided many helpful ideas on how to cut back on my energy consumption, things like insulation and storm windows. I think more people would be interested in learning about those programs. I went to St. Mary's Festival in Griffith and it appalled me at the amount of trash that was all over the ground. When I offered some tips, they said it was easier just to toss it on the ground and then pick up. They didn't have any recycling. It's something fairly easy to do. There's a lot of low-hanging fruit that we could do to get started and to make Highland a greener and more sustainable place to live.

Councilor Schocke said I happened be here for a Park Board meeting and I saw your group go into Tree Board Meeting and I suggested or made the suggestion to the Council, why don't we join forces or combine the Tree Board and Sustainability Commission. To me it would be a natural fit. But here you are, asking for a separate commission. Does the Tree Board not fit your mission statement?

Cathy said we met with the Tree Board and are some really fine people, doing some really good work on the Tree Board. I don't want to take anything away from the Tree Board but I think ours is different. I think we are complementary but not the same.

Councilor Schocke responded that I only did a cursory reading of the ordinance Councilor Zemen presented but I do see some overlap. For example, protect and preserve public and private trees or the enhancement and stewardship of urban forests, both public and private. I wrote a little note about coordinating the sustainability group and

the Highland Tree Board regarding any efforts concerning public or private trees or in urban forests. I would hate to have 2 boards not getting along. You guys have a different standard for trees and the Tree Board has their own standard for trees and we're gonna defer to the Tree Board. I don't want to dilute the abilities of the Tree Board. I want to support them. Maybe you would be willing to recommend to the Tree Board the planting of wild or native trees. At this point, I thank you for coming but if your unwilling to change some of your language in the ordinance, its not worth discussing anymore, as we have a lot on our plate.

Donna Zemen said, I don't know if Bernie told you but this year we grew 9 pumpkins in our backyard. I'm pretty happy about that and we grew a bunch of tomatoes, which we ended up canning some of them. It's a fun thing. I'm looking forward to doing certain things in my home, like using rain barrels. I plan on having my gutters run into them.

Councilor Sheeman said he made a couple of notes and had a question for you. The ordinance mentions tracking annual progress of long-range goals, as well, as broad sustainability metrics. Then basically, a report is written and emailed to the Town Council and the President and then the next thing is to apply for federal, state and local private grants. These all sound wonderful. The question I have is, who is actually doing the report writing. Do you need a staff? Is there going to be a proposed department head because I can tell you right now that it sounds great but it is very time intensive. Are you, as a volunteer group going to put that together? Are you planning on having support staff here in the town help?

Cathy Perrin responded, we are volunteers. This is very important to us. This is important to the future of our children, our grandchildren, and we are willing to put in the work to get this accomplished. If you would like to give us staff, I would happily take staff, but I figured that was not an option, so I figured that we would be doing this this kind of work.

Councilor Schocke said when it deals with the Federal and State and local grants, I know some of our boards and commissions have their own grant people, like Redevelopment or Police. Maybe Redevelopment would be willing to work with you on grants as it relates to solar power or maybe even native planting. I'm really a big believer in collaboration. I don't want to fight with people. For example, the HCCE, they put together all of these things in Town like the parade and the Main Square Festivals. But in order to do that, they are overseen by the Park Board because they have a professional staff to make sure everything is in order. Would you foresee some type of professional, department head kind of person taking this group under their wings or would you prefer to go on your own? He said to John Reed that this strikes me almost as a Civic Foundation.

John Reed said it can run independently of the Town. Any funding that it would get from grants or donations would not be a line item in a budget. It would not have any sort of tax levy or effect the Town's tax rate. It would operate entirely on grants and the donations or funds collected. It would be independent of an appointing authority and

ultimately would have the ability to spend the money that it collects in the way they choose because it is not tax dollars. They would run independently.

Councilor Sheeman said our Department Heads are stretched about as far as you are going to stretch people. Because it doesn't have a tax levy associated with it, I suppose as long as the Council is comfortable with the language and what authority it has over it as you wouldn't want a rogue commission to have the ability to invest or do things under the Town flag that are contrary to the other purposes of the Town. In this regard, it would hard to see a conflict like that but that doesn't mean it can't happen or become problematic. A lot of times, we put boards and commissions under various departments. For example, planning and BZA fall under the building department. Traffic Safety falls under the Police department. It is probably best to do this with this group because they would get more individual attention. Looking at the second paragraph down, under purpose, it says it's establishment, purpose and intent to promote growth, management and land use planning which basically falls under the Plan Commission and potentially the BZA. Those Boards are governed by state law and not local laws. . Just put all that under, you know, planning and zoning, and leave it. It would probably better to do it this way, because things get more individual attention than they would get otherwise.

Councilor Schocke said if you scroll down the document to part E, Inter-government Cooperation, it states that all boards, councils, commissions and department of government of the Town of Highland are directed to give full cooperation to the Town of Highland's Commission on Sustainability. You'll note that I crossed that off as we can't have that. I love the idea of solar energy but if you guys came to us and said, Hey, by the way, we're going to cut off from Nipsco and we're going to put up solar panels. And by the way, that's going to cost twenty million dollars. I'd be like, whoa guys, I appreciate where you're coming from. but yikes, that's a lot of money and I don't think that's realistic to set up our own grid, at least not in this century. Rather, I would like you to come to the Council saying, we found some information or grants that you might find useful. I not be in a position to be dictated to. The ordinance mentions the development of short term and long-range goals. Do you have any of those goals in mind.

Cathy Perrin responded that a few weeks ago, we went to see Republic Recycling. We went on a field trip to go see what they were doing. It was an astonishing to see the amount of stuff that is thrown away. I would really like to do something like some sort of a recycling fest and coordinate with possibly the Park Board. Bring people together and have some fun activities by tie it in with learning, showing them what kind of things are recyclable. I've recycling for years and after the field trip found trip that some of the items I was recycling couldn't be recycled and we tossed in the land fill. . I would really like to educate people and have fun at the same time. Republic said they use to sort at the curb but it became to costly. Now, they simply pick up whatever is at the curb and bring it here to sort.

Councilor Schocke responded, I am all for what you do. I think sustainability is great. I'm not sure it should become part of the government of Highland. I tend to agree with Mr. Reed that it's probably best as a civic organization, who from time to time, can come

before this body and make suggestions. I'm not sure about incorporating it as a commission or a board in the Town. We can't tell people you can't drive your car or tell people they have to install solar panels. It would have to be voluntary.

Jean Bernius responded that it seems like the Council is struggling over so many ideas that we have. Perhaps if we gave the Council more specifics ideas were involved in, like a climate control action plan. This is all voluntary, as a commission, we don't have any power. We can't make laws and don't have a big budget but what we're trying to do is educate and persuade.

Councilor Smith responded, I get what you are trying to do or saying and I like it but the language needs to be cleaned up because for me to make a sound decision, I have to be able to know what I'm making a decision on and right now the decision is kind of like all over the place. I think you have to narrow this down because the way it is written, its almost like here's a bunch of squares and check off which ones you like and leave blank the ones you don't. Maybe use bullet points to make it more succinct.

Mary Hackett asked if any of the Council had seen a recent article in the Times. It was a great story on greenhouse gas and one of the goals of the Sustainability Commission is to have a sustainability commission in each of the localities.

Councilor Sheeman asked if he could ask a couple of questions and please forgive my ignorance as I just don't know what some of this stuff is, so maybe you can help me. The words sound nice but I don't know what they mean. What is environmental justice? There's another section talks about advocating for environmental justice principles and all the commission's work to ensure equity and a fair equity for all of the Town's resident regardless of age, race, ethnicity, creed, religion, sex, gender identity. It all sounds wonderful, you know equality but I don't know what environment justice is and what does it have to do with equality.

Cathy Perrin gave an example as they are probably not going to put a dump in my backyard or yours but there are places where people don't have a voice and they do put those kind of things in their back yards. That's what we are fighting against in Hobart. We are fighting against the putting in of a truck terminal. Residents are saying we don't want that here. The same with putting some industry across from a school. We want to make sure that everybody is treated equally. They are taking advantage of the poor neighborhoods or poor communities.

Councilor Schocke said it is like a quasi-zoning in nature. No one would like a meat packing company in their backyard but those folks in the lower income sections, have more of a chance of a meat packing plant in their back yard. I need to read up on it a little more so I can educate myself a little better because I'm asking you cold questions. I took a note hear, collaborate with municipal staff to draft new or amended policies to further the sustainability in to the commission. What type of policies would you suggest for our Town?

Cathy Perrin responded that the police department, for example is already doing a fine job of recycling with the drug collection. You're collecting the drugs at the police station and keeping them out of the water supply. Maybe you need a little recycling center here in Town or at the Town Hall or Lincoln Center. Maybe we could form a co-op and give presentations on solar power. Maybe several neighbors could go together and do a group buy to save costs on solar material. We're trying to reduce 2 of our carbon emissions from municipal vehicles over the next two years.

Rory Kosior said she is a college student, majoring in public affairs with a concentration in environmental policy and wanted to know how she could get her hands on the ordinance so she could help fix the language. She felt the biggest issue was control and being forced to cooperate with the advice. We are not asking for additional appropriations but it would be nice if the Town could reimburse members for conference fees, travel expenses and being given a per diem to cover daily expenses. The Sustainability Commission would have to pre-approve.

Council Zemen thanked everyone for coming and it appears the overall consensus appears that the ordinance needed to be tightened up, as well as, their ideas. Attorney Reed and Cathy Perrin will exchange e-mails. He offered to place it on the study session in 2 weeks.

Cathy Perrin thanked the Council for the opportunity to discuss the details of the Sustainability Commission. The Council provided much food for thought and they will work on tightening up the language. She also provided a definition of Environmental Justice from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Environmental Justice at the Department of Energy

Environmental justice is actually a principal of American democracy that combines civil rights with environmental protection. It demands that those who have historically been excluded from environmental decision making, traditionally minority, low-income, and American Indian and Alaska Native communities, have the same access to environmental decision makers, decision-making processes, and the ability to make reasoned contributions to decision-making processes as any other individuals.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE, or Department) is committed to environmental justice. We take it seriously. It is a Department-wide activity with Department-wide responsibility. Fair treatment is how we conduct business at DOE. Several of the Department's Operating Principals memorialize this commitment. We endeavor in all we do to treat people with the dignity and respect they deserve, while keeping our commitments and ensuring safe, secure, and environmentally responsible operations. Meaningful involvement requires that our stakeholders have a working knowledge of the subject matter under discussion, as well as the process for conducting the discussion. In order to be productive participants, all stakeholders must be versed in the subject matter and understand the rules of the process. Otherwise, their participation will not be meaningful.

Memorandum of Meeting
Monday, November 14, 2022