

Minutes
Environmental Advisory Board
15 January 2020
Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 15 January 2020 at 5:30 pm at the Ogden Dunes Town Hall. Attendees were, Susan MiHalo, Jim Biancotti, Kristine Sandrick, Vicky Albritton, and John Morris.

Kristine moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 15 November 2019. Vicky seconded. The motion carried.

The board needs to find a replacement for Chelsea Overholt. Susan plans to contact Anne Muntean. Kristine suggested Barbara Schultz, whom she will contact.

Susan did not show the video that was made by the Columbia College students at the last meeting. Instead, she will distribute it to the members of the board by email.

Media reports of Arcelor Mittal redoing sample results were discussed. The plant disputes these reports. IDEM does contend that some sampling procedures were performed improperly. To check the operation of the plant, Jim will examine the NPDES permit to see if once through lake water is permitted to be utilized for blast furnace gas cleaning. There is also a limit on the amount of lake water that may be withdrawn, per the Great Lakes Compact. Our findings shall be made available to the Environmental Law and Policy Center. We are still waiting to see what IDEM and US EPA will do. Susan is a fact witness for ELPC for the Citizen's Lawsuit against Arcelor Mittal.

Concerning the Consent Decree for US Steel Midwest, there are some parties urging the judge not to sign it, but the Consent Decree is not up for comment. What we need to do is to make sure the information from the additional monitoring from water intakes is used. Is the information going to be posted, and where? Who is keeping tabs on it?

There is some bad 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. A list of state senators to contact is available. On the other side, there is a bill that would outline who needs to be notified in the event of a spill similar to the recent ones in our area. It needs some fine tuning, such as with the timing, as "immediately" is not practical. Someone needs to follow up on these bills, and Sue Adams was suggested, as her legal expertise would be useful. The Board could hold a meeting to inform residents of how to make calls to legislators to influence legislation. Beverly Shores is doing something similar with their residents.

A goal for 2020 would be to set up a phone tree. Each board member would contact 3-5 other residents, who would be asked to further contact additional residents. This would be used spread word of emergencies or anything else that required action. Again, Beverly Shores is doing something similar.

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 has not attended the Septic Workgroup because Anne was to attend. As we have heard nothing, he will attend this month's meeting if he has no conflict.

There is no news on the MS4 exemption.

There is no news on recycling.

There is no news on the lighting task force.

There have been comments from residents about beaver felling trees in the marsh. Most recently a couple trees near the bend in Diana Road near the water filtration plant have been felled. The only answer is to wrap coarse wire mesh around the trunks.

A new organizer for the beach cleanup is needed with Chelsea leaving the Board. Vicky volunteered, but needs help from those who have done it before. Jim volunteered space in the Lions Club storage for the various items needed.

For next year's beach sampling, Susan says that Bob Theodorou of Gary Sanitary District came in with the lowest quote, and he will hire Carson Costanza for the sampling. That quote was cheaper than Microbac. Karen Berrier will still handle data and signage.

Susan asked that someone monitor the IDEM virtual file cabinet for reports on nearby industries, notably US Steel Midwest and Arcelor Mittal. John had done it in the past, but needs to do it more frequently. Next meeting a tutorial in use of the virtual file cabinet will be conducted.

Also at the next meeting, updating the Street Department SOPs that were discussed in October will need to be done.

Kristine moved to adjourn and Vicky seconded. The motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Submitted by John Morris.