

Minutes
Environmental Advisory Board
19 February 2020
Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 19 February 2020 at 5:30 pm at the Ogden Dunes Town Hall. Attendees were, Susan MiHalo, Jim Biancotti, Kristine Sandrick, Vicky Albritton, Sue Adams, and John Morris.

Vicky moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 15 January 2020. Jim seconded. The motion carried.

The board needs to find a replacement for Chelsea Overholt. Jim will contact Paul Panther to see if he is interested.

The fish kill which was reported last weekend in the Little Calumet River may be attributed to natural causes. The affected fish are shad, which are susceptible to abrupt changes in temperature. Dan Plath of NPS said that even so, fish tissue samples are being analyzed for toxic compounds. Susan contacted Mike Teeling, and Indiana American Water shifted the intake to Gary through an abundance of caution. A question is whether IDEM contacted IAW.

Sue had a question about the status of legislation being considered in the Indiana Senate, SB73. This would strip the ability to report a problem at a facility anonymously. The IDEM web site would not accept such a report unless the name and address of the person making the report were filled in. It had been reported that this bill had been killed in committee, but Sue will verify this.

Susan relayed notes from Save the Dunes from a meeting on 14 February 2020 following up on the Arcelor Mittal spill in August 2019. This meeting discussed responses by the community, and from legislators, including the two senators from Illinois. The Isaac Walton League prepared a suggested letter to be presented to Bruno Pigot of IDEM and the USEPA Regional Administrator, with ccs to several Indiana legislators. One of the most noteworthy suggestions is an increase in staffing levels for IDEM. The response by Arcelor Mittal was also presented. The response to the lawsuit by ELPC will be given by the end of this month.

As mentioned last month, Beverly Shores is hosting a speaker series, notably Howard Learner of the ELPC on Sunday 23 February 2020 at 1 pm. Ogden Dunes residents may attend.

Jim mentioned from his review of the NPDES permit for Arcelor Mittal, the usage of fresh water in the blast furnace recycling system is limited only by the total suspended solids limitations, with a 7000 lb average, but a 24500 lb daily max, so it is just limited for a short time, 3 days, before returning to normal operation.

The standard operating procedures (SOPs) for three Street Department operations, municipal recycling, compost, and used oil handling, were reviewed. These SOPs were generated in 2006, and needed serious revision. The adoption dates were missing in all. Names of specific personnel of companies shall be changed to titles of positions or contracted function. Battery recycling is now in a receptacle by the mailbox. The County performs pickup. Printer cartridges are not picked up by the Girl Scouts, but various retail establishments will accept them. CDs and floppy disks are probably not recyclable. There was a question as to who brings the trash and recycling bins to the curb on pickup day. Kristine will talk to Doug Cannon and Mark Juszcak about this. Also, the town is not getting monthly reports about percentage recycled. Sue will contact Jim Metros of Republic to find out why.

The SOP for the compost site mentions resident registration for leaf pickup, but all residents now pay as part of the water and sanitation bill. We need to check if the procedures are still followed. Kristine will ask when she contacts Mark. Also, are the reports of waste reduction to the state being completed?

For the SOP for used oil, it must be determined if these procedures are still followed or is the equipment being maintained off-site.

Jim did not attend the Septic Workgroup. He will not be available in March, Sue will attend.

There is no news on the MS4 exemption. Jim did raise an issue of cleaning the drains. Susan mentioned that Jim Mathys did purchase a vacuum for that purpose, but she didn't know how recently it had been used.

With the loss of shoreline due to beach erosion, there was a question whether any septic systems are on the lake side for houses on Shore Drive. Currently, there is no data collected on this, but the septic work group is tasked with getting this information. If septic systems are impacted by high lake levels, lack of shelf ice, and subsequent erosion, that would be an impact to infrastructure as well as to the environment.

Sue reported that three lights had been changed by NIPSCO from high pressure sodium vapor to LEDs. Two on Ogden Road were changed to 4000 K LEDs, and were changed back after we alerted NIPSCO about resident complaints. Another, at Lupine and Woodland appears to be 3000 K. The scheduled changeout is for 2021. Portage is slated to get all 4000 K lights. Sue will alert Mayor Sue Lynch. Sue will ask for an LED (3000 K) at Diana and Hillcrest, near the Firehouse, so all residents have a chance to see the future.

Susan does not have a response yet from IDEM on the beach grant for next year's beach sampling.

Because several members will be out of town in March, there will be no meeting.

Sue moved to adjourn and Jim seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.