

Ogden Dunes Environmental Advisory Board

Town Hall - September 17, 2024 5:30 p.m.

Attendees: Tom Davenport, Vicky Albritton, Frank Lani, Bianca Passo. Karen Berrier also attended.

1. Review and approve agenda – any additions? -No.

2. July Minutes Issues - No corrections

3. Beach Monitoring Update - Karen Berrier gave us a yearly update on water quality monitoring. In all, we had another good season. There were only eight instances of slightly high levels of E. coli at different sites. One instance showed an enormous increase, but this was believed to be an error. Nevertheless, we had to report a closure that day to IDEM.

Karen will forward the invoice from Gary Sanitary to Bianca So that Bianca can seek a reimbursement from IDEM.

Bianca asked how the new curtailed sampling schedule (Mon-thru-Fri as opposed to daily) had worked out. It seems to have been fine. Tom warned that in any case sampling provides less protection than one might think, given that there is probably more E. Coli in the sand than in the water. Data is collected without enough analysis. Bianca pointed out that IDEM gathers a lot of information in the region that helps us and them compare communities to each other.

4. Invasive Species eradication at Pollywog Pond [Karl] & Susan Mihalo's request regarding Volunteer Day Long Lake in November [Frank]

Karl is now working with Sandy O'Brien to do environmentally sensitive landscaping on his own property. He had her look at Pollywog Pond (PP) and he will share her thoughts when he returns from his trip. He will focus on removing invasive trees at PP. He's going to extend the already cleared portion of PP's banks. Tom said that he was looking for additional manpower to help with this. We will also plan a separate volunteer removal/planting day at which all residents can come out and help.

Susan MiHalo asked if the EAB could help her plan a volunteer day at Long Lake as well. She is not planning to do as much as in the past. Frank has the herbicide and he will get that to her as needed. Tom will ask her for dates.

5. Any update on the Town Council Proposal [Frank]

No updates

6. Septic: IDNR Coastal Program Update

Tom asked around about having the IDNR back any proposed Ogden Dunes requirement to have contractors and maintenance workers report septic work to town officials as a way of gathering data on OD septic maintenance records. But it seems that we can only ask for voluntary reports. We cannot make them required.

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

a. Cleveland Cliffs - nothing to report

b. U.S. Steel Midwest - nothing to report. Tom said that the US government plans to block any sale to NIPPON Steel as it is seen as a national security risk.

c. PreCoat Metals - nothing to report

8. Public Works Dumpster Status [Karl]

Karl sent around photos of the new recycling sign. It looks good.

9. Discuss Frank's draft plan write up & possible funding sources

We discussed Frank's plan, which Tom had previously reorganized. Tom spent some more time looking for possible funding sources: The forestry service is seeking applications for \$500K or more, which is far too much for us to deal with.

Environmental Education grants are still a possibility. We can use such grants for demonstration work. IDNR Coastal Zone will have two different grant opportunities to look at. NIPSCO will have something too.

Frank asked about funding for rain barrels. Tom will look into it. Bianca offered a tip regarding the year-end clean-out of rain barrels, which is the only downside of having one. She said you can create a rock filter over the top to help prevent clogs and reduce clean-out requirements. Tom added that closed top barrels are harder to clean out for just that reason—open top, with a rock filter, is better.

Other funding ideas might be sought for pollinator gardens, birds, environmental speakers, more demonstration projects, children's summer school education programs (WWF has put out tools for this). Bianca says Sandpipers could work this into their system.

10. Other: Beach Clean Up? Tom said we should get this kind of thing on a calendar so we can see it and plan for it long in advance. None of us will be around to organize it this year.

11. Additional Agenda Items:

Tom would like to get input from the rest of the community regarding future planning at PP. We could bring it up at a Town Council meeting, but we might get more engagement at a Historical Society event. The HS might be interested in showing how PP has changed over time. This could be done in conjunction with the National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Tom will ask Karl to talk to the HS.

A few other ideas about what we could seek funding for:

- We could install a stationary box that monitors birdsong at PP over time to see whether various species numbers are changing.
- Bianca would like to support bats at PP.
- Bianca mentioned that we ought to be on the lookout for new NPDES permits and public commentary opportunities in the next year or so.

12. Next Meeting(s) – 15 October 2024

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

Notes taken and submitted by Vicky Albritton