

**Ogden Dunes Environmental Advisory Board
Town Hall, February 20th, 2024 5:30 p.m.**

Attendees: Frank Lani, Tom Davenport, Vicky Albritton, Bianca Passo

1. Review and approve agenda – any additions?

See "Other" below.

2. Review and Accept Minutes

We reviewed and approved the minutes from both November 28 and January 9 (Frank moved, Bianca seconded).

3. Discuss/Vote on New Minutes Procedure

We voted to speed up the procedure for approving the minutes so we can get them posted for residents to see more quickly. The new process is as follows: After a meeting, the secretary will write up the minutes as soon as possible and email them to the other board members. From that moment on, the other members have one week to read and approve the minutes by email. Once they are approved, the secretary will send them to the town webmaster to be posted on the official Ogden Dunes website. If for any reason corrections need to be made after that point, they will be addressed in the next month's minutes.

4. Invasive Species Annual Activities

a. National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) - Feb. 26-Mar 1st

Frank and Karl created our new NISAW banner and Karl hung it over Hillcrest Road. To kick off NISAW, we have arranged for NPS biologist Laura Brennan to speak at the Hour Glass Museum on Feb. 25th at 4pm. Bianca will contact Andrew about having the town send out an email blast ASAP. Tom agreed to introduce the speaker and will say a few words at the end. He will emphasize that supporting native plants is a continuous effort closely intertwined with everything else we do. Frank will gather useful handouts to set on a table for guests. He will also make a little quiz to challenge them. We plan to have a sign-up sheet for guests to indicate their interest in the EAB and our activities.

b. Polliwog Pond

We are looking to apply for another Community Fund Grant Application to address native/invasive species at Polliwog Pond. Bianca noted that the deadline is fast approaching (March 1st). She sent us the link. We will need to get approval signatures not just from EAB members but also from the Street Department. Frank will talk to the Street Department about this.

c. Long Lake Marsh

Bianca wondered when the Long Lake Marsh project would be complete according to the requirements of the 20-year grant. Vicky asked Susan Mihalo after the meeting and she said it started in 2006 and so it should end in 2026. Susan and assorted volunteers have worked consistently on the marsh over the past two decades. She said that *Phragmites australis* and nonnative cattails could have taken over again, but they have not. The project continues to be a success.

c. The Chinese Silver Grass Issue

Tom agreed to contact the Beautification Committee one more time about the invasive Chinese Silver Grass.

5. Bird Town Update

Our Indiana Bird Town application was approved last month and Vicky asked the town clerk, Amy Parry, to send a check to the Indiana Audubon Society. Vicky and Frank met on Zoom with Whitney Yoerger at the IAS to discuss how and when to go public with our town's new status as a Bird Town. Vicky worked on Ogden Dune's new Bird Town webpage to create content that will attract visitors to Polliwog Pond and educate them about birds and their ecological needs. Vicky suggested that we go public in April. We will announce a tape-cutting event and Whitney will help us with a press release. We will ask the Town Council to attend. This could coincide with an oriole bird count or the local birding festival. Tom suggested that we work with other nearby Bird Town communities to create educational events and activities. He will ask Jennifer with the Coastal Zone Program to publicize.

6. Monitoring Nearby Industries <https://www.in.gov/idem/resources/lake-michigan-sites-of-interest/>

a. Cleveland Cliffs - N/A

b. U.S. Steel Midwest - Tom noted that environmentalists are raising objections to the sale of US Steel to Nippon Steel, citing their allegedly poor environmental record.

c. PreCoat Metals - N/A

7. Save the Dunes Pollution Prevention Roundtable update.

Bianca attended a meeting in January, which was mostly brainstorming about the new website being developed to guide communities through NPDES permit renewal processes. Save the Dunes said it wants to put informational flyers on our table at the Memorial Day gathering.

8. Septic Coordination Workgroup Report

Vicky attended two meetings since last time. Not much to report for now. Another meeting will be held in late March in advance of a larger public educational fair.

9. Annual Achievements Write-up

Tom proposed that we start promoting the EAB's achievements on the town website's EAB page in order to give credit to volunteers who do meaningful work for our community. This will also raise awareness more broadly of our environmental concerns and strategies and hopefully attract new volunteers to join us. It will also help chart our progress in various areas. We are all going to think about what we or others have achieved in the past few years and submit them to Tom by the next meeting.

10. Other

a. Dynamic Website Initiative to Increase Town Engagement

Tom wants to give residents a way to post photos (of birds, plants, etc.), ask questions, and receive answers. Some of this could be done on the town website, but Vicky suggested that the

new ODEAB Facebook page that she created might be a better place for dynamic interactions.
New ODEAB Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61555360035919>

b. EAB Annual Plan

Tom wants to develop an EAB Plan where we list all our goals for the next few years. These might include obtaining community fund grants, invasive species removal days, featuring biodiverse home garden make-overs like Frank's or Karl's, etc. We will send our ideas to Tom before the next meeting.

c. Welcome Kit

Tom suggested that we update materials in the New Homeowner's Welcome Kit.

d. Placards

Tom suggested that we promote official native species placards for private yards that showcase biodiversity.

10. Next Meeting – March 19th

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

Minutes taken and submitted by Vicky Albritton