

**South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee**  
**Meeting Conducted Virtually**  
**June 20, 2023**

Committee Members: John Beauregard, Bob Fisher, Gary Lessing, Joan Marini, John Roberts, Chris Vanuga, Dave Wilson

Absent: Pete Trelenberg, Chris Carlyle

Town Council Liaison: Tim Shaw

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.
2. 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.
3. Minutes from the May 15, 2023 meeting were approved with a correction from Dave Wilson.
4. Town Council Update (Tim)
  - a. Algae harvesting was completed and seemed successful overall. The Town Council will be looking for a recommendation on a path forward for next year.
  - b. Chris requested a formal debrief with the Council so we can understand their thoughts. Tim will arrange this.
5. Canal Maintenance
  - a. The Committee had an open discussion on the recent harvesting to get everyone's thoughts:
    - i. Total costs in the \$60K range for this recent 2 phased effort. We will get the final cost once the invoices are finalized.
    - ii. The equipment seemed to be manageable, and opinions noted that we could likely manage a similar harvester.
    - iii. 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.
    - iv. Consensus was that we don't need to rent the barge in the future. Also, stay with the harvester and work on technique for unloading the conveyor – there was some spillage.
    - v. 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.
    - vi. 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.
    - vii. 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.

- viii. 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 in all future efforts.
    - ix. Chris will send out the analysis that was completed last year on options of buying equipment or contracting the work for both new members and refresh for returning members.
  - b. Update proposal from Envirotech.
    - i. Town maintenance crew is focused on and prioritize beach maintenance during the peak season for canal usage, limiting availability to work on canal maintenance matters proactively and/or consistently.
    - ii. Chris shared a revised contract for monthly cleaning from Envirotech that he worked with them on. 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.
    - iii. 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.
  - c. Other related matters
    - i. Discussion on the impact all the 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).
    - ii. Also discussed again the need to discuss with Town staff about setting up a landscaper 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 withing certain distances, types of fertilizers to use, etc.).
6. Focus Areas
- a. For the new Fiscal Year, need to review our sub-groups and their membership. Chris will circulate an email to gather members’ interest for discussion at the next meeting in July.
  - b. Code review & Education / Communications (Bob)
    - i. Recognized Bob for the good work in increasing and consistent communications content for Town and SBPOA communications. He will continue this during this year too.
    - ii. Bob has also compiled examples of codes from Towns with similar canals or lagoons and will share in future meeting(s).
    - iii. Bob is planning to meet with the new leadership of the SBPOA to discuss a ‘neighborhood watch’ type of program for the canals. This could help with the ongoing maintenance efforts as well. He will report in a future meeting.
  - c. Floating wetlands (Gary)

- i. Gary active on informing and getting feedback from the town council members and committees on the program overall.
    - ii. Gary shared an update on what the next generation of the program might entail, which we are calling: Floating Wetlands (FW) 2.0
    - iii. Goal to finalize in the next few months.
    - iv. We need to describe how the current Floating Wetlands Program will wrap-up and FW 2.0 will start, in addition to the ongoing benefits and costs.
  - d. Grant funding (Chris)
    - i. No updates, including on the status of the Town's HMGP application for the York Rd. project.
    - ii. The Town is looking to re-establish a nuisance flooding and resiliency committee versus adding this to the CWQC remit. The town will be looking for committee members soon.
  - e. Water quality & analysis (Dave)
    - i. Citizen's water quality volunteers have monitored the water quality in our canals for 14 – 15 years. Six members. Samples are taken every week during the season.
    - ii. Data archived by University of Delaware.
    - iii. 7 out of the 11 sites had excessive oxygen this week. This was like what happened a year ago.
    - iv. Total nitrogen and phosphate data is now being collected as well.
- 7. Committee Meetings will be on the third Monday of the month at 10:00am. Hybrid meetings are allowed. However, we will need a quorum physically present for voting.
- 8. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.