

SB Canal Water Quality Committee
February 28, 2022, 1:00 pm
Meeting Conducted via Town Hall and Go To Meeting

Committee Members: Bob Fisher (Excused Absence), Karin Gander (Phone), Gary Lessing (Phone), Brian Moroz (In-person), Chris Vanuga (In-person), Dave Wilson (In-person)

Town Council Representative and Committee Member: Derek Abbott

Guests:

1. Burr Monroe, President, Tributaries LLC
2. Bill McLaughlin, property owner and CIB representative

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm

1. Minutes from January 24, 2022 meeting were approved.
2. Updates from Town Council Liaison, Derek Abbott:
 - a. Derek confirmed that the Town Council would like this Committee to include Sea Level Rise (SLR) as additional scope.
 - b. Chris inquired on how the work from the disbanded ad-hoc SLR and Storm Surge (SLRSS) Committee that was activated after Hurricane Sandy in 2012 could be leveraged for this Committee's efforts?
 - c. Dave was on the SLRSS and provided an overview of the scope of work which included an outside consultant to include and elevation study. Dave will share the final report with this Committee from the SLRSS Committees' work; Committee members agreed to review and be prepared to discuss at a future meeting TBD.
 - d. Derek provided update on the Budget process, with the prior request for funds for water sampling (\$4,700) along with funds for canal monitoring (\$10,000) still in the budget. Other incremental projects can be addressed with the Council as they arise in the budget. Time is short for any further recommendations or requests, so please get to him asap.
 - e. Topic of the Woods Hole report provided as final in 2019 was raised by Chris, particularly related to what is the update for the recommendation to dredge the canals. Derek said he would follow-up with the Town Council and update us at the next meeting.
3. Discussion with Burr Monroe:
 - a. Burr introduced himself as the President and provided a brief overview of his company. He was here today to tell the Committee about the capabilities of Tributaries to support the continued maintenance and other concerns of the CWQC.
 - b. He stated his understanding is that water quality is a top priority, and he has some ideas on how his company could help. For example, there was a discussion around aeration, circulation and options to addressing specifically reducing the level of phosphorous. Burr said he would take this discussion, what he learns in this meeting and looking at the previous efforts to come back to this Committee with a proposal

on how Tributaries could help maintain the Canals. He will let us know when he is ready to present to the Committee.

4. Discussion on Priorities of the CWQC

- a. Chris reminded the Committee on the recent work completed by this group to evaluate and update the priorities of this group and shared again copies of the survey results and rankings for the discussion.
- b. Dave provided some thoughts around the recent improvements in the water quality readings may be the result of the completion of the Sea Colony retention pond in 2020. However, not sure how recently the Forebay was cleaned out by DE Department of Transportation per the agreement. Chris indicated he would follow-up with Maureen Hartman, Town Manager, and report back.
- c. Dave further commented on the continued challenges, however, with the Canal ends overall and dissolved oxygen (DO) readings that remain poor. He provided historical context for discussions around how address this through improved circulation with Tidal Pumps and other considerations like connecting the canals; general agreement to continue to look at these and other less-complex options too.
- d. Derek suggested to address the priority of overall education and awareness of SB Residents, Guests and others that we consider organizing a “Canal Day” to focus on the quality issue. General agreement to the merits of this idea. Chris agreed to reach out to the South Bethany Property Owners Association to see if this is something they are considering and/or would consider in collaboration with this Committee. He will report out this discussion at the next meeting.
- e. Chris updated the Committee that he has an upcoming meeting with Chris Bason, President of the Center for Inland Bays (CIB) on Thursday March 3, 2022 to discuss the recent updated Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) 2021 just published. Along with the recently published and distributed to Residents of South Bethany the well-done “Protecting the Inland Bays: A Waterfront Property Owner’s Guide”, looking to get further guidance, alignment and support from the CIB as we refine our focus and efforts. Chris will update the Committee on the key points at the next CWQC meeting.
- f. Burr Monroe commented that there may be a technique to assist with the circulation in the Canal ends. He will provide additional information to us at a later date.

5. Focus Area Updates and Discussion

- a. Code Review and Education - Bob
 - i. Topic was deferred until next Committee meeting with Bob’s excused absence.
- b. Floating Wetlands – Gary
 - i. Dave started the discussion noting some of the benefits, particularly in the Canal ends; however, question around who will take care of them? Is this something the Town has in the budget?
 - ii. Derek noted the continued concern around the benefits versus the cost.
 - iii. Gary provided some updates from his discussions with CIB, prior CWQC members and others with the following key points:

1. A nice habitat to attract wildlife.
 2. Provides a tangible and visible point around education and awareness of resident.
 3. But still not clear how many you need to really make an impact.
 - iv. Gary will continue to research this and provide an update and potential proposal for the Committee to consider at a later date to be determined.
 - c. Grant Funding – Chris
 - i. Chris provided update on one of the Grants that looks promising: the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP DR-4526).
 1. This is a FEMA program, that DEMA is leading the efforts within DE.
 2. Pre-application due in June, final application due 8/15/22 with funding due by end of the calendar year.
 3. Several Committee members attended the information session in late 2021, and the presentation was forwarded to everyone on 12/2/21.
 4. Chris has set up a meeting with the Program lead at DEMA, Karen Montes-Berrios on Thursday @ 11:30am; anyone is welcome to join him, just let him know. He will report back any updates at the next CWQC meeting.
 5. Derek also mentioned a new Grant related to SLR that the Town may be looking in to; he will report back to us by or at the next CWQC meeting.
 - d. Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis – Dave, Brian
 - i. Brian provided an update on his analysis with meteorological information (precipitation, windspeed and wind direction) from the Delaware Environmental Observing System (DEOS).
 1. One key observation is that the greater a rain event, there is a positive correlation with a degradation in water quality in the days following; this appears to support the consideration that run-off from all the surrounding properties, Route 1 and stormwater entering the Forebay from the northern sources is causing some of the Canal water quality issues.
 2. Chris commented on how this information might be used in a discussion with the Town Council relative to code changes, enforcement, and other more significant programs such as diverting Route 1 stormwater complete from direct entry in the Canals.
 3. Brian will continue to analyze the data and will prepare some slides for an upcoming presentation to the Town Council at a date to be determined.
 4. Dave updated the Committee that the Volunteer testing program was going well, and always looking for new volunteers to help and get involved.
6. Other Committee Business
 - a. None brought forward.
 7. Public Comment

- a. Bill McLaughlin provided an update on the Oyster Gardening and the cages. He confirmed that the CIB owns the cages, and is open to discussing with the Town of South Bethany about taking ownership of them. CIB does not currently have the budget or Program support to take care of them. After a short discussion, Chris thanked Bill for the update and his participation in the meeting and stated that we would get back to him on how we recommend proceeding on the Oyster cages.
- b. Bill also reminded us that Nivette Perez from the CIB and who presented to us at the last meeting on the Oyster Gardening program is available for any further questions or communications. We can reach Nivette at nperezperez@inlandbays.org.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 21, 2022 at 1:00 pm via In-person at Town Hall and Go To Meeting.