

TOWN OF DUNE ACRES
COUNCIL MINUTES - DRAFT
August 19, 2025

The Town of Dune Acres Town Council met for its regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at the Clubhouse. Council President Richard Hawksworth called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with Council members Alexander Stemer and Paul Woidke; Clerk-Treasurer Bonnie Hawksworth; and Town Attorney Adam Mindel in attendance. Commissioners present were Lee McKinley (Security), and Shawn Fitzpatrick (Parks).

The meeting was broadcast live and recorded via Zoom. The recording will be archived online for 90 days and can be accessed via this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/jRhKFDxhwwa0kb4U3MVuyNfD3wWH1GJ7RzC-GM-IVE5LXRgLt5boHRM9JHit16WA.24kfvwM1-lRCBiTE?startTime=1755647439000>
Passcode: u7eG6G\$*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes for the July 15 Town Council meeting minutes as presented. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Clerk-Treasurer Hawksworth presented the July month-end financial report. The combined bank account balance as of July 31 is \$960,855.49. The Town is in a good financial position relative to its budget for mid-year. Year-to-date revenue is \$672,854.76.

It was moved and seconded to approve the financial report. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:

Clerk-Treasurer Hawksworth asked the Town Council to approve Accounts Payable Vouchers for August (http://duneacres.org/apv/apv_2025-08.pdf) totaling \$70,619.62. This includes the payment to Emcor Electric for installation of power at East Beach. It was moved and seconded to approve the claims. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

CORRESPONDENCE: President Hawksworth summarized a notice from Porter County Council regarding Local Income Tax. An increase to the local income tax rate may be considered in this year.

EXECUTIVE REPORT:

Council President Hawksworth presented his executive report for the preceding month including the following activities:

TRAIN CROSSING: Since the July meeting, the Mineral Springs Road crossing has been blocked nine times for a total of approximately 263 minutes—an average of 29 minutes per incident. After seeing a reduction in incidents and duration last month, this continues the trends that we’ve seen over the last few years. It appears that most of the incidents were in the late evening or early morning hours.

CLUBHOUSE: Michele McClead solicited an estimate to restore the original painting of Dune Acres from the 1920s.

ELPC PERMIT COMMENTS: The Environmental Law and Policy Center (ELPC) submitted formal comments to IDEM related to Cleveland Cliffs Burns Harbor permit modification, No. IN0000175. A permit modification is less involved than a renewal, but the issues raised by ELPC are relevant to Dune Acres and its residents. The final comments document is available from the clerk-treasurer, upon request.

TRASH AND RECYCLING COLLECTION: We’ve been working on and off for more than a year to procure bids for trash and recycling collection in Dune Acres. To date, Total Disposal is the only responsive bidder. Republic and Homewood have not responded to inquiries. There are statutory requirements to granting an exclusive contract, which will be discussed under old business.

STORM EVENTS: Recent storms have caused widespread damage and flooding in Dune Acres. The maintenance building may have been struck by lightning, Comcast service was knocked out in many parts of town, trees and beaches were down everywhere, and several roadways were inundated, at least temporarily. Mark Taylor worked throughout the night to make sure the roads were passable and safe. Town Hall has an undefined water issue that needs to be remedied. Water is infiltrating the clerk’s office, even after relatively modest rains. It may be entering from a point concealed by the ice rink deck. Mark will coordinate an inspection with an appropriate contractor.

IN MEMORIUM: Longtime resident Barbara Plampin passed away on Saturday August 9th. She was 96. Barbara and her husband Geoffrey built their home at 18 East Road in 1985 and she became the leading authority on flora of the Indiana Dunes. Barbara inaugurated Dune Acres environmental commission, served as it’s first commissioner, led nature walks for many years, and continued to botanize the region into her 80s. The Plampins donated land adjacent to their home to the Town, which was christened Plampin Park. Beginning in 1999, Barbara researched and co-authored a seminal 700- page revision to the Indiana Dunes “Special Vegetation report” which documents the rare flora found throughout the National Park. After 25 years, it was completed in 2024 and released in print earlier this year.

RESTORATION OF TOWN PARK S: A Lake Michigan Coastal Program grant was received to fund, in part, the restoration of Town Park S, which is 7.5 acres situated above Hill Drive. It is challenging terrain and not easily navigated, but for those ambitious enough to try, it offers exquisite views of Lake Michigan and the surrounding landscape. The parcel connects to Town Park A (opposite the intersection of Mineral Springs Road and East Road) via a habit corridor that roughly parallels Linden Lane. The initial plan was to maintain this corridor for residents who wish to walk off road from town hall all the way to Hill Drive. The restoration included the removal of invasive brush and other invasive species, in addition to both non-native and overstocked native trees. The area’s most dominant ground cover plant—Pennsylvania sedge will be transplanted to the area when the weather cools, and a native seed mix will be distributed in December, adding diversity to excellent assemblage that exists.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS:

BEACH: None

BUILDING: None

ENVIRONMENT: None

FIRE: President Hawksworth reported that Porter Fire Chief Jay Craig reached out to begin coordination of the fire contract renewal for next year.

MAINTENANCE: None

PARKS: Commissioner Fitzpatrick reported that a decision was made to hold off on the Perma-Seal tennis court crack repairs until next spring because of weather and scheduling issues. A rubber sealant will be tested as a stop-gap until next year. A gathering will be held to discuss potential plans for the playground.

ROADS: None

SECURITY: Commissioner McKinley presented Joshua Bauer as a security new hire. Joshua previously worked in Dune Acres in the same capacity in 2021. This is a probationary hire to be formalized at the discretion of the Security Commissioner and voted on by the Town Council. This will be the procedure for all new security hires moving forward. Attorney Mindel will draft some guidelines for this process. A motion was made and seconded to approve the probationary hire of Joshua Bauer. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Commissioner McKinley reported on patrol procedures. When security guards overlap shifts, the opportunity is taken for patrols (while there is another guard who can remain at the guardhouse),

OLD BUSINESS:

Garbage: Attorney Mindel will prepare a draft ordinance to enable the Town to recommend a waste removal service provider.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ordinance 2025-01. 2026 Budget Appropriation and Tax Rates, First Reading: President Hawksworth conducted the first reading of the Ordinance 2025-01, 2025 Budget Appropriation and Tax Rates. It was moved and seconded to approve the first reading. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion passed.

Duneland Landscape Proposal for East Road Beach Stairs: The council reviewed Duneland Landscape proposal to repair the stairway from Circle Drive to East Road. Commissioner Taylor addressed questions. There was a discussion about whether the usage of this stretch justifies the \$18,469.00 expenditure. A motion was made and seconded to approve the expenditure. The vote was unanimous in favor; motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Dan Kleine reported that file cabinets will be moved to the Town Hall for archival Plan Commission storage this fall.

Michele McClead shared an estimate for the restoration of the historical Dune Acres painting. The Town Council will review and discuss at a future meeting. In the meantime, the council agreed that Michele would talk to DACIF regarding potential funding for this project.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:57 pm. The next regular meeting of the Town Council is on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at the Clubhouse.

RICHARD HAWKSWORTH, Town Council President

PAUL WOIDKE, Town Council Member

ALEXANDER STEMER, Town Council Member

BONNIE HAWKSWORTH, Clerk-Treasurer