

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will be held at 7:00 PM, Thursday, February 16, 2023 at Town Hall. There will be no Zoom access to this meeting.

Richard Underkofler
Secretary

**Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, February 16, 2022 – 7 PM**

Roll Call:

Board Members: James Colias, Ron Jackowski, Joan Roback, Blane Roberts, Natalie Stromberg, Richard Underkofler, Bernie Zemen.

Invited Town Staff: Mark Herak, Clerk/Treasurer; Mark Knesek, Public Works Director; Tim Gembala, Public Works Operations Director; Alex Brown, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Department; Trever Kinley, Parks Director.

Others: webupdates@theideafactory.us.com c/o Theresa Badovich; Lance Ryskamp, Highland Community Foundation; Heather Oaks, Teacher/Sponsor Highland High School Sustainability Club; T. Hillegonds, Teacher/Sponsor Highland Middle School Science Club; Drew Hart, USDA, Forest Service; Samuel Vergara, The Student Conservation Association; Jennifer Birchfield, NIRPC; Rebecca Koetz, Lake County Extension Agent.

Minutes: Request for a motion to approve minutes of the last meeting held January 19, 2023.

Old Business:

- a. Board Member Terms: On January 23rd 2023, the Town Council nominated and President Tom Black reappointed Jim Colias and Ron Jackowski to 3-year terms expiring the first Monday in January 2026. *Although Natalie Stromberg of the High School Sustainability Club expressed interest, her application to the board has not been received. Council President Tom Black postponed action on a chairperson appointment awaiting a recommendation of the board.*
 - b. CommuniTree Spring 2023 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. NIRPC is now accepting applications for Spring 2023 tree planting through the CommuniTree Grant Program. Communities can apply to receive quality 1+ inch caliper native trees to plant and maintain in public spaces. *Applications are due March 10th. Doris Bauer has requested replacement of four trees at 10032 Wildwood Lane; Jim Sweeney requested replacement of one tree at 10020 Wildwood Lane. Jim Colias is requested to post notice on our Facebook site that homeowner requests will be received by Public Works Operations Director Tim Gembala until March 8, 2023.*
 - c. Transplanting Trees: The weather is now too cold to transplant more Jackowski nursery trees. We will plan to replace dead trees in parkways, street medians, Merkley School; and plant new trees requested by Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen in the Spring.
 - d. Tree Health Seminar: An October 19, 2022 session scheduled at Highland Library for a presentation by Arborist Sharon Anderson 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 29 with notice in the Gazebo Highland Newsletter and the Board's Facebook site.*
 - e. Tree classes for Elementary Students: Jim Colias is 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.
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- f. 2022 Tree City USA Application: The Town of Highland's application was submitted December 30, 2022. Notice should be received by Arbor Day whether the application has been approved.
- g. Indiana Arborist Association Conference: Jackowski and Underkofler will report on their participation the first day of the Urban Forestry Program at the IAA Annual Conference Jan 24, 2023 in Indianapolis. Both became 2023 members of the Association.
- h. 2023 Arbor Day Event: Colias will report on work in progress for Highland's April 28, 2023 Arbor Day Event at Highland Christian School.

New Business:

- a. Federal Inflation Reduction Act Funding: Letter of Support & Proposal to the Indiana DNR for a Highland Urban & Community Forestry Project. Highland's proposed project would retain a consultant firm to update Highland's Urban Forest Management & Reforestation Plan. The plan was initially completed in 2017 by Graf Tree Care, now Great Lakes Urban Forestry Management. It needs an update to verify trees removed and planted since 2017 in Highland's ESRI ARC-GIS data management system. The update would identify invasive species, trees now dead, and those that need substantial pruning together with a reforestation component. The Purdue Lake County Extension Service and Lake County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area would be collaborative partners for replacing invasive species with native species from NIRPC's CommuniTree Inventory. Volunteers from Highland Community Foundation, the Highland Neighbors for Sustainability Organization, students from the High School Sustainability Club and Middle School Science Club would be asked to participate in the project for educational training. The project scope would occur over 5 years. A proposed project budget and schedule is attached.
- b. Update Board Action Plan: The 4-Year Plan approved November 2019 is attached for reference.

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.

Next Meeting: March 16, 2023.

Adjournment