



NAPPANEE TREE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Date, Time & Location:

Monday, February 2, 2026 — 5:00 P.M.
Council Chambers, City Hall, 300 W. Lincoln St.

Board Members:*

Abbot Martin • Donnie Aleo • Steve Gall

Meeting Agenda:

1. **Call to Order**
 - a. **Call to order:** Called to order by President Abbot Martin at 5:00 pm
2. **Roll Call**
 - a. **Present:** Abbot Martin, Donny Aleo
 - b. **Absent:** Steve Gall
 - c. **Also Present:** Crystal Reinhard, Tree Board Liaison, Vern Hochstetler, Forester, and Mark Collins, City of Nappanee Director of Redevelopment,
3. **Approval of the Minutes from January 5, 2025**
 - a. **Motion:** To approve the minutes of the January 5, 2025, meeting as printed.
 - b. **Action:** Donny Aleo moved, Abbot Martin seconded, and approved unanimously 2-0.
4. **Petitions and Comments by Citizens**
 - a. None
5. **Unfinished Business**
 - a. None
6. **New Business**
 - a. **Downtown Redevelopment - Tree Removals and Inspections**
 - i. **Background:** The Board reviewed trees located within the downtown redevelopment project area, where multiple properties are being acquired for future redevelopment and planned green space. As part of a property sale contingency, property owner Larry Mullet requested removal of a specific tree located in the public right-of-way just south of 252 W. Lincoln Street, with the intent of retaining the wood for personal use. Mark Collins also requested that City Forester Vern Hochstetler inspect all trees on the property, and Nate Yoder to do any maintenance or removal work on the trees, with Redevelopment covering the cost.

*Please visit nappanee.in.gov for board member appointment and term details

- ii. **Discussion:** The Board discussed the request, noting the long-term redevelopment plans, preservation of remaining healthy trees in the right-of-way, and future replanting opportunities. It was clarified that redevelopment funds would cover costs associated with removal and inspection. The Board also discussed the condition of other trees in the area, including one tree already scheduled for removal due to poor condition.
- iii. **Motion:** To approve removal of the tree located in the right-of-way just south of 252 W. Lincoln Street as part of the downtown redevelopment project.
- iv. **Action:** Abbot Martin moved, Donny Aleo seconded, and approved unanimously 2-0.

b. Haney Drive Planned Development – Tree Species Review

- i. **Background:** The Board reviewed a request from a developer for guidance on tree species for the planned Haney Drive residential development, consisting of approximately 80 lots. The proposal includes planting one tree per lot and additional trees along roadways, within a seven-foot tree lawn. The developer requested recommendations for smaller species due to sidewalk, utility, and infrastructure considerations and will cover all planting costs.
- ii. **Discussion:** The Board discussed the importance of balancing smaller ornamental trees with larger canopy trees where utilities and site conditions allow, emphasizing long-term canopy benefits, species diversity, and avoidance of monoculture plantings. Members noted concerns regarding reduced canopy coverage, long-term maintenance costs, and tree longevity if only small species are used. The Board agreed that planting should consider utility locations, site grading, and phasing of development to protect tree health. The Board reviewed the currently approved small-tree species list, which includes Eastern Redbud and Prairie Fire Crabapple. Members discussed adding additional species, including White Dogwood, and agreed on the need for variety.
- iii. **Consensus Direction:** The Board agreed to develop a recommended list consisting of three canopy tree species and three ornamental/small tree species to provide flexibility and diversity. Crystal Reinhard will follow up with the City Planner regarding any deadlines and will solicit input from absent Board Member Steve Gall. The Board anticipates formalizing the species list at the March 2026 meeting or earlier if required.

c. Tree Maintenance

- i. **Discussion:** City Forester Vern Hochstetler asked whether the Board wished to proceed with canopy raising and trimming of recently planted trees once weather conditions improve.
- ii. **Consensus Direction:** The Board agreed that trimming and canopy raising should be completed to prepare trees for the upcoming growing season.

7. Adjournment

- a. **Motion:** To adjourn the meeting
- b. **Action:** Donny Aleo motioned, Abbot Martin seconded, motion carried unanimously 2-0.
- c. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 5:24 PM

Abbot Martin, President

Steve Gall, Vice President