



**Minutes of the
Environmental Affairs Advisory Board
Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 6:30 PM
Location: Avon Lake Public Library, McMahan**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Welcome/Attendance/Meeting Minutes

Present: Kayla Goodwin, Sam Naumann, Marty Patton, Rob Shahmir, and Terry Wyrock, citizen members.

Tom Sulzer (Avient™), Mike McCormick (Applied Specialties), and Ron Spears (Lubrizol), industry members; Scott Cameron (Charah Solutions), industry member.

Absent: Rita George, Jen Miller, and Terry Robison, citizen members; and Michelle Hall (Ford), industry member.

Also in Attendance: Mayor Zilka and Council Representative Billie Jo David.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Sulzer moved to approve the minutes of February 1, 2023, and March 7, 2023. Mr. Shahmir seconded. All ayes. Motion approved.

Resident Holly Kowalski handed the Board samples of laundry detergent that does not use plastic products in its distribution. She uses this detergent, which is a sheet that dissolves in the washing machine and is only available online.

Residential Accountability

1. Clean-up Avon Lake Day

Mrs. Goodwin reported on the Board's efforts to organize this year's Clean-Up Day held on Saturday, May 20th. This annual event will join the City, community organizations, and church groups in various cleanup projects. The City has a relationship with several groups who routinely participate in this annual event, and Mrs. Miller and Public Works Director Kevin Brubaker will organize this year's projects. The Avon Lake Boat Club receives a dumpster, and the Avon-on-the-Lake Garden Club needs volunteers at the civic gardens. Typically, there are five organized activities, and St. Joseph's, Open Door Church, the Lutheran Church, and the scouts have expressed interest in helping. Director Brubaker will provide a list of areas in the City that the Board is allowed to clean.

Chair Naumann stated that the Avon Lake Cleanup Day joins with the Lorain County Beautiful Day initiative. It is part of a larger countywide effort, and he requested that if any Board members are aware of an organization or residents that would be interested, please contact him or Mrs. Miller.

Action: More information on this year's activities will be provided to the Board.

2. Speaker Series

The next program partnered with the library is Environmentally Speaking: Organic Lawn Care and will be held on Tuesday, April 11th from 7 to 8 p.m.

3. Trash Contract Roundtable Forum

Mrs. David reported that this event will be held on Wednesday, April 26th at 7 p.m. at the Avon Lake High School Commons, and six volunteers from the Board are needed. The City will use the World Café model for this forum. Every table will have a specific topic and a facilitator will encourage a conversation as each resident sits at the table. That conversation will generate feedback from residents which will help the City and the representative from the Trash Consortium develop the bid requirements for the next trash contract. The topics will include recycling, container size, and the days of the week for trash collection versus one day for all trash collection.

Mayor Zilka stated that the current trash contract ends on March 31, 2024. This forum will begin the process of obtaining what residents want in the City's next contract. The City will write up a bid package and prioritize the feedback received from the roundtable session combined with information received from an online survey.

Action: Mrs. David will email Board members a list of the table topics, and set up SignUp Genius, and she will email a copy of the City's current trash contract.

4. Earth Fest

Chair Nauman reported that the Board was invited to attend Earth Day on April 22nd hosted by the West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church in Rocky River. At this event, groups in the area will meet and discuss sustainability. The Board was asked to provide an update on the Power Plant and its remediation.

Industrial Accountability

5. Industry Reports

- Applied Specialties – Mr. McCormick reported that Applied Specialties recently toured their neighbor's facility (Chemtron). As part of an ongoing partnership in risk management, Chemtron and Applied Specialties meet regularly to review their risks and hazards.
- Avient™ – Mr. Sulzer reported that a group of employees serve on the Community Service Team and have scheduled the following cleanups: 1) April 26th, they will clean up the facility property; and 2) April 27th, they will clean up Lakewood Park in the City of Lorain. Currently, there is an internal safety audit being conducted by the ESG (Environmental Sustainability Governance) group which has been assessing Avient's spaces and programs, and there have been no safety incidents or discharges reported.
- Charah – Mr. Cameron reported that Avon Lake Regional Water has been collecting and testing the water regularly, the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) Board members toured the facility recently, and the asbestos abatement is still ongoing. To date, approximately 1,700 tons of asbestos have been abated. The building on the far west, the Unit 9 precipitator, will be demolished at the end of next week (April 14th), and then the debris

from that demolition, i.e. steel, siding, etc., will be removed. Then Charah will begin removing the ducts and the steel that runs to the Unit 9 stack.

Mrs. David asked if the Board has had contact with industry member Vestolit and if someone will replace their last representative, Jason Drum, who resigned from the company. In response, Chair Naumann stated that the Board has not had any contact from Vestolit.

Action: Community Development Director Esborn will be contacted and asked for assistance in obtaining another representative from Vestolit.

Power Plant

Chair Naumann explained to the members of the public in attendance that the EAAB Board seeks to be a consultant stakeholder and a community partner for the City and its industry partners and the community. As such, the Board desires to ensure that it is a conduit for the community to raise concerns, if necessary, and to work collaboratively to ensure that the Power Plant redevelopment is done successfully.

The groups involved in this collaboration are 1) the EAAB; 2) the CIC, which is involved in the legal framework, industrial accountability, and stakeholder engagement; 3) Charah, who is involved with the collection of environmental data and oversees remediation and selected demolition. Selected demolition means that the property will be demolished to a certain point of development, and whoever acquires it will continue with remediation to meet their development standards; and 4) Council. The City is moving to a stage in this project whereby a zoning strategy will be applied regarding how the property will be developed, and there will be potential zoning changes. Charah will work with the City to obtain those changes in zoning.

Mr. Cameron of Charah stated that Charah will remediate the property to a certain point and then it will be passed on to whoever purchases the property, and the purchaser will continue developing the property at that point.

Mrs. David informed the Board that the City has discussed contracting an environmental consultant, and it is a matter of determining the scope of the project and when the City should hire the consultant. The City has a vested interest in having part of the property as public property that will be accessible to the public. To accomplish this goal, an environmental consultant is needed to ensure that the land will be in the best condition for public use.

Power Plant Presentation

Highlights from the PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Shahmir:

- The EPA's model for a coal power plant decommissioning, remediation, and redevelopment consists of the removal of equipment and materials, compliance with closure permits, demolition of the buildings, the remediation of contaminants, and the redevelopment of the site.
- Regarding the decommissioning of the Avon Lake Power Plant, stakeholder involvement is critical, and a stakeholder consultant is vital. To date, the City has not retained an environmental consultant.
- Charah meets regularly with the CIC and has provided some information on the progress of the environmental activities at the site, specifically, on the asbestos abatement and the demolition component. Also, the EPA has inspected the abatement process.

- The City, however, has not been privy to any Phase 2 plans. The City has learned that wells are being installed and soil samples have been collected. But Charah has not answered the Board's questions on the depths of those wells. They have stated that they are shallow.
- An example of a successful coal power plant decommissioning occurred at a plant that was built in 1912 in Savanna, Georgia. In that setting, stakeholder consultation was involved at the beginning. It should not matter if a private entity redevelops the site because the City is responsible for safeguarding the safety and health of the community.
- A conceptual plan was presented to Avon Lake that may or may not be implemented. There are eight parcels of green space along with multi-use offices. It is a great concept and, if done properly, would be a model to showcase around the country.
- The Avon Lake site hosted a power plant with a coal storage area and green space. Initially, the City hired an environmental consultant (Verdantas) to assist with the application for funding of \$300,000 for Phase 2 assessments and another \$10 million. The consultant went through the records and pulled up "hot spots" based on the records that were available at the time. There are areas with VOC (volatile organic compounds) that are gasoline-related or diesel fuels. Other concerns are coal byproducts, and there are potential PCB areas. PCBs are carcinogenic, and they were used extensively in transformers before 1980.
- A transformer repair house was at the site. Many years ago, oils were drained into sewer lines, and those lines were made up of clay pipes. Clay pipes have a life of 100 years but, over time, they tend to leak. Therefore, there is a high probability that PCBs have leached into the soil and groundwater, and surface water. It is not hearsay since these are General Electric vessels. GE manufactured transformers in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Pittsfield has been closed for almost 15 years and remediation is still ongoing because the entire area is contaminated with PCBs.

Mr. Cameron stated he was aware that PCB oils were removed from all the transformers in the 1980s and replaced with non-PCB oils. He has performed transformer testing, and there has not been any PCB oil in the transformers since his employment in 1990. He has read a report that stated that all PCB oils were removed in the 1980s.

- Before the 1980s, PCBs were used at this site for 50 years, and clay pipes and trenches tend to leak and fracture. A maintenance shop constructed in 1926 sat above the Powdermaker Creek conduit. This shop housed a corrosive environment, such as cleaning products and solvents, and the conduit may have lasted 30+ years, but at some point, leakage will occur because of corrosion.
- PCBs are heavier than water and will drop to the bottom and will find a fracture and will move in the direction of fracture patterns.
- Ponds were built at the site with fill because there is no natural grade. Another power plant previously sat at that location which had problems and was torn down. A conduit was built to redirect Powdermaker Creek into Lake Erie. When fill is used, it does not act the same as natural ground and it moves differently because it wasn't compacted properly due to the lack of equipment during those times.
- Based on a review of all the parcels, the first seven parcels have a low probability of contaminated zones, and those zones could be easily remediated with minimal time, effort, and cost. However, the area in the green zone, presented in the PowerPoint, is an area that will take a lot of time and will be costly to remediate. Parcel D has a highly contaminated probability.
- The Board has requested EPA engagement and an environmental consultant to be hired by the City not to go onto Charah's property but to advise the City of the regulatory requirements.

Mayor Zilka stated that the water intake is tested every two hours at the point of intake and again at the plant before the final product goes out to the public. ALRW has found no evidence of any of these chemicals.

Mr. Shahmir responded that the water intake is not the issue, and ALRW does a great job protecting the drinking water source. The concern is not today, but it is the future after this area is disturbed.

Mayor Zilka stated that he shared some of Mr. Shahmir's concerns as Charah has not been forthcoming about whether they have seen or are experiencing contamination. They have been transparent with the asbestos abatement. As private property owners, they are not obligated to disclose this information. However, when they start selling parcels, they must reveal everything that is on the site. The City has discussed hiring a consultant, but it is a matter of timing as to when that should occur.

Mr. Cameron informed the Board that he started testing the water at the intake and discharge when he was hired. The Clean Water Act began in the 1970s and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) was installed at the plant. He has tested the water entering the plant and leaving the plant, and the water leaving the plant is cleaner than the water taken in, and he has 30 years of analytical data to support this fact. Mr. Shahmir is describing contaminants that happened before those NPDES systems were in place.

Mrs. David reiterated that the City does not oppose hiring an environmental consultant. This is the biggest environmental project the City is experiencing, and there will be other environmental issues that will require someone with expertise and knowledge. Therefore, having a consultant available will benefit the City.

Further discussion on the PowerPoint followed by questions was held. Chair Naumann invited the public in attendance to provide their contact information for future notifications of meetings or additional public forums that will be held regarding the Power Plant redevelopment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully yours,

/s/ Valerie E. Rosmarin

Valerie Rosmarin, Clerk