

Meeting Minutes
Town of Highland Tree Board
Monday, June 15, 2026

The agenda for this meeting listed the Board Members, whether they are executive or legislative appointments and their terms of office as required by a new state statute.

Time and Place of Meeting: Chair Blane Roberts called the monthly meeting of the Tree Board to order at 6:33 PM in a meeting room at the Lincoln Community Center.

Roll Call

Present: Board Members: Mary Ann Brunt, Secretary JT Mackey, Teresa Lekan, Scott Polster, Chair Blane Roberts, and Arlene Sandrick.

Additional guests present: Ron Jackowski

Absent: David Taylor, Council Liaison Alex Robertson, and other agencies.

General substance of matters proposed, discussed, or decided – record of all votes taken if there is a roll call.

- Mary Ann Brunt made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held May 18, 2026. Scott Polster seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Old Business:

- **Role of Highland Tree Board Committee.** 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 31st. 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 solicited the support of Great Lakes Urban Forestry to review the list. They recommended adding burning bush (shrub) and honey suckle (shrub) as items to

the invasive list. Teresa recommended striking Rose of Sharon from shrubs list and striking hedge amor maple from street tree list. Scott recommend added European black alder to the invasive list.

Following discussion, Mary Ann made a motion to recommend the Town Council update the lists in the Highland Municipal Code based on the Tree Board's review. Seconded by Scott and approved by unanimous consent.

Following the meeting, the lists were shared with Alex Robertson to share with the Town Council.

- **Little Calumet River South Watershed Seedling Project.** 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.

Ron Jackowski shared he found several plum and hickory trees trying to grow from previous planting. He also found several shingle oak and swamp white oak saplings growing naturally. Tree Board members made a plan to tour the site on June 22 at 6 PM to see previous plantings and discuss thoughts on future project. During discussion, Tree Board members remain divided on scope of future project and what to plant.

New Business:

- **July Meeting Decision.** In prior years, Tree Board members have decided to not hold a July meeting. Tree board members agreed to reconvene in August.

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.

Ron shared an ongoing issue with community trees being damaged by town landscaping crews. He brought the issue to Brian Bell at Public Works and encourages Tree Board members to raise the issue as well.

Tree Board members expressed interest in learning how the Town has used the tree inventory.

- 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 **1-15-26 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. Participate in Town Twilight Parade.
9. 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.
10. Secure 1 or 2 expert speakers per year for community educational sessions on pertinent topics.
11. Attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and NWI Urban Waters Partnership to maintain community relations and become aware of urban forestry grants.
12. Recruit new Board Members for terms ending in January 2027.
13. Renew application for Tree City USA recognition before December 31, 2026.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 17, 2026.

Adjournment: Mary Ann Brunt made a motion to adjourn at 7:56 pm. Teresa Lekan seconded the motion. Approved by unanimous consent of the members present.

Respectfully submitted,
J.T. Mackey, Secretary