

Enrolled Memorandum of the Meeting
Study Session/Meeting (In person)
Thirtieth Town Council of Highland
Monday, September 28, 2026

The Thirtieth Town Council of the Town of Highland, Lake County, Indiana met in a study session on **Monday, September 28, 2026**, at 8:00 o'clock P.M., in the regular place, the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana.

****Pursuant to Enrolled House Bill 1167**, this meeting is convened as an in person meeting and live streamed to the Town of Highland Facebook. Facebook permits the public to observe and record the proceedings but allows no interaction between and among the Town Council and members of the public. The public is able to participate in person. If you are in the audience and unwilling to be recorded and live streamed, we ask you to depart the meeting now, otherwise your continued presence is your consent to be recorded and live streamed.

*All Councilors were simultaneously seen and heard. Councilor George Georgeff, Councilor Doug Turich, Councilor Alex Robertson, Councilor Tom Black all participated in person. Councilor Scheeringa was absent.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors George Georgeff, Doug Turich, Alex Robertson, Tom Black were present in person as indicated. Councilor Philip Scheeringa was absent. Clerk-Treasurer, Mark Herak was present to memorialize the proceedings. *A quorum was attained.*

Officials Present: IT Director Ed Dabrowski, Redevelopment Director Maria Becerra, Fire Chief Glenn Schlessler, Metropolitan Police Ralph Potesta and Park Superintendent Mindi Ray were in person.

x. Discussion: Appointments. None

Unless otherwise noted, all terms expire on the 1st Monday in January 2026 and or until a successor is appointed or qualified, not exceeding ninety (90) days.

• Statutory Boards and Commissions

Executive Appointments (May be made in meeting or at another time)

• Regional Statutory Appointments

Home Rule Commissions or Boards

• Legislative Appointments

• Regional Statutory Appointments

• Home Rule Commissions or Boards

Place Holders should the Council decide to take up:

1. **Main Street Bureau Board:** (17) appointments to be made by the Town Council.
Term: Two years ending 1 Jan 2027. *Currently only 8 of 17 appointed.*
(Note: Current Appointees are: Diane Barr-Roumbus, James Roumbus, Sandy McKnight, Al Simmons, Sandy Ray, Ben Tomera, and Desiree Biro, term ending 1st Monday January 2027). Term is for two (2) years.

These are placeholders and will remain until passed or advised to remove from the agenda.

- x. Discussion: **Proposed Ordinance No. 1852:** An Ordinance amending the Highland Municipal Code, by adding to Title 10 Vehicles and Traffic, a new Chapter 10.50 to by styled Electric Bicycles ("E-Bikes") and Electric Scooters ("E-Scooters")

The Town Council, at its Plenary Meeting of September 28, 2026, decided to put Ordinance No. 1852 on hold. Councilor Turich agreed to chair a sub-committee, reaching out to neighboring communities to see if uniform ordinance could be used in all of the neighboring communities.

- x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. 1857: An Ordinance to Prohibit the Commercial Use of Public Records from Electronic Data Storage Systems.
(Attorney Reed to review)

Attorney Reed had to leave the meeting prior to discussion of Ordinance No. 1857, as he was travelling to Indianapolis for a IURC hearing in the morning.

- x. Discussion: Proposed Works Board Order No. 2026-22: An Order authorizing and approving an Agreement between Medium Shot Media and the Town of Highland to perform Professional Communications and Media Support Services for the Municipality.

This will be taken up once the agreement with Medium Shot Media is approved.

- x. Discussion: Agreement with Medium Shot Media
(Attorney Reed to review)

Attorney Reed had to leave the meeting prior to discussion of the Agreement with Medium Shot Media, as he was travelling to Indianapolis for a IURC hearing in the morning.

- x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance Number 1842-F: An Ordinance to amend Ordinance No. 1842 to establish the Wage and Salary Rates of the Elected Officers, the Non-Elected Officers, and the Employees of the Town of Highland, Indiana particularly creating a Residency Stipend Provision in the Highland Works Department (Agency), the

Information Communication Technology Department and the Highland Fire Department. *(introduced at the 9/28/2028 meeting)*

The Clerk-Treasurer asked clarification from the Council if they wanted to make Ordinance No. 1842-F retro to January 1, 2026. The Council said they wanted it retro to January 1, 2026.

x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. 1845: An Ordinance to Amend the Compensation, Benefits and Personnel Program of the Municipality, to be known as the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance commonly known as the Employee Handbook, particularly creating a Residency Stipend Provision in the Public Works Department (Agency), the Information Communication Technology Department and the Highland Fire Department. *(introduced at the 9/28/2028 meeting)*

The Clerk-Treasurer asked clarification from the Council if they wanted to make Ordinance No. 1845 retro to January 1, 2026. The Council said they wanted it retro to January 1, 2026.

x. Discussion: **Proposed Ordinance No. 1842-G: An Ordinance** to amend Ordinance No. 1842 to establish the Wage and Salary Rates of the Elected Officers, the Non-Elected Officers, and the Employees of the Town of Highland, Indiana particularly modifying the compensation package as it pertains to the Chief of the Department. *(introduced at the 9/28/2026)*

The Clerk-Treasurer informed the Council that the effective date of Ordinance No. 1842-G has been retro to the start of the first pay period after his degree was conferred on June 26, 2026.

x. Discussion: **Proposed Ordinance No. 1854-A: An Ordinance** to Amend the Compensation, Benefits and Personnel Program of the Municipality, to be known as the Compensation and Benefits Ordinance Commonly known as the Employee Handbook, Pursuant to IC 36-1-3 and other Relevant Statutes. (making the Fire Chief eligible to receive overtime payments in lieu of comp time for work in excess of 50 hours per week, without express written permission of the President or Chair of the relevant Board of Jurisdiction. *(introduced at the 9/28/2026)*

The Clerk-Treasurer informed the Council that the effective date of Ordinance No. 1854-A has been retro to the start of the first pay period after the Town Council approved his contract on May 11, 2026.

x. Discussion: Proposed Ordinance No. 1839 – Violations Bureau Payable Fines
*can be considered once the fines are determined for e-bikes and e-scooters.

With the delay of Ordinance No. 1852, the Clerk-Treasurer asked the Council to consider Ordinance No. 1839 without the provisions of the E-Bike and E-Scooter. The Council concurred.

x. Discussion: Lamar Grant of License Agreement
(Attorney Reed in discussion with Shawn Pettit of Lamar Advertising)

Attorney Reed had to leave the meeting prior to discussion of the Lamar Grant of License Agreement, as he was travelling to Indianapolis for a IURC hearing in the morning.

x. Discussion: Chapter 15.55 Flood Control Damage
Building area would be counted as grass type of surface for storm water runoff. Would this only apply to PUD's?

Councilor Georgeff began by saying part of the discussion we had last week with the grocer was the fact was whether they were going to keep the existing building or if they were going to tear the existing down and build new. One of the issues is the stormwater retention requirements. If they were to tear the existing building down, they would have to be required to do stormwater retention for the entire footprint. He said he thought we had talked about giving credit for existing buildings and any additional stormwater they would add, that runoff, the developer would have to provide additional stormwater retention. He said he had a brief discussion with Dan Repay of the Little Calumet River Basin Commission. Mr. Repay told Councilor Georgeff he didn't think the Little Calumet River Basin Commission would have any opposition to our proposed changes, as long as the project doesn't put any more stormwater into the system than currently. He said the project at Second and Ridge Road was the same situation. The difference is that they were going to be putting an addition, which would require them to provide additional stormwater retention.

Attorney Reed said he was thinking of making an amendment just saying, starting out with a 10,000 square foot building, and a 30,000 square foot impermeable parking lot, whatever you tear down and replace, rebuild or remodel, you won't have to create additional stormwater retention for the existing 10,000 and the 30, 000 because they were already there and already accounted for the stormwater runoff.

Councilor Georgeff felt it was crazy money requiring an already developed site to put in underground storage to hold water. He thought that would have a chilling effect on any new development.

The Clerk-Treasurer said the public works director and town engineer asked that anyone who wanted to utilize this amendment, should submit the project as a PUD because the developer would be required to supply more engineering data.

Councilor Georgeff said the PUD process is not without its difficulties and they take a long time to do it. He said we should talk to the Little Calumet River Basin and see if they are good without restricting it to a PUD. He said we want to encourage development and not discourage it. He said in the case of the Ultra building, if they had

to put in additional stormwater retention, they would most likely have to buy additional land or put a smaller building and we don't want either one of those things but if we gave them credit for the existing building that's there, they'll build a new building and the assessed value is going to be so much more on that property.

Councilor Turich asked how much of the existing building would have to remain versus having to do a full demo?

Councilor Georgeff said even if they demoed the entire building, he's saying there is no distinction between a 10,000 square foot building, whether new, remodeled or demoed. I think even if they demoed it, I'm replacing 10,000 feet with 10,000 feet.

Attorney Reed said regardless of new or a PUD, in a 100 year rain event, a lot of property will be affected and in a 200 year rain event, everything is going to flood.

Councilor Georgeff said he wants to make sure the Little Calumet River Basin is fine with it. Dan Repay told Councilor Georgeff that he didn't see a problem with it considering the proximity to the highway and the drainage ditches already in place, which should make the stormwater move faster and easier.

Councilor Robertson said he would like to see future developments reviewed on a case by case basis, instead of saying blanket as we're not going to really improve our flood control with this proposal and might worsen it. He said maybe put a dollar amount on the improvement. If you are doing an improvement and its valued at x, if it is above a certain amount, you will be required to go to the Plan Commission for a site review.

Councilor Georgeff asked Attorney Reed to prepare a rough draft and bounce it off the Little Calumet River Basin. He said he thought they had a meeting every third Wednesday, as he said there are 2 projects on the agenda, Garber and Victory and the developer of the old tri-state coach site. Councilor Georgeff felt the Tri-State Coach project, they will have to add additional retention considering the size of the existing building.

Before Attorney Reed left to go to Indianapolis, Councilor Robertson asked about a letter for the developer of the old Tri-State Coach as he is looking for assistance with the service road and lighting. He thought he might be looking for a letter of commitment from the Redevelopment Commission because we had talked about those items.

Attorney Reed said he would write something up based upon the data Derek Snyder provided.

x. Discussion: Chapter 9.55 Nuisances

Weeds in excess of 10" and that unlawfully interferes with and obstructs or tends to obstruct or render dangerous for passage vs native plants which help to protect and restore biodiversity

Councilor Georgeff began by asking IT Director Ed Dabrowski to put up pictures of the house he was referring to. He continued that he was contacted by Code Enforcement Officer Carl Porter about the house in question, as the weeds and grass in the front yard were extremely tall (a copy of Carl's email was attached to the Town Council's Study Session Meeting Packet). He then said to Councilor Robertson, you told the code enforcement to stop writing a citation and you would propose an amendment to the ordinance. Councilor Georgeff said he was fine with the amendment but he wanted the Council to see what we are allowing under the current ordinance. He wanted feedback from the Council if they are willing to pursuing it or not.

Councilor Robertson said as the ordinance is written, what does the resident have to do to be in compliance.

Councilor Georgeff said reduce the height of the grass and weeds to under ten (10) inches to four (4) inches.

Councilor Robertson asked, in the parkway or the entire front yard?

Councilor Georgeff said the parkway.

Councilor Robertson said he knows that everything in the parkway and front lawn was planted with an intention. He said he knows the resident does go through that habitat and removes the invasive plants and only keeps certain species. I know it might look a little chaotic, but there is intention, so he would like to see her or other residents have that sort of landscaping in their front lawn, maybe with some guidelines that we can all agree on, rather than just saying, hey, chop it all down.

Councilor Georgeff said he's not interested in allowing what he calls them weeds. He said one the residents of the residents in that neighborhood almost hit her, pulling out of her driveway the other day. Councilor Georgeff said that was when this was brought to his attention.

Councilor Robertson said he felt the story was a little exaggerated as the grass is not 10 feet in height and he said what about the other areas in Town, including land owned by the Town that are higher. He said there are at least three (3) other homes in the Town that are doing the same thing. He said if you are going to be enforcing them here, what about on Kennedy Avenue by St. James or Boulevard Estates or on Lincoln Street. He suggested if we take the native grass that is in the parkway transplant to some other area in the lawn and put some type of decorative concrete or some other edging and put the

native plants in it like other landscaping or maybe in a flower box, would that satisfy the Council?

Councilor Turich said there are weeds in the driveway but if you look behind the parkway, the lawn is manicured.

Councilor Robertson asked if the resident flipped it and the parkway was manicured and the native grasses were placed in defined areas in the front lawn, would be acceptable to the Council?

Councilor Georgeff said it wouldn't be to him, as he has a neighbor three doors down that does the same thing and he realizes that it is helping pollinating insects and birds. He said it is not only in the parkway but the entire front yard. If he was ever to go and sell his house, do you think anyone would buy it with the way his neighbor's yard looks?

Councilor Robertson asked if a border or something with curb appeal was added, would that be a happy medium to the Council?

Councilor Turich said he's going back to what Councilor Robertson said and he's not wrong. He said next year, we're bringing in a landscaping company because we as a town admit the park department doesn't do a very good job of manicuring and keeping up with our own weeds and then we go and enforce it on somebody else. He said it is challenging because as he walked up to tonight's meeting and he saw all the weeds and clumps of grass in the Town Hall lawn, we need to get our own property in line before we start citing someone else's property. Councilor Robertson said a happy medium would be to have it very clearly defined with some architectural bricks or landscaping rocks, with the native grass in it but is not overtaking the lawn.

Councilor Georgeff said he doesn't want everyone in town to quick mowing their grass.

Councilor Robertson said he would like to get rid of more grass along the parkways. He said it does present a bit of a hazard, especially down Kennedy Avenue, with people that need to mow that close to traffic and then you end up with clippings out in the road. That's a hazard for motorcycles.

Councilor Turich agreed with Councilor Robertson, particularly down Kennedy Avenue. Get rid of the grass along Kennedy Avenue and other major arteries and put brick or concrete or something else in its place. He said he knows that's part of the Redevelopment plan.

Councilor Robertson gave an example of a house by the school administration building. It has some pine trees and brick around them. He said he doesn't think it was approved to go in that way or it's not conforming, so like you have on Grand, do you have them rip that out?

Councilor Georgeff said he thought we need to keep the parkway ordinance but enforce but if Councilor Robertson, wants to draft something, bring it to the Council and let's review it.

Councilor Robertson said are you are going to do selective enforcement? What about all the property the Town owns that is not in compliance?

x. Discussion: Preliminary discussion of the 2027 budget
(introduced at the 9/28/2026)

The Council agreed to allow the Clerk-Treasurer to review the 2027 budget and make sure the departments comply with a 6% growth in medical insurance and a 2% raise in salaries.

Plenary Business Meeting of Monday October 12, 2026

- Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, September 28, 2026.
- Accounts Payable Voucher
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