

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Board

18 November 2015

Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 18 November 2015 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. Attendees were Sue MiHalo, John Morris, Jim Biancotti, Bob Cattani, Kristine Sandrick, Susan Adams, Paul Panther, and Tom Clouser.

Jim moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 16 September 2015, and for the meeting on 21 October 2015 for which no quorum was obtained. The motion carried.

For the MS4 exemption, Jim has a .pdf file of the previous application, which he intends to convert to Word.

No one has heard of a meeting of the Septic System Coordination Work Group. During Septic Awareness Week, someone suggested contacting the various septic companies to see if they would be interested in offering discounts during that week. The main concern was the possibility of getting realtors involved. At minimum, they could alert the buyers that the property does not have sewer, but a septic system. Including certification of the septic system in the home inspection might add significant cost. Jim will look at the LaPorte County ordinance, which is an operating permit, to be renewed after 5 years. Sue will check with Jeff Benson of Beverly Shores about his attempt to get a town ordinance on septic.

Recycling is hanging at about 30% diversion. The greatest problem appears to be education, particularly with regard to placing recyclables in bags within the bin. Susan said a suggestion was made by Jenifer Wilson for a plastic bag and film recycling in town, most likely on Street Department property. Then comes the question of who manages it, and where does it go? Jim said his film generated at the food pantry is taken to Walmart which has its own program. Susan proposed looking at what are the objectives of the board for this problem in a logic model using a group exercise in the January meeting.

In Long Lake Marsh, Sue was worried that the controlled burn conducted on 15 November 2015 burned too much at ground level, but in any case a cleanup of woody invasives needs to be scheduled in the winter.

The beach testing grant needs to be approved by the Town Council at the December meeting so it can be sent to IDEM by 11 December. Sue needs to contact Gary MSD to see if the testing fees have gone up. She is also investigating if Microbac could do the sampling, although we would have to specify sampling per our SOP, and a more expeditious reporting of results to Karen Berrier than in our previous experience with them. Jim will investigate another company that tested at the mill.

There is nothing new on crude oil trains, save that DOT is going ahead with the propose rule despite comments.

Regarding Dark Skies, Susan Adams met with the Bells in Beverly Shores. She did say NIPSCO would not inventory the street lights for us, although Tom said he try to get the Street Department to do it, but they are busy now with the leaves. She has been trying to reconcile the bill with a map from NIPSCO. Although we are billed for 89 lights, she estimates there are 60-70 the she can find. She will need assistance to complete this. To do the conversion would be about \$13000, but NIPSCO is also talking about replacing the sodium vapor lights with LEDs, which would be bad if the side scatter isn't eliminated, and the brilliant white light is worse for glare. If the lights must be changed, make both changes simultaneously. Still, the money must be raised. Susan wanted to get some grant money and pursue an education and fundraising campaign to augment grant funds. Then the issue of private lights was raised, with no easy solution.

Susan was interested in nearby industries. There was discussion of graphite dispersed into town from one of them. Jim provided candidate industries for some of the pollutants, and potential causes of some of the noise complaints. There was discussion of placement of monitors, and Sue said she heard a monitor was moved in Whiting. She will investigate the circumstances.

Other business concerned organizing a succession plan, and appointing one or more vice-chairs to distribute some of the load. We will also look at what are the objectives of the board in a logic model using a group exercise in the January meeting.

As no one had immediate matters for a meeting next month, the December meeting was cancelled.

Bob moved to adjourn, and John seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.