

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee

March 31, 2021, 1:00 pm

Meeting Conducted at Town Hall and via Go To Meeting

Committee Members: Bob Fisher (in-person), Karin Gander (excused absence) Gary Lessing (in-person), Brian Moroz (in-person), Chris Vanuga (in-person), Dave Wilson (excused absence)

Town Council Representative, Derek Abbott (excused absence)

Guest: Burr Monroe – President, Tributaries, LLC

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm

- Minutes from the February 28, 2022 meeting were approved.
- No update from the Town Council.
- Update from Chris' meetings this month.
 - On March 3, Chris met with Chris Bason of The Center for Inland Bays (CIB). This was an introductory meeting to discuss how our groups can work together going forward.
 - On March 4, Chris had a call with Mayor Pro-tem Sue Callaway, who leads the Community Enhancement Committee. She express concerns about the poor condition of the floating wetlands at the canal ends and the abandoned oyster gardens at the street ends.
 - On March 9, Chris and Brian had a call with Karen Montes-Berrios from Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA) regarding the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and other Grant opportunities. (Karen is leaving the organization and is being replaced by Phil Cane.
 - On March 11, Chris had a call with Joe Mormando of SB Property Owners Association. It was a very supportive meeting. One idea that was discussed was having a 'Clean Up South Bethany Day this spring. They also discuss the opportunity for joint mailings / emails

- On March 21, Chris had a call with Nivette Perez-Perez from the CIB regarding the Oyster Garden program. Reviewed the history of the program, and the key issue of the regulation change by the State which impacted CIB's ability to oversee the program. Need to discuss options with Township and follow-up meeting with CIB to be scheduled.

- On March 25, Chris had a call with Phil Cane of the State Hazard Mitigation Department. He was supportive of any efforts we take to address flood mitigation and canal contamination from storm water run-off, and offered his help in reviewing our proposed grant applications.

- Discussion on Floating Wetlands and Oyster Gardens

- There was general agreement that we need to do something about the condition of the floating wetlands at the canal ends. It was felt that they need at least two maintenance efforts each year: a spring maintenance to properly secure the structures and replace plants that have died over the winter; and a fall clean up to check the physical conditions of the gardens and cut back the vegetation along with canal end clean-up.

- The CWQC voted to recommend that the town issue an RFP to conduct a special assessment of the floating wetlands, along with the continuation of the overall canal maintenance . Chris will contact Maureen Hartman to discuss this.

- The 6 oyster gardens were put in place in 2017 in cooperation with CIB. Because of a change in State regulations, CIB has not been able to continue their program of harvesting oysters and maintaining these gardens and they have since fallen into disrepair. Burr mentioned that he does not believe any of the oysters are still alive in these gardens. Andrew McGowan is the person at CIB responsible for this program. Gary will reach out to CIB and discuss this problem. One option may be to set up a video call with members from our committee, Maureen Hartman and Andrew McGowan.

- Code Review and Education

- Bob committed to come back to the committee next month with Education ideas and possible options to address homeowners dumping directly into the canals.

- Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis.

- No discussion this month with Dave's absence.

- South Bethany Clean Up Day

- The possibility of having a clean up day was discussed and supported. We liked the idea of having this event on May 14 – the same day as

the special bulk trash pick up when many homeowners are in town. Chris will talk to Derek, Maureen and Joe Mormando about this.

- Grant Funding

- As mentioned above, Chris had a very supportive discussion with Phil Cane from DEMA. Chris shared ideas about the flood water diversion from Coastal highway and the 2007 engineering study on building tidal pumps to increase canal circulation and flood mitigation. Phil said the State is looking to support larger, more impactful projects and offered to review out grant requests. Currently, we do not have a grant writer to support us on these efforts. Chris will discuss this with Maureen to develop options to support grant writing.

- The town is currently conducting a resiliency study that may help us with the priorities for grant writing. The study is expected to be completed in May, and then we can determine what next steps should be aligned with the report's recommendations.

- CWQC Mission and Purpose

- In preparation for our next meeting, Chris requested we all review our Mission and Purpose Statements so we can discuss changes / upgrades to them. Committee members should send their comments to Chris prior to our April 18 meeting

- New Business

- No new business

The meeting was adjourned at 2:47 pm.