



## Town of South Bethany Committee Report from May 15, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on May 15th at 10:00am online with all members attending except Derek Abbott.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 4/17/23 meeting.

TC Updates: Tim reminded the Committee that the deadline to submit the form to continue participation for the next fiscal year is on Friday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. He provided update from Town Council meeting confirming that Solitude is coming back the week of Memorial Day but with the Harvester equipment and will return the following Tuesday after the Holiday for the final day of the contracted terms; however, they can stay through end of the week if required. Tim also conveyed that the Council remains focused on how to maintain the canals for the long-term including to continue to evaluate enforcement of current and upgrading codes as well as considering other initiatives.

Canal Maintenance Work Group: Discussion held around the updated routine canal maintenance proposal from Envirotech for the current season. Agreement by Committee to not consider regular canal monitoring services and to modify the cleaning services to be only “ad-hoc” and not a formal regular schedule. Chris was directed to work with Envirotech to come back with this one updated proposal for the as-requested canal cleaning services. He will report back and will be discussed at the next CWQC meeting in June. In the meantime, Dave agreed to talk with the Measurement Volunteers to specifically observe and note any organic or trash in the canals during their regular monitoring reporting so we can potentially address any issues that come up in the meantime.

Special Presentation on the Quality of the Canals: Ed Whereat, Program Coordinator of the Citizen Monitoring Program of the University of Delaware and its College of Earth, Ocean and Environment joined us for a discussion on the state of the inland bays and our canals. This program has been in place since 1991 and Ed has been involved since 1998. Ed made the point to compliment the Town of South Bethany for its focus on and long term and continuous monitoring of the Water Quality; he noted our program is the best he has worked with over the years. We spent time talking about various ways to continue to improve our water quality including the changes in prevalence of Algae and other contaminants. The Committee will use this information and Ed’s continued input and support for continued discussions on more specifics in the coming months.

Code/Communications: Discussion was held on how we might work more with the SPBOA on the development of a “Canal Watch” program like the off-season neighborhood watch program they already have in place. Bob will meet with the new SBPOA leadership to discuss and report back. Committee also discussed some of the factors that were brought up in Ed’s presentation on the causes of some of the quality issues including excess organic and chemical treatments, particularly from landscapers and other commercial lawn maintenance groups, getting into the canal water. Bob will do some research on what other Towns are doing to address working more closely with Landscapers and other lawn maintenance services to both prevent and adhere to guidelines and codes. We will discuss his findings at the next meeting.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Gary provided an update on discussions with various stakeholders he has had and will continue to reach out to the Town Council members individually to gather more input on the program overall. The Committee agreed that we need to think about this as wrapping up this initial floating wetlands pilot program (“FW 1.0”) and discussing what a new and improved floating wetlands program (“FW 2.0”) would entail. More discussions to follow in future meetings.

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 an update on the continued monitoring efforts and the general conditions of the Canals. Brian noted he has successfully pulled together a more extensive database on water quality data including meteorological data going back to 2008. He will make this available for all to use.

Other Committee Business: None discussed.

No public comment.

The next meeting will be on June 19th at 10:00am online. Members of the public are welcome.  
Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman