

**Highland Tree Board  
Agenda for Regular Meeting  
Monday, May 18, 2026 – 6:30 PM  
Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln St**

**Roll Call:**

**Board Members:**

Chair Blane Roberts	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2028
Secretary JT Mackey	Executive Appointment	1/1/2024 – 1/1/2027
Mary Ann Brunt	Executive Appointment	1/1/2024 – 1/1/2027
Teresa Lekan	Executive Appointment	1/1/2026 – 1/1/2029
Scott Polster	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2028
Arlene Sandrick	Executive Appointment	1/1/2025 -1/1/2028
David Taylor	Executive Appointment	1/1/2026 - 1/1/2029
Alex Robertson	Town Council’s Board Liaison	1/1/2025 – 1/1/2026

**Invited Town Staff:** George Georgeff, Council President; Mark Herak, Clerk/Treasurer; Mark Kneseck, Public Works Director; Tim Gembala, Public Works Operations Director; Tim Diamond, Superintendent, Parks & Recreation Department; Trever Kinley, Parks Director; Maria Becerra, Redevelopment Director; Webupdates@theideafactory.us.com c/o Theresa Badovich & Robin Carlascio.

**Others:** Richard Underkofler, Ron Jackowski, Doug Van Ramshorst, Highland Community Foundation; Drew Hart, USDA, Forest Service; Jennifer Birchfield, NIRPC; Rebecca Koetz, Lake County Purdue Extension Educator; Connie Wachala, Cathy Perrin, Highland Neighbors for Sustainability; Mélina Blanc, Delta Institute; Phil Graf, Great Lakes Urban Forest Management; Joe Moore, Erosion Construction Services; Dan Repay, Little Calumet River Basin Commission; Mike Repay, Lake County Commissioner;

**Minutes:** A motion is requested to approve the minutes of a meeting held April 20, 2026. A copy is distributed with this agenda.

**Old Business:**

- **Role of Highland Tree Board Committee. (10 Minutes)** The Committee met on February 26 and shared minutes with Board members. At the March 16 Tree Board meeting, members expressed interest in reviewing the list of approved and unapproved lists in order to make a recommendation to the Town Council. Blane Roberts shared an existing list via email on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Ron sent an email on 4/4 with a summary comparison of the different lists and considerations for the Board. The Tree Board shall review and make recommendations.

At the April Board meeting, Town Council Liaison Robertson recommended revising the list of approved and unapproved tree species to incorporate the categories in the municipal code. By doing so would avoid making substantial changes to the code and ensure existing structure and references remain intact.

Blane volunteered to incorporate the recommendations into existing list.

- **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project (5 Minutes).** Tree Board continues to discuss opportunity to replant the seedling project after unsuccessful 2025 planting. Joe Moore who served as the contractor for 2025 planting, joined the March meeting around 6:45 to answer questions and discuss opportunities for redoing the project. From Joe’s perspective the seedlings were removed by wildlife. Joe Moore is willing to reorder trees from the state nursery. He recommends reconvening in late 2026 to order trees from the nursery for planting in 2027.

Tree Board members expressed interest to walk the project location and continue discussing best trees for planting

- **Arbor Day/ Park Pride Celebration (7 minutes).** Tree Board celebrated Arbor Day as part of the Park Clean Up Day on April 25. Following cleanup activities, the Tree Board hosted a tree planting to honor Rich Underkofler and feature a tree care discussion with an arborist from Great Lakes Urban Forestry. Council President Georgeff read a proclamation celebrating Arbor Day and a separate proclamation honoring Rich. Mary Ann Brunt sent Indiana DNR poster contest information to area schools.
- **CommuniTree-Spring 2026 Community Tree Grant Program (2 minutes).** The Tree Board applied for a grant in February and was approved for 10 trees (4 American Hornbeams; 3 Hackberry; 1 Scarlet Oak; 2 Northern Catalpa). The Trees were distributed to 9 community residents the week of April 20. Residents received a Tree Care Manual from USDA and tips for planting. Approximately 10 other residents are interested in receiving a tree.

**New Business:**

- a. No new topics identified.

**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.

- 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.
  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.
  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, June 15, 2026.

Adjournment