



## Town of South Bethany Committee Report from March 27, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am online with all members attending except for Karin Gander.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Guests: Carmen Holland, Journalist for WRDE

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 2/20/23 regular meeting and the 3/14/23 ad-hoc special meeting on the Solitude and DNREC Algae Removal matter.

TC Updates: Tim updated the Committee on the additional budget of \$5,000 that was requested and approved by Town Council for adding the use of the Solitude barge for the Algae Harvesting and the Town rental of a larger backhoe to be able to lift and place the Algae spoils in the DNREC larger dump truck that will now be used during the two (2) week Harvesting period. Everything will now be in place to address Algae blooms this spring.

There is a check in conference call with Solitude, DNREC and the Town tomorrow 3/28/23 at 2pm to discuss final timing, logistics and any remaining open items. While the Algae situation is still yet to develop, we will continue to monitor the conditions so that we can adjust the timing of the Harvesting to best time it in April and/or May. Chris and Pete from the CWQC will attend the call too.

Canal Maintenance Work Group: Committee discussed the need for a Town-located launch point for not only the Canal Maintenance program, but also for other Town related matters such as public safety. Committee agreed to hold on any recommendations to the Town until after the Solitude work is completed this spring and we can use these insights to better inform the request.

A new topic related to the use of Barley Straw to help reduce Algae in the Canals was discussed. This was based on a report that was shared among the Committee. We will do some additional research including cost determination to bring to a future meeting a possible pilot program to test the viability for South Bethany at some point TBD.

Committee also discussed a discussion Chris had with Carolyn Bell, President of the SPBOA on working together on fund raising for various improvement efforts such as these. They are open to discussing this further when specifics are known.

Finally, the Committee discussed the need to put in place again this season a general Canal Maintenance program and contract. The recommendation is to review last year's program for

what worked and what needs to be improved, and report back to this sub-group within 2 weeks for recommendation on possible action relative to a new RFP for services for this Season. This would have to be completed and RFP issued in April in order to have a new contract in place by end of May. Chris will lead the development of this report and recommendation on next steps. He will reach out to the Town for feedback as well as meet with Envirotech who did the work last year.

Code/Communications: Bob continues to work with Community Relations Committee on plans to collaborate on an Earth Day related project(s) on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. More information will be published on Town plans overall for Earth Day by 4/1. Bob will work to get Committee member Dave Wilson's report on the condition of the Canals posted on the Town website. Committee thanked Dave for this informative report and his continued work leading the Water Quality measurement team for many years.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Gary walked through his presentation and updates on the work he has been leading around the situation and options relative to the Floating Wetlands in our Canals. The Committee discussed various aspects of the current and potential options presented, and have agreed to continue the discussions at our next meeting. Gary will continue to reach out to other community members and leaders to finalize the review and come back with several options for the Committee's consideration and possible action next month.

Grants: Chris noted that no updates yet from the Town regarding the submitted grant application with DEMA in December for one of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs for a flood safety feasibility study for the York Road area in the South section of the Town.

Water Quality: Dave provided updates on the condition of the canals. Limited Algae has been observed, and this is likely since the water temperature is still below the normative range that support Algae growth. Overall, nutrient levels in the Canals are improving slowly overall. There was a discussion the possible impact that the new retention pond at Sea Colony is having on this situation since this observation is since it was put in to service. More work and review of the data will continue to see if this can be substantiated further.

New business: Related to the Water Quality discussion and the new retention pond, Chris introduced a possible new project for the Committee related to addressing the options to address overall Storm Water diversion from the northern section such as from the Sea Colony retention pond but also all along Route 1 to the southern Town border to some other retention pond or similar in lieu of directly in the Canals. We are looking for a Committee member to volunteer to lead this initiative.

Finally, the SPBOA's annual Townwide picnic is on June 10<sup>th</sup> from 12 – 4pm. Chris is looking for volunteers to help staff our CWQC booth at the event.

The next meeting will be on April 17<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am online. Members of the public are welcome.  
Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman