

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Town of Highland Tree Board**  
**January 19, 2023**

1. Time and Place of Meeting: Chair Jim Colias called the monthly meeting of the Tree Board to order at 7:08 PM at Town Hall.
2. Roll Call:  
Present: Board Members Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski, Joan Roback and Richard Underkofler.  
Absent: Board Members Bernie Zemen, Blane Roberts, Elizabeth Herrejon, other invited employees of the Town and agencies.
3. General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided - record of all votes taken by individual members if there is a roll call:
  - Joan Roback moved to approve minutes of the meeting held October 20, 2022, seconded by Ron Jackowski and approved by unanimous consent of the members in attendance. The November meeting was canceled for lack of a quorum when the Zoom portion could not be accessed by Colias, Herrejon and Roberts. A meeting was not held in December 2022.
4. Old Business:
  - a. Expiration of Board Member Terms: The terms of Jim Colias, Ron Jackowski and Elizabeth Herrejon expired on the first Monday in January. The members of the board serve until a successor is appointed. *Jim Colias and Ron Jackowski seek reappointment to a 3-year term expiring in 2026. Elizabeth Herrejon from the High School Sustainability Club is succeeded by Natalie Stromberg for a 1-year term that expires in January 2024.*
  - b. Student Conservation Association (SCA) Plantings: Funding for SCA plantings is provided from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Chi-Cal Rivers Fund; its grant funding has been approved again for 2022. *We failed to suggest Fall 2022 SCA planting locations. Ron Jackowski suggested identifying streets where there are many open planting sites due to removal of dead trees; then surveying the homeowners to inquire if they are willing to water and care for a replacement tree as we completed for Sandalwood Subdivision and Highway Avenue.*
  - c. CommuniTree 2022 Plantings: Funding for the CommuniTree Grant Program is made possible through a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant awarded to the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission by the USDA Forest Service. The Street Department collected 19 trees September 29 for planting this Fall: Redbud (7); Red Twig Dogwood (5); Serviceberry (6); American Linden (1). All but the Linden are low growing species. *Public Works Operations Director Tim Gembala submitted the Fall 2022 Planting Location Inventory Sheet. It showed four homeowners pledged to plant and water trees in their front yards where there were utility conflicts or insufficient space in parkways.*
  - d. Transplanting Trees: The weather is now too cold to transplant more Jackowski nursery trees. We will plan to plant them in 2023; replacing dead trees at Merkley School, in parkways, and street medians; and planting new trees in yard locations requested by Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen.

- e. Tree Health Seminar: An October 19th session scheduled at Highland Library for a presentation by Arborist Sharon Anderson of Evans Tree Service of Hobart about how to help trees survive drought conditions was postponed due to a death in the Anderson family. *Jim Colias reported the session will be rescheduled March 22 or 29 with notice in the Gazebo Highland Newsletter and the Board's Facebook site.*
- f. Tree classes for Elementary Students: Jim Colias was coordinating with Rebecca Koetz, Purdue Lake County Extension Educator, to lead classes on a single day at Our Lady of Grace and Highland Christian School. *Principal Mark Topp reported a class did not occur at OLG, nor was he contacted to cancel or postpone it. Jim Colias reported he will attempt to reschedule.*
4. New Business:
- a. 2022 Tree City USA Application: The Town of Highland's application was submitted December 30, 2022. Jacob Roos [jroos@dnr.IN.gov] has been appointed successor to Carrie Tauscher as the Division of Forestry's Community and Urban Forestry Coordinator.
- b. Indiana Arborist Association Conference: The IAA Annual Conference will be held at the Indianapolis Marriott East from Jan 24 to Jan 26. Rich Underkofler is leaving Jan 23 for the first day of the Urban Forestry Program and will be returning home Jan 24 should anyone desire to accompany him. Registration information has been emailed to board members, public works, parks and recreation leaders. Ron Jackowski expressed interest.
- c. 2023 Arbor Day Event: Jim Colias volunteered to manage Highland's April 28, 2023 Arbor Day Event potentially at Highland Christian School.
- d. 2023 Plantings: Jim Colias will renew a Facebook post seeking locations for new tree plantings from homeowners willing to pledge they will water and care for them for at least 3 years.
- e. Multi-Community Collaboration: Upon receiving the agenda for this month's meeting Drew Hart of the Forest Service sent this email to the Tree Board; Highland Community Foundation; Heather Oaks, High School Sustainability Club Sponsor; Ty Hillemonds, Middle School Science Club Sponsor; and Rebecca Koetz, Purdue Lake County Extension Educator. "I wanted to share with you and the Tree Board that the US Forest Service has an unprecedented funding opportunity to provide funding for tree plantings, tree maintenance and tree removals. The CommuniTree program will be working with the State Forester and the IDNR Community and Urban Forestry program to assist in allocating these funds. We would be interested to know if the Town of Highland would be interested in partnering with other municipalities in this endeavor. We should have more information by the end of this week, and the turnaround time for submitting a proposal is quite tight. If interested, we can set up a meeting with town officials and members of the Tree Board to hear your ideas, as well as to share some of the CommuniTree programs' goals."
- Underkofler replied, "Highland would certainly participate!"
  - Rebecca Koetz replied, "If people are open to a collaborative project, I know the Lake County CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) would be interested in pursuing

funding for an invasive plant exchange. Lake County residents could bring in proof that they removed an invasive tree or shrub and receive a native replacement. Is this something the group would be interested in pursuing? If so I can loop in our CISMA leader-Mandi.”

- Underkofler will attempt to schedule a meeting of interested parties.
5. 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.
- At our February meeting, Board members will be asked to discuss an update our work plan for the next three years.
6. Next Meeting: February 16, 2023
7. Adjournment:
- The meeting ended at 8:03 PM on a motion of Roback, second by Roberts and approved by unanimous consent of the members in attendance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Underkofler', written over a horizontal line.

Richard Underkofler, Secretary