

The monthly meeting of the Town of Highland Tree Board will be held at 7:00 PM, Thursday, April 20, 2023 in the second-floor meeting room at Town Hall. There will be no Zoom access to this meeting.

Richard Underkofler
Secretary

**Highland Tree Board Agenda for Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 20, 2022 – 7 PM**

Roll Call:

Board Members: James Colias, Elizabeth Herrejon, Ron Jackowski, Joan Roback, Blane Roberts, Richard Underkofler, Bernie Zemen, Sarah Beagle, Prospective Board Member (sarah.e.brack@gmail.com)

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; Doug Van Ramshorst, 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; Connie Wachala, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability; Joe Keefnir, President, Park Place Townhome Homeowners Association (jek1202@gmail.com)

Minutes: Request for a motion to approve minutes of the last meeting held March 16, 2023.

Old Business:

a. Board Member Terms: Elizabeth Herrejon serves until her successor is appointed. An invitation was sent to Sarah Beagle to apply for succeeding Elizabeth. Sarah helped Arborist Sharon Anderson with the March 29 Library community presentation, "Preparing your trees for Spring and Drought Recovery".

b. Board Suggestions to Park Place Townhome Homeowners Association. Joe Keefnir, President of the HOA attended the last meeting asking for suggestions about issues along the 5th Street side of the Townhomes. Shade trees are impairing healthy lawn growth, and the roots prevent replacement of the irrigation system so that piping has been installed above ground. A tree service suggested removing the trees and replacing them with narrow columnar trees. Chair Jim Colias visited the site and put his thoughts into an email which he sent to Kyle Daniel the Nursery & Landscape Specialist at Purdue University.

"There are a lot of new cultivars of columnar trees which would work well in this location, but the price for moving the mature trees would be significant. Removing the stumps and the root system will be a major task. Expect around \$1,500 per tree including stump grinding. Grind out enough of the stumps to plant something else in that spot. In the process the parkway grass and the irrigation system is likely to suffer significant damage. The irrigation will likely need to be re-installed if the existing trees and stumps are removed. With the buildings blocking the afternoon sun and living on a street that is heavily salted in the winter, the grass is not in great condition. If the trees are removed and new turf is installed, you will likely be in the same place in two to three years. Unless the grass is intensively managed, this is not the best location for grass. I think it could potentially be a nice turf, but it will require a lot of maintenance. I suggest soil testing, aerating and over-seeding the lawn. Be sure to have a fertilization program that fits. In addition, consider the planting of ground cover around the base of each tree.

"I would give up trying to grow grass in this location if the existing trees are kept. I would recommend a

groundcover to be planted. Some potential groundcovers include: liriopse, creeping juniper (*Juniperus conferta* is very salt tolerant), bearberry, ice plant, creeping thyme, creeping phlox, and pachysandra. All of these should do well in that area.”

c. 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. On April 18th, Ron Jackowski, Blane Roberts, Jamie Paul (Blane’s Neighbor) and Underkofler attended a tree care & planting workshop at NIRPC led by Jen Birchfield, NIPSCO’s Andrea Nichols and Drew Hart of the Forest Service. After the 3-hour session, Kevin Rudy and a street department colleague picked up 20 trees: Yellow Birch (2), River Birch (2), Pagoda Dogwood (5), Sweet Bay Magnolia (5), Black Gum Tupelo (1) and Chinquapin Oak (5). Roberts sent a subsequent email requesting a Magnolia at 8842 Branton and a Chinquapin Oak for Jamie Paul at 8838 Branton.

d. Transplanting Trees: On Sunday, April 2nd, a crew consisting of Jackowski, Underkofler, Roberts, Colias with truck assisted by Donna Zemen, Connie Wachala, Carlos Alberto, Jean Bernius and 6 other members of Highland Neighbors for Sustainability worked for 3 hours transplanting four trees from the Jackowski nursery. Dead trees were replaced at the Merkley and Warren Schools, in the Parish Avenue Median and in the Parkway on the southside of Highway Avenue near the intersection of Parish Avenue. Next are 4 more planting sites at White Oak Park, in the Boulevard Estates Median on 44th Street and trees requested at the Herrejon and Zemen homes.

e. 2023 Arbor Day Event: The event will begin at 2:30 pm, April 28, 2023 on the front lawn at Highland Christian School. State Senator Dan Dernulc, State Representative Mike Andrade and Town Council President Tom Black accepted speaker invitations. A proclamation has been prepared by Clerk-Treasurer Mark Herak to be read by Tom Black. Rebecca Koetz, Purdue Lake County Extension Educator, will speak about Urban Agriculture & Home Horticulture Services provided by Purdue Extension Services. NIPSCO donated its “Right Tree, Right Place, Right Way” pamphlets for student distribution. The Indiana Department of Forestry Nursery offered to provide a Shingle Oak Tree for campus planting and Pecan seedlings for distribution to the students. There will be two grades outside for the program - Kindergarten and 1st Grade. 1st graders will be planting the tree; the kindergarten class is tagging along for the program, but the connection is to the 1st grade curriculum. A tentative program is attached.

New Business:

- a. Park Pride Day: Two members of the Tree Board are registered to participate in this event at Main Square Park, Saturday, April 22nd from 9-11 am. Bring gloves, rakes and meet at Main Square Park. Spend the morning cleaning up the park and receive a T-shirt and free lunch at noon.
- b. Transplanting Trees: Schedule a mutually acceptable date to plant the four remaining Jackowski nursery trees.
- c. Update Board Action Plan: The Board may review, change and update the 2023 Action Plan.

January 2023 – December 2023

1. Seek Town Council appointments to update expiring Board Member terms – Done 1/23/23.
2. Become a member of the Indiana Arborist Association and participate in the IAA Annual Conference – Done 1/24/23 by Jackowski and Underkofler.
3. Cancel Board Meetings in July and December - Done 2/16/23.
4. Secure 1-2 speakers per year for educational sessions on pertinent topics. A first community

- presentation was held at Highland Library 3/29/23 – Assigned to Colias.
5. From the approximately dozen Jackowski nursery trees, secure utility locates and replace dead trees at the Merkley and Warren Schools, in parkways and street medians; plant new trees in yard locations requested by Elizabeth Herrejon and Bernie Zemen - Assigned to a weekend crew consisting of Jackowski, Underkofler, Roberts, Zemen and Colias with truck with help from Highland Neighbors for Sustainability – 9 trees completed by 4/2/23.
 6. Update Unapproved / Approved Species List with photos of recommended tree species – Assigned to Jackowski (Last done for unapproved species 9/6/22).
 7. Identify streets where there are open planting sites due to removal of dead trees; then survey the homeowners to inquire if they are willing to water and care for a replacement tree – Assigned to Roberts as lead with Roback for survey.
 8. Decide on events in which we will participate to acquaint the community of our endeavors, identify homeowner planting sites, recruit volunteers: Park Pride Day, Farmer’s Market, Fourth of July Festival, Fall Festival - Assigned to Roback as Lead.
 9. Maintain community partnerships with Parks, Public Works, Schools, Town Council, NIRPC, NIPSCO, Chamber of Commerce & Highland Businesses – Assigned to Roberts as Lead.
 10. Apply for available grants and keep a running tally of trees that we procure – Assigned to Underkofler.
 11. Update the tree inventory for tree removals, pruning and new plantings. See Underkofler’s Federal Inflation Reduction Act Funding Proposal.
 12. Renew Arbor Day Foundation membership and share new ideas from this participation – Underkofler’s membership expires 8/1/23.
 13. Organize, in participation with local organizations, an annual Arbor Day Observance - Assigned to Colias at Highland Christian School 4/28/23.
 14. Post a Tree of the Month & Tree Care Tips on the Board's Facebook Site - Assigned to Colias.
 15. Periodic review of ordinances that need updating – Assigned to Underkofler
 16. Annual idea sharing, new ideas to keep Board moving forward – All Board Members.
 17. Establish a list of goals/accomplishments/key facts and publish in a media release to Gazebo Express, NWI Times and WJOB – Assigned to Underkofler.
 18. Review the Action Plan and make any adjustments to assure commitment to goals and objectives of plan for the next year – Assigned to Underkofler.
 19. Renew application for Tree City USA before December 31 – Assigned to Underkofler.

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: May 18, 2023.

Adjournment