



Town of South Bethany Committee Report for November 21, 2022

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on November 21st at 10:00am online with all members attending except for Karin Gander and Pete Trelenberg.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Resident Richard Juliano attended.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 10/17/22 meeting

Tim 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 update from his and Tim's presentation and robust and positive discussion with the Budget & Finance Committee on November 9th. Purpose was to discuss in greater detail the presentation and underlying assumptions around the 5 options this Committee has developed and was presented to the Town Council at their Workshop on October 25th.

We reviewed all the options and provided support and answered questions around the various assumptions and considerations. The B&F committee members were very engaged and, in the end, very supportive in getting something in place to better address the Algae issue.

However, consistent with the Town Council direction, the B&F Committee wants to see us get a back-up plan/agreement in place with an outside company if DNREC is not able to perform the Harvesting and/or on a timely basis, and to provide us some additional time to get more of the operational details figured out if we move forward to purchase and operate our own Harvester.

It was also discussed once again that for any of the options that don't include DNREC, 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 disposal and de-watering of any harvested algae before it is hauled away from South Bethany.

Tim conveyed that he is now on point for the Town to lead this continued discussion and negotiations with DNREC on getting a formal agreement in place that we can continue to dewater and dispose of the Algae spoils in Fresh Pond. 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. Tim is asking DNREC for a call with all required DE parties by the beginning of December.

Regardless of whether we contract for these services or purchase our own Harvesting equipment and put in place staff, we will need to establish a location to remove the harvested algae from the Canals onto the dump truck to transport the spoils to the dewatering location. Several options were discussed, and the working group will continue to explore and update the Committee in future meetings.

The Committee discussed the importance of moving forward with getting a contract in place for this back-up Algae removal services for a range of dates based on additional analysis that Dave and Brian will complete. Based on the 3 responses Bob received from our request for proposals, the Committee approved unanimously to move forward with Solitude. Bob will get the draft contract to Maureen so it can be finalized and reviewed by our Solicitor. Tim will add the review and possible action to approve the contract on the next Town Council meeting on December 9th.

Code/Communications: No new updates.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Working with Envirotech to complete the Fall pruning per their contract. There were some delays, and Chris will follow-up to get final confirmation on when they can complete all the work. The analysis came back from the samples collected by Envirotech and we sent to a lab for processing. Dave provided a brief summary, which indicated that they were pulling out nitrates and phosphorous but not clear on the overall impact. Dave and Brian will work with the data and provide an update at a future meeting on their estimates of the overall impact of the Floating Wetlands.

Grants: Chris shared there were two upcoming meetings on Resilience (RASCL) and the Hazard Mitigation Grant programs on December 6 and 12, respectively. Tim and Chris are scheduled to attend the RASCL meeting and Chris is working on attending the HMG meeting as well. This should help provide additional insights and direction on additional grants and process to follow.

Water Quality: Dave provided updates on the condition of the canals, which show continued improvements in Dissolved Oxygen (DO) due to lower water temperature. During this off-season, testing is only 1x per month. Dave noted that we should be getting back the analysis from the Chesapeake Lab of our sampling soon. He will update the Committee at the next meeting.

For other committee business, Chris updated the CWQC on his research on the prior Dredging efforts of South Bethany. Discussions with DNREC took place from 1993 and up to 2002, when regulations changed and DNREC no longer could perform Dredging directly for municipalities. South Bethany engaged help with studies and permitting beginning in 2003, resulting in approvals and actual Dredging taking place in early 2008. From Town files reviewed, noted there was no record of any prior Dredging. An interesting new approach was put forth at that time, based on new regulation in 2002 allowing for the establishment of Lagoon Commissions to manage canals. More research will be completed and an update to the Committee in a future meeting.

Richard Juliano addressed the Committee during Public Comments, thanking the Committee for its efforts and committing to supporting and helping as well.

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