



Town of South Bethany Committee Report from June 20, 2023

The Canal Water Quality Committee met on June 20th at 10:00am online Zoom only as the Town Hall meeting room was not available. All members were present except Pete Trelenberg and Chris Carlyle.

Town Council Liaison Tim Shaw was present.

Minutes were approved and adopted for the 5/15/23 meeting.

Committee Turnover: Chris welcomed our new Committee members for the new Town 2024 Fiscal year, and he thanked those members who have left the Committee for all their efforts and support.

TC Updates: Tim summarized the overall efforts of the Solitude Algae Harvesting, and some of the insights and learnings from the very successful effort overall. He noted that the Town Council will be looking for a recommendation on a path forward from this Committee. Chris requested that a formal debrief from the Council including feedback from Solitude, be provided. Tim agreed to arrange this.

Canal Maintenance Special Work Group: The Committee had an open discussion on the recent harvesting to get everyone's thoughts. We will get the final cost once the invoices are finalized. The equipment seemed to be manageable, and opinions noted that we could likely manage a similar harvester. Solitude had two operators and their approaches and techniques to the harvesting varied with perceived different impact. We should have a formal feedback session with them and the appropriate Town staff to see what could be better next time across all parties.

Consensus was that we don't need to rent the barge in the future. Also, stay with the harvester and not the hydro rake, and work on technique for unloading the conveyor – there was some spillage. Feel better about our ability to potentially manage this ourselves, but the key remains the need to have a skilled harvester operator with the preferred approach. We couldn't get to the algae in the forebay on Anchorage due to depth issues. It might be improved if the harvester and some other equipment or staff support could work together as the amount was significant. Observation that the Town truck could handle the harvested algae. We never filled the larger DNREC truck. If we could use our truck, we could then use our back loader and save the rental fee on the back loader too.

There were good communications around this effort from the Town: notices, changing dates, warnings about boats, etc. Thanks to the Town staff for this effort; we will need to continue this type of timely information sharing with the public in all future efforts.

The committee discussed the updated and revised proposal from Envirotech for routine maintenance during the peak summer season. Town maintenance crew is focused on and prioritizes beach maintenance during the peak season for canal usage, limiting availability to work on canal maintenance matters proactively and/or consistently. Chris shared a revised contract for monthly cleaning from Envirotech. The cost of monthly cleaning is approximately \$6,800 / month. Discussion around the concerns of the cost versus the needs/impact; perhaps only need an "on call" agreement or similar.

As a committee, we will need to pull together options of using a contractor or hiring town employees focused on the canals to better assess the cost / benefits. Decision tabled until more information is pulled together by the Canal Maintenance sub-committee which will be revised with the change in membership, at the July meeting.

Relative to reducing trash and other debris and the need for this additional maintenance agreement, the committee had a good discussion on the potential impact all the active construction sites in Town have on the canals relative to trash. Suggestion was to discuss with Town staff the ability to perform more site-inspections for code enforcement on barriers, dumpster placements and management (e.g. overfills, covers).

Also discussed again the need to discuss with Town staff about setting up a new landscapers and other similar services contractors' education and registration system to improve the compliance with good practices near the canal and waterways (e.g. no clippings in water, limit fertilizer applications within certain distances, types of fertilizers to use, etc.). This is something routinely done in other canal and lagoon communities like in Florida.

Subcommittees: For the new Fiscal Year, need to review the sub-groups and their membership with the change in the committee members. Will be discussed and confirmed at the next meeting in July.

Code/Communications: Recognized Bob for the good work in increasing and consistent communications content for Town and SBPOA communications. Bob has also compiled examples of codes from Towns with similar canals or lagoons and will share in future meeting(s). Bob is planning to meet with the new leadership of the SBPOA to discuss a 'neighborhood watch' type of program for the canals. Thinking that this could help with the ongoing maintenance efforts as well.

Floating Wetlands (FW): Gary provided an update on continued 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. He shared some additional details on what a new Program would entail. Again, 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; including costs/benefits.

Grants: Chris noted no new updates or 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. He also gave the new members some additional background on the collaboration with the University of Delaware.

Other Committee Business: None discussed.

No public comment.

The next meeting will be on July 17th at 10:00am as a hybrid – in-person and Zoom. Members of the public are welcome. Reported by Chris Vanuga – Chairman