

**Minutes**  
**Environmental Advisory Board**  
**17 March 2021**  
**Via Zoom**

The Environmental Board met on 17 March 2021 at 5:00 pm via Zoom. Attendees were Susan MiHalo, Jim Biancotti, Vicky Albritton, Bianca Passo, Peggy Berbesque, Frank Lani, Karl Krismanic, and John Morris.

Frank wished to add to the agenda an item to discuss invasive and native species. Susan said it could be added at the end if there was time.

Jim moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 17 February 2021. Vicky seconded. The motion carried.

For future meetings, we may try to meet in person by June. For maintaining distance, we may meet in the Firehouse.

For monitoring industries, Arcelor Mittal/Cleveland Cliffs was first discussed. The summary judgement from the EPLC is moving forward, albeit slowly. Susan has not been deposed yet as a plaintiff. DOJ is moving slowly on this. Susan is getting together a letter to Cleveland Cliffs to let them know we are watching and monitoring IDEM correspondence in the Virtual File Cabinet (VFC). So far, there is no announcement of a submission of a permit renewal. It was learned that IDEM had denied a request for an extension. The board will need at least two meetings to review the permit application before the June expiration. For the new members of the board, John will send out the minutes from 2019 that pertain to our discussions about the spill in August of that year.

Bianca had found on the VFC an inspection report of an incident at Precoat in February. On 16 February, a leaky pipe leading from Precoat's pretreatment to the Portage POTW was noted by a Portage employee, who notified Precoat. Precoat notified IDEM, but did not notify downstream users. There is a

discrepancy between Precoat's documentation for IDEM and the Portage employee's report. Most significantly, Precoat contended that the spill did not reach the Burns Waterway, whereas the Portage employee said it did. There was also a difference in the estimate of the flow rate. It was suggested that we draft a letter to Precoat with a cc to the Portage party asking for an explanation of the inconsistencies, and to list contact information for the town for future use. We appreciate that they reported it to IDEM voluntarily, but we would like to know.

There is nothing new on US Steel Midwest.

Jim provided information on PVS, which used to be AMROX. He provided a summary of the processes in recycling pickle liquor into other products. He will monitor that industry on VFC.

There is nothing on the Septic System Coordination Workgroup.

Susan has not heard from IDEM in the beach monitoring for this year.

Sue is away, so there is nothing on the Lighting Task Force.

Susan invited Karl to be present so the town council could be aware of the issues with the MS4 exemption. The main problem is that while we do not have conveyance of storm water, the census tracts place the town in an urban area. The other issue is the pump near the east end of Lon Lake Marsh that occasionally removes water into the marsh from the park area around the flagpole. If the town is no longer exempt, stormwater fees will be charged to residents.

CTAP was suggested as a possible source that we can utilize for any compliance or regulatory questions that we have regarding the town. The confidential assistance program can be accessed at:

**Our Northwest Indiana office:** Charles Breitenfeldt [219-250-0119](tel:219-250-0119) [www.idem.in.gov/ctap](http://www.idem.in.gov/ctap)

There was discussion of education for recycling. Peggy and Frank will work on letting residents know how to recycle. Jim will send the link to the county web site.

Nothing new on Long Lake Marsh. There was not time to add Frank's discussion of invasive plants.

There was mention that some of the links on the ODEAB web page were obsolete. Karl said that Scott Kingan is the town council contact for the website.

John reminded all that he had a conflict for the 21 April 2021 meeting, so a temporary secretary must be named.

John moved to adjourn, and Vicky seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:25 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.