



TOWN OF
Ogden Dunes

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OGDEN DUNES TOWN COUNCIL-TOWN MEETING
APRIL 3, 2023—7:00 P.M. in the Community Room & Via ZOOM

PRESENT: Scott Kingan
Bernadette Slawinski
Karl Krizmanic
John Hannon
Dave Snyder—Via ZOOM

Call to Order
Pledge of Allegiance
Roll Call

MEETING MINUTES

- The December 31st 2022 Special Meeting -- Only 3 of the current council members were in attendance on that date. Bernadette motioned to approve as read. Karl seconded. **Roll Call:** Bernadette Slawinski—yes, Karl Krizmanic—yes, John Hannon—abstain, Dave Snyder---abstain, Scott Kingan—yes. The motion is approved.
- The March 30, 2023 Executive Session—John motioned to approve as read. Bernadette seconded. **Roll Call:** John Hannon—yes, Bernadette Slawinski—yes, Scott Kingan—yes, Karl Krizmanic—yes, Dave Snyder—yes. The motion is approved.

No Claims were approved

Visiting Speaker--

A presentation was made by Judy Alders, Director of the nonprofit **RePurpose Place** in Chesterton. Judy gave a brief description of how the RePurpose Place came to be and its mission. The organization takes donations of new or gently used furniture, building materials and appliances to resell or to reuse in the support of **NeighborLink Porter Co.** This second organization is a mission the helps people in need with home repairs, yard work, snow removal and home modifications (ramps, etc.). Karl invited Judy to introduce the RePurpose Place to residents who may be unaware of it. He thought the org. could be an ideal alternative to disposing of household items that would potentially wind up in a landfill. For the past 2 years, they have sent a truck out to pick-up useful materials, that folks have dropped off during Town Cleanup Weekend, to our Street Dept dumpsters. The **RePurpose Place is located at: 102 Beverly Dr., Chesterton. Their phone # is 219.728.1303. Pickups can be arranged on Wednesdays and Fridays.** Karl thanked Judy for coming!

DEPARTMENT & COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fire Dept.—

- Eric Kurtz thanked the community for their support during the St. Patrick's Event. A drawing for the super raffle prize will occur on Labor Day.
- He shared details of IN Senate Bill 424 which, if passed, will require owners of a pier or public access way to Lake Michigan to install public rescue equipment. Both O.D. Fire and Police depts. support having rescue rings & ropes along with safety signage at all Town access ways. Scott remarked, this would certainly be warranted at the East end where no beach- but boulder build-up, poses a risk of someone falling in. Eric thinks the East end of Town is definitely a more likely location for rescue incidents because of uneven terrain & stronger rip currents. Jeremy added, the Town has purchased a throw latter after a past experience with youngsters needing help at the seawall. Regardless of the statute, Eric recommends that as a lakefront community, we should have visibly marked safety equipment stations at all 18 access points. He cited Michigan City's placement of water safety equipment as a good example. John asked if Eric was familiar with Miller Beach's placement of safety equip.? He suggested reaching out to them as their community started this practice a couple of years ago. Eric pointed out a few differences in Miller's usage and storage of their equipment.

Police Dept.-

- Jeremy reported that for March, there were 29 citations written, 25 warnings given, 1 report of criminal mischief, 1 report of property damage and a single arrest made. Milage of the Police trucks are: **#1—3,451, #2—6,059 and #3—2758**. The second truck has been wrapped with new graphic and the 3rd truck will be done after an agreed time is scheduled.
- Jeremy referenced a letter from Richard Eshenaur, Chief Park Ranger of Dunes Nat. Park, asking the Town Council's permission to give park service police the authority to enforce their laws on a small portion of Town land that falls within federal property boundaries. This would apply only on the Northwest corner of Town-- that's uninhabited and has a couple of unused roads. It borders West Beach. An example of enforcement would be if alcohol were consumed by visitors sitting or walking on one of the aforementioned roads. Similar dynamics exist between Gary, Porter Co., Beverly Shores and Porter. All these entities have granted or are in the process of granting, permission to the Park Service as well.
- Scott asked the council members if they've reviewed the request letter? He called for a motion to grant enforcement authority to the Nat Park Service- within the small portion of Town so indicated. Karl motioned to approve. Bernadette seconded. **Roll Call:** Karl Krizmanic—yes, Bernadette Slawinski—yes, Scott Kingan—yes, Dave Snyder—yes, John Hannon—yes. Motion approved.

Building Dept.-

- Jeremy reported that 34 building permits have been issued to date. This has generated \$27,210.53 in revenue. He has spoken to owner of 114 Diana—who wishes to build a new home. The 7 Beach Lane project has moved onto next step of review and will be applying for some variances. There is also a large \$400,000 remodel slated to begin on Chrismar Rd.

Street Dept-

- Mike Lanovich reported that the Portage Compost Site has reopened for the season.
- Brush pick-up in Town is underway.
- The Street sign project is complete-- but a semi-truck recently struck a sign on the corner of Easthill Rd. & Skyline Dr. The post has been replaced but the sign itself is missing.
- Some excavation and grading work has occurred at key locations in Town to reduce standing storm water. There are other spots that need more advanced work requiring outside contractors which Dept is addressing.

Water Dept. -

- New water bills are going out today with a 30 day grace period for payment. After that period, late fees will be charged. Any questions regarding bills, can be made to Water Clerk, Julia Klingensmith at Town hall.
- Mike concluded by announcing additional renovations planned for the Pump Station later in Spring or early Summer.
- Andrew Gurschik then made a presentation of the streamlined billing process for water bills. In addition to saving an enormous amount of time and effort getting these quarterly invoices out to residents, the system is now fully automated from the meter readings to the actual tabulating and printing of bills by Keystone software.
- Andrew showed onscreen, what the newly formatted bills look like. He indicated the simple presentation of water usage data, as well as the itemized costs and newly simplified account numbers. Each step of the usage collection interfaces with the billing process. Julia is able to spot check, confirm and approve the amounts before mailing occurs.
- If residents choose to receive and pay online, there are other enhancements-- in the form of timely notifications and reminders.
- 8 to 10 weeks went into the development and customization of this process.
- Scott asked about committee inserts that sometimes accompany the mailed bills? Andrew said this can still be done with sufficient lead time and added cost. If some Town group wanted an info insert, they would need to give at least a two week notice and shoulder the addition processing fee themselves.
- Karl commended the Water Dept. for really transforming things!
- Jim Slawinski made the point that out of 630 bills going out, approx. 60 incur late fees that combined, may add as much as \$1,800 to the Dept. He said the Dept. would gladly forgo that additional money if the new system reduces late payments.
- He highlighted all the methods of payment, residents can choose, if they pay online -- Credit Card, Pay Pal or even the set-up of check tracking number payment by one's bank.
- As the Dept liaison, Dave gave a big thank-you to the Water Board directors, Andrew and Julia for all their efforts in getting this milestone accomplished. Kudos!

COMMITTEES

Beach Nourishment-

- Scott updated on a meeting held with the US Army Corps and IDEM that resulted in a favorable ruling for O.D. in the measurement of the "ordinary high water mark". This determination simplifies many things in the efforts to get permission to begin the Central restoration project. Hopefully this can begin in the Fall.

Budget and Finance-

- Scott said committee is watching monthly budget performance. Things are tracking very close to what was budgeted for.
- Preparations are soon underway for next year's budget. With Depts sizing up their needs, the process moves along to reporting of 2024 figures to the State. This begins in June and finalizes in Oct.

Community Fund-

- Maryann Schaefer reported via Zoom, on the 6 projects that are being awarded grants for 2023. These are subject to Council approval.
- #1 The purchase of a floatation system that works with the "Stokes Basket" that the Fire Dept uses to transport injured persons. The system would expand the capabilities of transfer, while still in the water such as Lake rescues. Cost is **\$650.00**.

- #2 The Town of Ogden Dunes would like to purchase new tables and chairs for the Community Room. Cost is **\$5,500.00**.
- #3 The Beautification committee wishes to install new wooden planters on east side of Town hall and hire a builder to make more wooden planters for the west side of Town hall. They also wish to purchase plants for the new Town garden as well as plants for the Police Garden in front of Town hall. Cost is **\$3,950.00**.
- #4 Ogden Dunes Home Owners Assoc. requests funds to purchase new soccer nets and repair of bent polling. Cost is **\$1,899.60**.
- #5 The Animal Committee wishes to purchase supply of animal waste bags. Cost is **\$200.00**
- #6 Environment Advisory Board wishes to purchase equipment related to the restoration of Long Lake Marsh-- by reduction of Invasive Plants. This would be the purchase of herbicide, backpack sprayers, seed mixes and a solar light. Cost is **\$842.00**.
- These 6 requests bring the total amount for council approval to **\$13,041.60**
- Scott thanked the Community Fund.
- Karl added that the Fund is a joint venture with the Porter Co. Community Foundation where Ogden Dunes has an account. With them, the account generates 5% of nearly \$200,000 each year. This money (principal) comes from donations made over the years by Town members, that are earmarked for O.D. projects. Karl said, "Just imagine what the Town could do if donations could one day reach \$1,000,000.00!"
- Both Karl and Scott acknowledged the generosity of Town residents who have donated to the Fund.
- Bernadette thanked Maryann and the other members of the Community Fund.
- Karl made a motion to accept the proposed grant that Maryann highlighted. Dave seconded the motion.
Roll Call: Karl Krizmanic—yes, Dave Snyder—yes, Bernadette Slawinski—yes, Scott Kingan—yes, John Hannon—yes. The motion passed.
- Maryann reminded the council that approved minutes from this meeting need to be presented to the Porter Co Community Foundation for the dispersal of funds to occur. If council can expedite with a special meeting before May, the Foundation, in turn meets in April and can bring the O.D. approval before their board. If voted on and approved by them, a check could potentially arrive sometime in May.

Environmental Advisory Board –

- Karl announced that Earth Day is April 22nd and that a clean-up of Stagecoach Rd is planned by the Woman's Club.
- Bernadette asked if there was any update on getting shades for the Town's street lamps? Karl said he would contact NIPSCO.

General Code Review-

- Jim Slawinski as chairman, reported on a committee meeting planned for a week from today.
- They will be examining the garbage bin Ord. to possibly amend language. 'this needs to be enforceable'
- New committee member, Bob Schwartz has been checking around Town on the status of current compliance.
- A Town Council liaison is the only vacancy left on this committee. FYI/ reminder, the Code Review committee reviews all ordinances with the exception of those related to building codes.

Historic Society-

- Ken Thompson reported on the progress of the ADA compliant, Lift and Bathroom installation in the Hourglass building. They hope to be completed with this sometime in May.
- A presentation by members of the Pokagon Band is scheduled for April 16th in the Community Room at 4p.m. They'll discuss the Mnomen Project undertaken with the Nat. Park.

ODHA-

- Andrew Gurschik reported on the Association's new pamphlet which is going out and which highlights all the activities and things the ODHA does.
- Membership is now \$125.00 which includes a seasonal parking pass & the opportunity to buy a discounted second pass for \$50.00.
- Andrew reminded folks of the value of the parking passes given the expansion of the restricted parking zones in Town.

Planning Commission-

- Ken Thompson says the commission is working on a draft of a long-term plan. They hope to have something ready in a month or two.

Beautification-

- Lois Bratz updated on their application for a CommuniTree Grant. A representative from the Org. is planning a site review visit to O.D. to better assess our needs.
- A meeting with Matt determined the need for repair of 3 messaging signs in Town.
- New flower boxes are planned for the space vacated by relocation of the mailboxes.
- Plans to obtain trees that will be planted along the fence in front of American Water Company are underway. A meeting with the Company is also planned.
- The committee has also found appropriate bushes to plant around unsightly service boxes to soften the look coming into Town. Lois envisions the combined projects creating a 'greenway'.
- Karl asked about the types of trees that will be planted? Lois said that's still to be determined—but they will certainly be native to the area. Evergreen trees will likely be included.
- Jeremy wanted to add that his agreement with Frontier, to modernize cables, will include eliminating some of the green service boxes.

Recognition Committee-

- Bernadette shared Dave Harbaugh's nomination of Sherri Ashby for all her hard work and support in providing a fun and successful Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt.
- Thank you Sherri!

OLD BUSINESS

2nd reading of Ord 899—corrections to Ord. 875

- Scott explained that since the 1st reading of Ord.899, another correction is being made to (Sec.2, item F). This will mean a reset from 2nd Read back to a 1st Reading.
- Scott read the Ordinance which is adjusting the minimum water rate. A second reading will occur during the next council meeting.

Update on NICTD Design Plans-

- Dave updated the council regarding double-track project and designs for a crosswalk placement for Rt 12.
- He received the final drawings from NICTD which are subject to INDOT approval.
- The plan is to place a crosswalk approx. 100 feet east of the Gas station. This will include an island in the middle of Rt 12 and flashing lights, activated by pedestrians pressing a button.
- Ogden Dunes is not being consulted on this decision but rather being told.
- A change- will soon prevent O.D residents from pulling up to the traffic light between the tracks, which is currently the norm. Drivers will now only be permitted to pull up to the Berm.

- Another change will be the elimination of a left turn lane into the gas station on Rt 12.
- Dave stresses that the council is paying close attention to these design changes but again, they are being dictated to us and not subject to Ogden Dunes control.
- Scott asked if the most recent changes to the design, have improved, from the standpoint of the Town? Dave's response was: no "they have not". He added, that this means council can only serve to inform residents—not manage the design of the work being done.
- "It will be interesting to see how INDOT weighs in"
- John asked if we have seen drawings showing the raised platforms for boarding trains? Do you know if it will be located on the south side of the tracks? Dave has only seen a concept drawing and can't confirm an answer, at this time. John also addressed the left turn into Gas station change. He thought planned painted 'cross hatching' on the road, might still allow room to pull out of the through lane, to make a turn. "A picture of the project would certainly be helpful with informing residents." Dave doesn't think crosshatching will be legal for drivers to use.
- Jeremy agrees with the many safety concerns, these changes present.

Reminder of fee changes for seasonal parking-

- Scott stated the new cost for a seasonal parking pass-only, is \$135.00
- He repeated the option of joining/renewing the ODHA-- where the same pass would cost \$125.00

Reminder of online payment option for water bills and other town items-

- This can be accessed via the Town Website.

NEW BUSINESS

Special meeting/workshop between Town Council & O.D. Fire Dept

- May 17, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. This will occur to review reporting the Fire Dept agreed to provide to the council, as per contract. It'll also be a good chance for entire council to meet and discuss misc. with Chief Kurtz.

RESIDENT REMARKS

Tom Leavitt, 23 Cedar Ct. He asked the council why, when he opened up his garage door during recent winter weather, "a white pick-up truck slammed into the back of his van" "It is a 2004 GMC van. It has all kinds of marks on the door." He made a police report today to Officer Kevin Hughes. He also believes that someone messed with the gas cap on his car. His locking gas cap no longer works. He stated that he's heard of some previous gas thefts. "Is this true? People of the senior variety?" Jeremy said no, it's not true. There have been no reports made of this occurring. He told Tom, he'd be happy to answer his questions off to the side so other residents can have their turn. Scott told Tom, he's done the right thing by voicing his concerns. Scott is confident that Jeremy will answer both his questions and concerns. Tom asked what time the Townhall opens tomorrow as he'd like to get tags for his dog. 8 a.m.

Walter Sampson, 9 Ogden Ct. He asked when the Street Dept would be eliminating the gravel and sand that has accumulated as a result of recent storms? He hasn't seen the sweeper truck and he feels the gravel can pose a hazard. Mike Lanovich said the sweeper will be addressing that very soon. Unless he has a medical reason, Walter doesn't understand why council member, Dave Snyder appeared via Zoom. Scott explained Dave did in fact have a medical reason to participate remotely. Walter believes it's important for committee chairs to give their reports in person. He complemented Lois Bratz for attending the meeting and giving her report live. He was critical of Maryann Schaefer for making her report for the Community Fund, remotely via Zoom. He has questions about Fund money and where it's going. He also feels

that a live presentation might encourage more donations, on the part of residents. He does think she's doing a good job but would like to question her on funding decisions.

Walter also shared his disapproval of the lengthy and unsightly work being done on homeowner property at approx.. 80-82 Ogden Rd. Jeremy, as building commissioner responded, that a new septic system is being installed. He thinks the past frozen ground and necessary county inspection delays, have contributed to the timeframe of the project. It will be done soon.

Lastly, he questioned why ODHA fees are being raised to \$125? Don't they have a reserve of money they could use? Why does ODHA need such an increase? Andrew Gurschik responded that costs have gone up, expenditures have increased and he added, the Association is not sitting on a huge influx of cash. In addition to the Beach, they spend on Nelson Reck Park, Kratz Field and all the access ways to the beach. There's a lot of land the ODHA pays to maintain. Scott summed up by pointing to inflationary pressures across the board.

COUNCIL REMARKS

Karl mentioned Earth Day clean up on April 22. He also pointed out -- concerned residents can attend the actual committee meetings, that are open to the public. This may afford them a better dialogue or answers to questions.

Dave said, Spring has sprung. With the warming weather, folks will be out walking around Town, walking their dogs too. The streets are also our sidewalks. Please be mindful of this, observe speed limits and be careful. Thank you.

Bernadette said, in the spirit of Recognition, she just wants to thank all the volunteers in Town. She knows people are busy with their jobs. She really appreciates the time and work people devote to Town committees. Thank you and Happy Spring!

Scott thanked the Water board and the Water dept. "To see where we were a couple of years ago, it's been a pretty dramatic transformation." This has freed up a lot of working man hours for Town employees which is a good thing for the community so my thanks to that group!

Motion to Adjourn

Dave made the motion. Bernadette seconded. **Roll Call:** Dave Snyder—yes, Bernadette Slawinski—yes, Scott Kingan—yes, Karl Krizmanic—yes, John Hannon—yes. The meeting adjourned.



Scott Kingan, President