

Minutes

Environmental Advisory Board

18 October 2017

Ogden Dunes Town Hall

The Environmental Board met on 18 October 2017 at 5:30 pm at Town Hall. Attendees were, Susan MiHalo, Jim Biancotti, Kristine Sandrick, Sue Adams, Chelsea Overholt, and John Morris. Also present as a guest was Paul Panther.

Sue moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting of the Environmental Board, for 19 July 2017, with minor editing of typos. Kristine seconded. The motion carried.

Susan presented the Environmental Assessment of the NICTD double tracking plan, and how it affected Ogden Dunes. It was decided by consensus that the ODEAB would only write up comments about environmental aspects of the plan, as the town has already drafted a letter about safety. Most of our board's comments concerned the new parking lots added, since the existing one would shrink due to the gauntlet tracks. A lot would be added between the NICTD tracks and the Norfolk Southern tracks, plus a lot south of US 12 near the gas station. Sue wondered if the stand of trees between the realtor's (which will go), and Stagecoach Road will stay. John wondered if the west lot would extend to where lupine is currently found. The most concern was expressed for lights in the west lot, which would likely shine into homes on Deer Trail. Also, the sound estimated for Deer Trail would increase from 64 to 70m dBA. That unit is decibels weighted to deemphasize the lower frequencies. Sue wondered if the lights could be limited to those under 3000 K. Also, if the National Lakeshore were to become a Dark Skies park, it would be affected. The board needs to ask if increased freight as well as passenger traffic is expected, as this will increase vibrations. There was discussion about the sound system proposed earlier for both railroads, which would obviate the need for trains to sound horns approaching the crossing. The EA discussed using such a system in Michigan City. As a positive comment, the board would say the decreased travel times to the city may take many cars off the highways.

Sue talked about the Lighting Task Force, saying that the residential ordinance has been passed to the General Code Review, but nothing has come back. Beverly Shores has an agreement with NIPSCO to not use lights above 3000 K, but that may be because the town already has a Dark Skies designation. We can see if the National Park being so designated carries any weight for us, as we are surrounded by the National Lakeshore. Sue has promises from NIPSCO to meet, but nothing happens. Perhaps Tim Nelson can send a letter requesting a meeting, since email

doesn't work. Chelsea complained about the Indiana American Water lighting shining down Indian Camp. She and her neighbors should write letters to the management.

The beach cleanup was held with less beach than before, but was well covered. Good participation was due to promotion by Kristine at several functions. We even had some students from Valparaiso doing community service. Smoking contributed the most trash items, so Chelsea would like to use the data to push for limiting smoking on the beach. A proposal can be drafted to be discussed. Kristine would do a Facebook campaign.

Long Lake Marsh spraying for phragmites was conducted earlier this summer.

The 2018 beach grant will be due by December. Susan is working on it, but will request the same as this year. Karen Berrier is willing to continue to manage it.

Jim asked for help converting the old MS4 exemption to a Word file. Chelsea volunteered.

Jim is attending the Septic System Coordination Workgroup meeting tomorrow. For discussion may be the houses in Long Beach that lost their septic systems to a storm.

No news for recycling.

No news for nearby industries. There has been continuing testing for hexavalent chromium, with no detection.

There was discussion of the Bailly power plant closing, and the sand migration stopping, but the sand dumping will apparently continue for five years. Paul mentioned a plan for sand from the Burns Waterway to be piped to the Portage Lakefront site. We will look at the permit, should that happen.

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

Submitted by John Morris.