



## Town of South Bethany

### Committee Report from January 17, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on January 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am online with all members attending except for Karin Gander.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Guest: Mike Smith, Coastal Point.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 12/19/22 meeting.

TC Updates: While there was no Town Council meeting in January, Tim provided an overall update on a few matters since our last meeting. He attended a meeting sponsored by RASCL and made connections with a group from University of Delaware who can provide support in our Grant pursuits. We will be inviting them to one of our future meetings for further discussions and to secure help on the grant process. Tim confirmed that the Town submitted a preliminary Grant application to DEMA for funds for an initial study on how South Bethany can address the increased flooding occurring in the southern areas of the Town.

Tim also participated in the Association of Coastal Towns (ACT) meeting where they discussed the impact of sea level rise (SLR). He also provided an update on the Town's updated Resiliency Study being completed by GMB. The report is not finalized, as additional input is being provided by the Town Council and Staff. Tim noted that the Town is continuing to look at setting up a separate new committee to focus on the impact of SLR. This committee will look to stay connected and aligned once formed. Finally, he provided a brief update on the new efforts by DelDOT to focus on the increasing risk of flooding and evacuation challenges around Route 1 across all the Coastal Towns.

On a related topic, Gary also shared some insights he gained from attending a meeting of the Bethany Beach Flood Water Committee on behalf of our Committee. We were interested to specifically understand what impacts their proposed bladder dam at the intersection of the Assawoman Canal and Bethany Loop Canal would have on the surrounding inland bays including South Bethany. From the discussions, preliminary studies indicate an inch of additional water would be the impact. We will continue to monitor the progress on this project.

Canal Maintenance Work Group: We confirmed that DNREC has agreed to allow South Bethany to continue to dispose of the spoils from any Algae Harvesting from a third-party. A formal agreement for 1 year with the option to renew is being finalized. With this approval, the Town moved forward to execute the contract with Solitude to provide up to two separate periods of Algae Harvesting in the Spring of 2023. They will be sending a couple of their team to review the canal system in January/February to confirm all the logistics and access points are workable.

The committee will monitor the activity during the spring and reassess some of the longer-term solutions of either continuing the contracting or purchasing our own equipment and staff. It was reiterated, however, that the primary support for the Algae harvesting is still with DNREC. Finally, we discussed that the final Fall clean-up by Envirotech had not been finalized. Chris will follow-up with them again to confirm dates for the final fieldwork and issuance of final report.

FY 24 Budget: Updated the committee that the following amounts were submitted: Community Education \$1,000; Canal Maintenance \$60,000; and Testing \$4,700.

Code/Communications: Bob working with Community Relations Committee on plans to collaborate on an Earth Day related project, as well as getting more information on keeping our Canals clean in SBPOA communications.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Continued discussions by the Committee on the viability and value of this program. Gary will be pulling together more information for a discussion and potential actions are our next Committee meeting.

Grants: In addition to the updates from Tim on the RASCL meeting and UD support options, Chris attended a DEMA/FEMA sponsored meeting around the three Hazard Mitigation Grants programs. He also connected with the same UD group, confirming our interest in working together. There are significant funds still available, and we will be working to identify where we can focus to best support South Bethany's needs.

Water Quality: Dave provided updates on the condition of the canals, which show continued improvements in Dissolved Oxygen (DO) due to lower water temperature. Dave noted that we are still waiting on the analysis from the Chesapeake Lab of our sampling. He will update the Committee at the next meeting. Dave also commented on the accumulation of trash and debris in the canal ends. We would like to discuss again with the Town how best to stay on top of this, even during the winter months when we don't have a maintenance agreement in place.

New business: Dave spoke to an email he forwarded to the full Committee from a former resident, Committee and Council member, George Junkin. Mr. Junkin has studied the changes in the water levels and other information about our Canals over many years and shared his latest analysis and thoughts on potential impact of SLR and other issues. Brian added in his interest in the changes in salinity as well and the impact on the water quality. We will be considering this further in the future.

The committee will continue to meet monthly on the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) 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