



**Minutes of the
Rescheduled Environmental Affairs Advisory Board Meeting
Wednesday, April 17, 2024
The Lake House, 32756 Lake Road**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. with Chair Naumann presiding and 13 others in attendance.

WELCOME/ATTENDANCE

Present: Chair Sam Naumann; Co-chair Jen Miller; Citizen Members Rita George, Amy Oliver, Marty Patton, Terry Robison, Malachi Witt, and Terry Wyrock; Industry Members Mike McCormick (Applied Specialties), Tom Sulzer (Avient™), and Ron Spears (Lubrizol Corp.); and Deputy Clerk of Council Ramona Boggins.

Also Present: Residents Katelynn Hall and Tom Cizmar.

Absent: Citizen Member Kayla Goodwin, Industry Members Michelle Hall (Ford Motor) and David Messinger (Vestolit), and Ward I Councilman and ex-officio member Rob Shahmir.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The February 7, 2024, and March 5, 2024, minutes were approved as prepared and published.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Environmentally Speaking - Co-chair Miller

Co-chair Miller said the April theme was about [butterflies](#), and the video is available online. On April 16, Terry Robison presented on behalf of the [Tree Commission](#) on the importance of trees, identifying native species, and how to care for them. On May 14, Councilman Shahmir is presenting an update about the Power Plant. Co-chair Miller said [Kiwanis](#), [Avon-on-the-Lake Garden Club](#), and [Rotary Club](#) have meetings and a presenter and maybe the EAAB could pair them with the hope that it would increase attendance at meetings.¹ The goal is to do this in 2025 since speakers have been secured, and they can't switch it up.

¹ As of these minutes, no Environmentally Speaking events are on the Library calendar after September. Starting in October 2024 and into 2025, the EAAB might consider having meetings on the same evening as Environmentally Speaking events.

Deputy Clerk of Council Boggins asked if EAAB meetings would be before or after the Environmentally Speaking presentations.

- Chair Naumann said the Environmentally Speaking schedule would be arranged to be the second portion of the EAAB meeting. Perhaps EAAB meetings would start earlier, at 6 p.m., and Environmentally Speaking would start at 7 p.m. and members could stay to support the Environmentally Speaking series.

Mrs. Oliver asked who to reach out to about posting Environmentally Speaking events on social media sites to promote them sooner.

- Co-chair Miller said Environmentally Speaking is promoted on social media.

Monarch Butterfly Initiative - Mr. Wyrock

Mr. Wyrock said the presentation was dynamite, and 44 people showed up 100% interested in what was presented. Co-chair Miller coordinated a video presentation and flyer to accompany him as he spoke on five different subjects, including planting common milkweed for the butterflies. On May 11, the Avon Lake Garden Club is coordinating with the EAAB at the Goddard School from 9 a.m. to noon for a plant sale fundraiser where he will be passing out flyers about monarch butterflies. They are also giving away 100 [hornbeam](#) saplings.

- Chair Naumann said the plant sale continues to be a great representation of what the EAAB does and continues to do more of, which is to partner with local organizations, create an opportunity for public education, and provide an opportunity for residents to spend time with family.

Board Awareness and Outreach - Mrs. George

Mrs. George briefly met with Mrs. Oliver and looked at information from the 2022 EAAB survey report since many topics are still very current in the City: deer culling, soil erosion, and coyotes, for example. Dwelling on the EAAB, Mrs. George wondered how to promote and market the “EAAB brand” by using exposure with Co-chair Miller’s successful monthly Environmentally Speaking series and bi-weekly [Avon Lake Matters](#) podcasts. With the variety of expertise already on the Board, she mentioned building a plan and a timeline to mindfully communicate and highlight the residents’ interests while also highlighting what the EAAB does.

Action: Mrs. George said she would create a list of topics (from the 2022 survey) and a timeline with suggestions about where, when, and how to post each topic. She said it would take a few months and could launch something in the fall.

Chair Naumann said the summer months provide opportunities to capture photos, videos, and such to help create content to use for future promotion.

- Mrs. George said that besides social media, other possible platforms to utilize are [Patch](#), [the Morning Journal](#), [West Life](#), [ALCTV](#), and [Grapevine Avon Lake](#). Her goal is to use scripted small vignettes that highlight who and what EAAB is. At live events, giveaways and promotional items can be tied into topics of

interest, such as biodegradable dog waste bags or seeds and plants for [Big Splash Dog Swim](#)² or [Clean Up Avon Lake Day](#).

Deputy Clerk of Council Boggins asked if anyone has approached the [North Coast Chamber of Commerce](#) or [Lorain County Chamber of Commerce](#) to participate in some of their [events](#). It's an opportunity to have a presence [throughout Lorain County](#) in untapped areas.

- Chair Naumann said partnership with other organizations is a great thing, but he was not aware of events put on by the Chambers of Commerce.

Wildlife Management Plan - Mr. Robison

Mr. Robison said he was working on a coyote management plan that morphed into a more encompassing wildlife management plan. It's coming together by piecing parts together from other city's wildlife management plans. He asked those who were present what worries or concerns they had about wildlife in Avon Lake.

- Dog attacks/vulnerability
- Lack of habitat/out of space for animals
- Traffic incidents with deer and geese, for example
- Overabundance of raccoons, chipmunks, groundhogs, and mice
- Feeding and attracting geese, ducks, raccoons, deer, skunks, and chipmunks

Chair Naumann said, similar to what EAAB is trying to do with HOAs and recycling, people think they are doing something good, have correct information, and operating with the best intentions but may be undermining certain aspects. Educating residents about what can and cannot be recycled helps down the road. Similarly, educating residents about coexisting with wildlife and why not to feed them is beneficial both in the short and long term.

- Feeding deer is a finable offense and against the law³.
- You are permitted to feed the birds.

Mr. Robison said education and coexistence are the most important things. His list of concerns had coyotes, deer, skunks, raccoons, possums, geese, and turkeys on it. He said turkeys might be the next urban wildlife problem because they have no fear. An issue of concern that wasn't brought up was rabies; Avon Lake has not had reports of rabies.

- Mr. Spears said the feeding issue becomes a domino effect. Residents feed the deer, the deer have fawns that attract predators that know where the fawns go to feed, and they prey on the fawns. Other predators and rodents also come to

² The 2024 Big Splash Dog Swim date has not been set yet, according to Recreation Director Erin Fach.

³ Cod. Ord. No. 618.13(b) states: *No person shall intentionally or recklessly provide food within the Municipality to any wild or feral animal so as to create noxious or offensive odors or unsanitary conditions, endanger the health, comfort or safety of any other person, or contribute to the damage of real or personal property of any other person.* And Cod. Ord. No. 318.13(d) states: *Whoever violates this section and fails to cure such violation within five business days after receipt of notice of violation from the Police Department shall be guilty of a minor misdemeanor on the first offense, a misdemeanor of the fourth degree on the second offense, and a misdemeanor of the third degree on the third or any subsequent offense.*

feed and get preyed on. It's a vicious cycle. People's hearts are in the right place but, unfortunately, create these problems.

- Mr. Robison said even compost piles and bird feeders attract bears (not locally), deer, and mice.

Mr. Witt said education goes hand in hand with communication. He said there are a lot of missed opportunities by not prioritizing communication now and waiting until later. Not everyone's on Facebook [Meta] and comes to City Council meetings, so a more thorough strategy on how to communicate is needed. He said the City has the same problem, getting information out to everyone. If time is spent developing these educational pieces or information for relevant topics but the vehicle or mechanisms to get it out are not in place, then there is no effectiveness. Mr. Witt suggested utilizing "snail mail" and social media and creating an EAAB-content calendar with seasonal information about breeding, migration, mating, and aggressive behavior. Posting as an EAAB member to social media sites might help push the messaging, and members could also share other people's posts and tag EAAB (#EAAB). He suggested creating a periodical that could be sent quarterly that focused on different content.

- Co-chair Miller said a [City newsletter](#) goes to every resident and business that includes various information. The [Avon Lake Community Council](#)⁴ purchases an extra panel, and all their information is put on that. There have been articles on coyotes and environmental topics. If the EAAB wants to purchase a panel, they can add more to the City newsletter content. It is currently twofold, but when the Community Council was added, it was threefold.
 - Chair Naumann said the EAAB has done a panel in the past. A lot of the work they do utilizes successful communication channels that already exist, and he would like to continue doing that.

Mrs. Oliver told Mr. Witt they needed help, and he could help with the marketing. She then asked who runs the EAAB Facebook page because it's been dormant.

- Co-chair Miller said the City has a Communications Department, and she didn't know who runs the Facebook page.

Mrs. Oliver said that if the EAAB wants to grow its audience, it should create events on the EAAB page and then have the City share it. That way, more followers come to the EAAB page.

- Deputy Clerk of Council Boggins suggested an EAAB contest to encourage certain behaviors⁵ or have environmental [yard signs](#) or [window clings](#) showing EAAB support/pride.
 - Chair Naumann said that it's in the EAAB budget to do some type of marketing collateral.

⁴ The Avon Lake Community Council is made up of community organizations, including local service groups, businesses, sports programs, and others. These organizations meet four times a year to share knowledge and work together to help with membership, fundraising, and resource sharing. In addition, the Council sponsors a Citizen of the Year event, which honors a volunteer for outstanding achievements in the area of community service, and Project of the Year, which honors a project that merits community-wide recognition. If your organization would like to be a part of the Avon Lake Community Council, please email [Marty O'Donnell](#).

⁵ Such as recycling, [upcycling](#), or [repurposing](#).

Discussion about utilizing EAAB Facebook and Instagram pages.

Mrs. George reminded everyone about Public Information and Public Education (PIPE), which former Public Works Director Joe Reitz promoted. She said he participated in EAAB meetings as a resident and created the AL the Alligator mascot, which promoted a successful program with the “Nothing But Rain in my Drain” slogan and signage added to street drains. She suggested either marketing PIPE again or finding a complementary approach.

- Co-chair Miller said the new Public Works Director, Jon Liskovec, worked with her and Mrs. Oliver on the HOA mailing, and he’s very environmentally focused. She didn’t know if he had been invited to the EAAB meetings.

To summarize the social media topic, Chair Naumann said the things being described are often done by a full-time salaried person, and everyone there has a job and a life outside of the Board. Perhaps setting more realistic expectations could help generate creative ways to be more direct and achieve those quick wins to celebrate. He said that might look like creating a profile for the EAAB, versus a page that requires a lot of content, engagement, timely posts, and soliciting for “likes”. That way, when scrolling and finding misleading information or general questions, someone on the Board should feel empowered to comment on behalf of the EAAB and provide relevant information. These monthly meetings can provide the checks and balances needed to support those engagements.⁶ He said these things take time, and we want to make sure that we *“don’t let perfect be the enemy of good.”*

- Mr. Witt agreed and said the EAAB could be feeding information to the City’s existing groups, sites, pages, and publications to minimize time and effort while achieving maximum results. He expressed his desire to expose the EAAB in new and different ways to people who don’t already know about it so the organization can experience growth.

Mr. Wyrock said that when Mr. Reitz attended the meetings, he would provide updates on topics like deer culling. He hasn’t heard anything on deer culling since Mr. Reitz retired.

Action: Mrs. Oliver said she would contact Director Liskovec about getting a deer culling update.

Green Scholars Program⁷ - Chair Naumann

Chair Naumann said that \$750 of the approved EAAB budget, coupled with additional funding from Councilman Shahmir, will be used for a comprehensive program within Avon Lake City Schools. The objective is to recruit students who want to conduct an environmental health impact study.

⁶ If the designee(s) from EAAB engages with environmental posts on social media, they can, as a rule, invite the person who posted or commented to the next EAAB meeting(s).

⁷ Only a proposed name. The official name has not been finalized.

- The program’s goals include fostering a deep understanding of environmental issues and their complexities, providing hands-on experience in conducting environmental health impact studies, and cultivating leadership, critical thinking, and collaborative skills among students through a cross-functional project.
- Mr. Wyrock and Mrs. Oliver might be liaisons between the Schools and the EAAB.

Chair Naumann announced that Scott Cameron, from Charah Solutions (Charah), resigned from the Board, effective immediately.

Creeks/Streams Testing

Now that Mr. Cameron is unavailable to follow through on his contribution to this project, Chair Naumann said this student outreach program might be something that Mr. Patton could be involved in. Details haven’t been hashed out yet, but the thought was to implement specific types of environmental community service work with students to test creeks and streams in the City. Perhaps a mentor/mentee setup, where a Board member pairs up with a student, is feasible.

- Mr. Patton said he would look into what he could do, or he just might pair up with Mr. Wyrock and Mrs. Oliver with the Green Scholars Program.
- Mr. McCormick said there was a meeting with Councilman Shahmir, Mayor Spaetzel, and Councilwoman Fenderbosch with Terry Scheurman at Applied Specialties (ASI) about this issue.

Chair Naumann said Scott Cameron sent his resignation to the Board that afternoon, so Charah will no longer be represented at the meetings. Chair Naumann expressed his frustration about participation from industries across the community. Dedicated members show up every month from ASI, Avient™, Charah (until now), Ford Motor, and Lubrizol, and he would like to see more of these types of relationships because of how much industry is in Avon Lake.

- As a project, if someone is interested in owning the research involved in making sure that EAAB is getting as many people as it can to the Board and fostering those relationships, he’s looking for volunteers.

Power Plant Update - Mr. Witt

Mr. Witt said that Charah no longer participating on the Board seems like an indicator. He then referred to the timeline Councilman Shahmir put together and said there is an environmental issue going on, but he’s not sure what the resolution is. Councilman Shahmir could best address the issues about the illegal connection from the coal yard to the storm drain that goes out to the beach. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had no knowledge or information. Mr. Witt said Charah lied and has been lying the entire time by saying they were involved in the Voluntary Action Program (VAP). The EPA said there was no information on the VAP docket. The same water that caused the mercury violation was redirected out of the 155” storm

drainpipe without anyone realizing it or knowing it, so the water was released into Lake Erie.

- This raises questions: How did it happen? Why did it happen? Why was it allowed to happen? Who pulled all the levers to make all that happen?

Mr. Witt said there is more information to come because this situation is far from over. He didn't know how this would impact the Power Plant; it's related to the other piece of property.

- Chair Naumann said to consider attending other monthly City meetings, such as the Communications, Environmental & Recreational Programming Committee meetings, the committee that EAAB reports to Council through; Collective Committee Meetings; and Council Meetings to gain a deeper understanding of issues and to advocate when there are opportunities for input and drawing attention to accountability.

Action: Deputy Clerk of Council Boggins said she would email Board Members any minutes from Committee meetings that contain relevant environmental information, such as the Power Plant updates.

Mr. Wyrock said a builder is attempting to build a home to the right of the Kopf Family Reservation entrance on Electric Boulevard. He shared details on what he did to oppose it, why he is against it, and what he will do to stop it from happening.

INDUSTRY MEMBER UPDATE

Avient™ - Mr. Sulzer

Mr. Sulzer said they started working with the [Onsite Energy](#) Program funded by the Department of Energy. It elicits college support, like the University of Chicago, to learn about opportunities that Avient™ can reduce its energy footprint by utilizing [newer technologies](#), battery storage, getting rid of its boiler house, and things like that. Engineers are eager to take action on environmental issues, and they also hope to utilize high school students to do some of the legwork.

NEW BUSINESS

Clean Up Avon Lake Day

Co-chair Miller asked if the EAAB wants to do anything as a group for this event.

- Chair Naumann said to come to the next meeting with ideas. In the past, the EAAB has facilitated the day by passing out water and guiding volunteers to areas where they could be most helpful.
 - Co-chair Miller said that Celena Crytzer, in Public Works, is facilitating it from now on. In the past, the EAAB has hosted a garlic mustard pull in Kopf Reservation, and there is still garlic mustard. That would be an easy thing to do.

Mrs. George said it was called Lorain County Pride Day in the past, but people thought that was no longer descriptive, so it was changed to Lorain County Beautification Day. Years ago, the EAAB purchased stand-up signs to use as reminders around the City. The real purpose of the day was to encourage people in the City and County to clean up, starting with their own areas. If you had elderly relatives or neighbors that needed assistance, you could volunteer to help them. The Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts would adopt a park, but she sees that less and less as the years go on. Avon Lake designated someone to get supplies, such as water, bags, and gloves, from the Lorain County Solid Waste District to provide to any groups or individuals who asked for them.

Mr. Patton said he would be at the Boat Club. He proposed meeting as a group and cleaning up the whole beachfront there. He said it needed it because of all the wood that washed up. There is a dumpster there to haul everything to.

Chair Naumann said all the ideas were good ones and would be discussed further at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Submitted by Ramona Boggins, Deputy Clerk of Council

/s/ Ramona Boggins