

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Board

18 January 2017

Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 18 January 2017 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. Attendees were, Susan MiHalo, Sue Adams, Jim Biancotti, and John Morris. Also present as guests were Doug Cannon and Chelsea Overholt.

Jim moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 16 November 2017. John seconded. The motion carried.

With regard to the potential shipment of petcoke to the Port of Indiana for transshipment, no new information is available. It is not known whether there still are plans to do this.

Sue Adams gave an update on the recent Dark Skies meeting. She had made a presentation to the Town Council, but since then, the task force has learned that NIPSCO plans to retrofit the streetlamps of the regional communities by 2022. They supposedly sent a letter these communities, but Ogden Dunes did not receive it; neither did Beverly Shores. When Sue reviewed a copy of the letter, it contained very little information. Apparently, all lamps will be fitted with 4000 kelvin LEDs, whereas the Dark Skies Initiative limits that to 3000. The brighter LEDs are hard on aging eyes, and bad for wildlife. Susan suggested banding together with Beverly Shores, Dune Acres, and NPS to have a united front for the lower strength LEDs, either the 3000 or 2700 kelvin units. A joint letter from these entities could be sent to NIPSCO. Sue will contact Beverly Shores and Susan will contact the National Lakeshore. Sue said she was shunted around when talking to NIPSCO, but was never told about, or put in contact with, Steve Barker, the environmental officer for NIPSCO. Susan will contact him. One suggestion was to put our town at the bottom of the list to give us more time to respond. Also, some areas in town have too many lights. Sue estimated that **approximately 15** of the 89 streetlights in town are unnecessary. One-on-one conversations with residents affected by these lights could be done to remove some of these offending lights. Lights at Indiana American Water **should be fully shielded; they** could be reduced, as well. Contacting them through the water board was recommended. It is possible that the water filtration plant be used as the demonstration project. Regarding residential lighting, **there may be resistance to changing out existing fixtures**. A draft ordinance was put forth, which would not be retroactive, but comments to Sue were requested by 1 February 2017. The draft would then be given to the Code Review Board for action. For action by the Town Council, Sue will prepare a fact sheet to be emailed to the council members, and they can then be invited to an ODEAB meeting for discussion.

Long Lake Marsh phragmites are still a problem. Susan can't tell if the last spray has been effective as it was done late in the fall.

Susan hasn't heard back from IDEM about the 2017 Beach Grant, so we don't know if the 5 of 7 day option was selected. *Enterococcus* cannot be used in place of *E. coli* as a measurement of contamination to speed the determination, since the State and Federal standards still use *E. coli*. The Chicago Park District was reported to be using *Enterococcus* next year, so some residents may ask.

There is nothing new on MS4 exemption.

The Septic System Coordination Workgroup meeting is now run by **Sharon Partidge**, as Doreen Carey has retired. **Nathanael Pilla is heading a "Septic System Education and Outreach Grant Project"**. One proposal was to have 5 year professional inspections of septic systems. **LaPorte County has instituted an inspection program**. They found 23 failed systems, or 5% of the total inspected. The State is still working on a relationship with the realtor's association, to better inform buyers and sellers of their responsibilities with regard to septic systems. The next meeting is 26 January 2017. Jim plans to attend.

The recycling flyers were included in the water bills out to residents this month. There are other efforts that can be made to improve recycling. The attendees were asked to look at the America Recycles Day web page for ideas. There was much discussion again about the film (Number 4), which includes plastic shopping bags, newspaper sleeves, bread bags, etc. Any attempt to have in-town collection would require attention by the person in charge. Current diversion rate is in the mid-30% range, but whether that includes leaves and branches is uncertain. Jim will ask Ben Newton if he has figures.

The beach cleanup in September was very successful, with many families participating. We plan to do it again this year.

For monitoring industries, the IDEM workers in Valparaiso need to be notified to come up to observe directly. The worst pollution occurs on the weekend.

There will be no meeting in February, unless something important comes up.

John moved to adjourn and Sue seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.