

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Board

17 May 2017

Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 17 May 2017 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. Attendees were, Susan MiHalo, Kristine Sandrick, Doug Cannon, Chelsea Overholt, and John Morris.

Doug moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 19 April 2017. Chelsea seconded. The motion carried.

Thanks were given to Doug for wrapping wire mesh around several trees at Long Lake Marsh to protect them from beaver.

In light of the recent spill of hexavalent chromium at the US Steel Midwest plant, Susan and John attended a presentation hosted by the Valparaiso Chain of Lakes Watershed Group, in which Valparaiso University professors Julia Peller and Christopher Iceman discussed hexavalent chromium and its environmental effects. While trying not to be too technical in light of the general audience, they tried to make the point that manufacture of consumer products entails use of highly toxic chemicals, and the pattern of our consumption of those products drives the use of the toxins in the processes. They did discuss the chemistry in that hexavalent chromium, a toxin and carcinogen reacts with many things in the environment, changing the state to trivalent chromium, an essential nutrient. They fielded questions from the attendees, but not all questions were answered. In the back and forth, Susan did tell the audience that we (ODEAB) reviewed permits for nearby industries when they are up for renewal. She also met Sam Henderson, who is an environmental lawyer, who discussed launching a citizen suit as a last resort.

A letter was prepared by Susan for Tim Nelson's signature to be addressed to the US EPA, asking the town to be considered stakeholders in any action taken against US Steel. In addition to water sampling, it was requested that analysis of the sand be conducted, to see if any hexavalent chromium had bound to the sand for later release. This testing should be conducted through Labor Day

Plans for the Memorial Day include Kristine, and possibly Chelsea, setting up the tents and chairs. Susan has obtained an enviroscape to show how a watershed works. A supply of water is needed for this. Kristine will have a sign, and materials on recycling will be available. We are still not sure if the Lions Club is using the non-recyclable beer cups. The beach testing can also be talked about. Susan will supply talking points for all to use.

There is no new information on the potential shipment of petcoke.

Regarding Dark Skies, Kristine said the workgroup is brainstorming for a new name, but many members have been out of town. Sue Adams is still trying to meet with NIPSCO, and still has not heard back from Indiana American Water. The Planning Commission has kicked back the proposed ordinance to the workgroup. Kristine is working on a flyer, which she will pass on to Doug for art work.

For Long Lake Marsh, a workday is needed when the water levels recede for trash pickup and to spray phragmites, which are now spreading by seed from the untreated area by the water plant.

The 2017 Beach Grant has been signed by Tim Nelson electronically. This year, sampling will be conducted 7 days a week. Susan needs to know if Karen Berrier need help with the signs, and the street department is in flux. Karen also needs to monitor daily rainfall, and John may need to back her up.

There is nothing new on MS4 exemption.

Susan was a presenter on the EPA Septic Webinar, along with state employees from Washington and Alaska.

The beach cleanup will be 16 September. Susan will be out of town, so Chelsea and Kristine volunteered to take the lead. Ideas to build on last year's success in getting participation by families included finding sand sifters to get more plastic bits and other small items.

We need to find out what permits are up for renewal. John will search the virtual file cabinet for answers.

The budget was discussed. If federal money is no longer available for beach monitoring, how much would be needed to ask for one day per week? Lab analysis alone would be \$555 for one sample 15 weeks. Two samples for each end of the beach would be double that, plus payment for collection and transport. Should we ask the town for this money? Money for phragmites control in Long Lake Marsh is currently \$100 per

year, but more needs to be done. The grant under which we conducted the restoration promised maintenance for 20 years. The Dark Skies brochure is under \$200, and a member of the workgroup promised to defray the cost.

Chelsea moved to adjourn and Kristine seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.