



Town of South Bethany Committee Report for September 26th, 2022

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on September 26th at 10:00am online with all members attending. Town Liaison Tim Shaw was a planned absence.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 8/15/22 meeting

Chris provided a brief update on relevant Town Council matters with Tim's absence. Town Council approved and contract was signed for the additional services' quotations from Envirotech for the fall pruning and replacing the missing plants on the Floating Wetlands. We are awaiting confirmation from Envirotech on the timing for the work.

The working group on Canal Maintenance provided an update on their efforts to evaluate several options to address the ongoing maintenance of the canals with a priority on Algae harvesting. A new fifth option was also presented that was brought forward by DNREC and was added to the other options in consideration, as follows:

1. Stay with the current program relying on DNREC;
2. Outsourcing the entire effort to a 3rd-party contractor;
3. Purchasing the necessary equipment and adding personnel to perform the work;
4. Purchasing the necessary equipment but contracting with an external party to perform the work; or,
5. Continue with DNREC (option 1) but have access to borrow their harvester when not being used by DNREC.

From the additional research and discussions, the sub-group recommended the Aqua Marine Harvester as the equipment to purchase if either option #3 or #4 is recommended. The committee agreed and asked to get a formal quote to be shared with the full Committee for consideration of approval at the next CWQC meeting.

It was also discussed that for any of the options that don't include DNREC (options 2,3,4), a formal agreement will need to be put in place with Delaware Seashore State Park (DSSP) to continue using the Fresh Pond location for the temporary dumping and de-watering of any harvested algae before it is hauled away. DNREC currently has approval to do this themselves, but this would need to be put in place directly with the Town of South Bethany if one of the options not involving DNREC is selected. DNREC is reaching out on our behalf to discuss this with DSSP and will update us as soon as they connect.

It is important to note this is the critical milestone in the overall recommendation process regardless of which option is recommended and may impact the timing of a final decision.

Without the ability of the Town of South Bethany to dump the spoils at this location, this leaves limited options, regardless of options 2, 3 or 4 being recommended. The result is that we likely would be left with the current option 1 only for Spring 2023. More work is being done to better understand any other back-up disposal plan options as well.

Once the committee has developed adequate information about each of these options, including estimated costs and (dis)advantages provided by each, it will make a presentation and recommendation to the Council on best option. Due to delays in getting firm quotes along with discussions with DNREC, it is now expected to occur in October.

The Committee again reaffirmed that if a procurement option is recommended and approved by the Town Council but can't be executed in time for ample delivery time, it may be necessary to have a 3rd party perform the work in the coming Spring of 2023 as a back-up plan. We would then likely have the Town's chosen procurement plan be in effect and ready for the Spring of 2024. More information on this is planned to be discussed at the next CWQC meeting.

There were questions from Bob Biciocchi, Town Council member in attendance, regarding some of the other activities of the Committee as well as specially dredging and where this fit relative to the Committee's maintenance discussion and efforts. Committed confirmed that this was on the mid to long-range plan to review and evaluate options and of course the regulatory and cost considerations. A summary and any recommendations would be brought to the Town Council for consideration at the appropriate time.

Leads for the focus areas provided updates. Key activities including continue education through the newsletters, fall clean-up and replenishment of the floating wetlands, following up with DEMA on the HMGP grant program and any other newer options, and Water Quality Monitoring & Analysis is continuing.

There were no other public comments.

The committee will continue to meet monthly on the third (3rd) Monday of the month, at 10:00am online until the renovations of Town Hall are completed. Members of the public are welcome.

Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman