



Town of South Bethany Committee Report for October 17, 2022

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on September 26th at 10:00am online with all members attending except for Gary Lessing and Karin Gander.

Town Liaison Tim was present.

Residents Carolyn Bell, President of the SBPOA and Keith Watson were also present.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 9/26/22 meeting

Tim provided a summary of the Delaware Department of Transportation meeting he attended on the newly launched resiliency study focused on keeping Route 1 accessible during events requiring evacuation from this coastal region of Sussex County. Initial work planned will be around extensive modeling. He also shared the continued concerns from Town Council on how the Township can be better prepared for the Spring 2023 Algae bloom season. Direction from Town Council remains to keep this as the top priority for the CWQC.

Chris provided an updated recap on the efforts of the working group focusing on the Algae remediation efforts. While the five (5) options remained the most viable considerations, the recommendation remained to purchase a Harvester equipment and either hire two (2) seasonal staff or contract for a company to provide seasonal staff support.

Final quotes were received from both Aqua Marine and Alpha Boats for their two respective Harvester equipment and trailers.

It was also discussed once again that for any of the options that don't include DNREC (options B,C,D), a formal agreement will need to be put in place with Delaware Seashore State Park (DSSP) to continue using the Fresh Pond Trailhead location for the temporary dumping and de-watering of any harvested algae before it is hauled away from South Bethany. As reported previously, 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 they still have not been able to speak directly with them; they committed to continue to follow-up. There was a suggestion made to consider reaching out to our State Representatives for assistance on this as well.

It is once again 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 being recommended. The result is that we

likely could be left with the current option A only for Spring 2023. More work is being done to better understand any other back-up disposal plan options as well.

Considering the progress made and the concern with timing, Tim agreed to seek a date for a presentation and update to the Town Council as soon as possible.

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. Bob Fisher is leading discussions with several qualified companies on getting some sort of retainer contract in place to assist with Algae removal as necessary.

Code/Communications: Bob will continue to provide content for the Town and SBPOA newsletters. Keith Watson presented an idea around the launch of a new program to recognize homes that follow more canal-friendly efforts to eliminate or minimize contaminants or other negative impact to our canals/canal water. He shared example from another community. The CWQC was supportive of the idea, and he will work with Bob and Chris to detail out the Program for future meeting discussion and consideration. Carolyn expressed support for the initial idea on behalf of the SBPOA as well and committed to seeing how SBPOA would assist.

Floating Wetlands (FW): In Gary's planned absence, Chris noted that the fall pruning of the FWs will take place on October 26, 27th by Envirotech per their contract. The replacement of the missing plants will likely be deferred to the Spring at this point.

Grants: Chris has a follow-up call with the HMGP, BRIC and other key resilience grant programs' point of contact from DEMA next week. There are also some upcoming workshops that DEMA is organizing that we will have participation to help us in preparing our funding request(s) by 12/31/22.

Water Quality: Dave provided updates on the condition of the canals, which show improvements in Dissolved Oxygen (DO) due to lower water temperature and churning from recent storms. Brian provided some updates on the continued work to align with the extensive data available from the University of Delaware community monitoring program.

For other committee business, Chris updated the CWQC on some discussions taking place with a resident interested in helping with the review, evaluation and considerations around dredging the canals. Follow-up discussions are planned. 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