

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meeting Conducted In-person and on Zoom
December 18, 2023

Committee Members Present: John Beauregard, Chris Carlyle, Tim Shaw, Pete Trelenberg, Chris Vanuga, Dave Wilson

Committee Members Absent: Bob Fisher, John Roberts

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am
2. Minutes from the November 20, 2023 meeting was approved.
3. Town Council Update
 - a. Tim Shaw updated the Committee on the discussions around the Floating Wetlands and our recommendation to support the ask of community members to adopt healthy ones before they are removed.
 - b. The Town Council will not consider this at this time, and the request of Envirotech to remove all current floating wetlands will proceed.
 - c. The Committee agreed to continue to review options for a new Floating Wetlands program to bring to the Town Council in the future.
 - d. The Committee was also briefed on the potential consulting contracting situation with Tony Pratt for the Dredging project, which is on hold by the Town. Discussion by Committee members of the concerns of the impact this delay in getting additional expert assistance will have on our potential project timeline and planning efforts for Dredging. This will be a primary focus for this Committee in the coming months.
 - e. Tim Shaw agreed to reach out with a new member of the Resilience Committee, Michael Powell, who is with DNREC to see if he would be able to provide some guidance to us in the meantime.
4. Town Fiscal Year 2025 Budget
 - a. Discussion on the upcoming FY 25 preliminary budget submission deadline of 1/4/24.
 - b. The Committee plans to submit with roll-forward to existing programs such as the Algae harvesting, water quality and communications.
5. Maintenance
 - a. Discussion around the current contract with Envirotech for the seasonal (Fall) canal cleaning of organic matter and trash on the water surface. The Committee in general is concerned that the amount of time, timing and approach to this cleaning effort is not adequate to keep up and/or clean certain problematic canals. Chris V. will reach out to Envirotech to set up a call to discuss this with them.
 - b. In the meantime, additional costs for increasing the ongoing routine canal maintenance will also be included in our budget submission.
 - c. Regarding closing out the current FY 23/24 contract for this seasonal cleaning with Envirotech, we are awaiting final documentation from Envirotech to confirm that all 30 canal ends were cleaned and to the contract requirements. Committee members

were informed to watch their emails for an update on this and any possible actions that may be required.

6. Code Review, Education and Communications

- a. Reminder made to Committee members to review and add final suggestions and comments to the list that Bob Fisher distributed previously for recommendations for improving the Town's Charter and Code to address ways to reduce, eliminate and otherwise improve the quality of the Canal water. The list will be resent and the request of the Committee members was to get this completed in the next couple of weeks.
- b. A final version of this compiled version would then be shared with the Charter and Code Committee for review and consideration.
- c. Still no update on a date to meet with the new leadership of the South Bethany Property Owners Association. The objective is to understand any updates to their plans and activities, as well as continue to align around efforts to improve the quality of the Canal water.

7. Grant Funding

- a. Discussion around the importance of the Committee's efforts to routinely collect data on the quality of the Canal water to support all new grant program applications. While the South Bethany dataset is one of the better longitudinal in DE, there are still certain data that aren't being collected either at all or not regularly enough (e.g. nitrates, phosphorous, algae).
- b. The Committee was supportive of adding an additional budget line item for new monitoring equipment for both capturing additional data and more continuously.
- c. Dave Wilson will continue his research on new monitoring options for our consideration, and we will include this in the budget request.

8. Water Quality Monitoring

- a. Dave Wilson summarized the latest water quality testing results, with the general condition of the canals relative to Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and water clarity being good – which is typical of this time of year.
- b. Discussion around some of the ongoing causes of our poor water quality overall, with the stormwater runoff from north of Town into our forebay, all the US Route 1 stormwater runoff directly into our canals and the stormwater from our Town roadways.
- c. Tim Shaw noted that the Town Manager and Mayor were having some discussions with DELDOT on maintenance and cleaning of the forebay, and he would follow up with them and report back to this Committee at our next meeting on the scope of the discussions.
- d. The Committee acknowledges that the diversion of Route 1 and other roadways' stormwater directly away the Town canals is a priority now for us to address and will work with the Town to coordinate our efforts along with DELDOT, Center for Inland Bays and other stakeholders.
- e. The Committee discussed how we best synchronize these priority efforts to get a clearer sense of both the potential impact and staging of the priority initiatives under consideration (e.g. dredging, stormwater diversion, tidal pump and code

- improvements and enforcement) to improve the quality of our canal water and system, most feasibly.
- f. It was agreed that we need to have a “Master Canal Water Quality Improvement Plan” developed by an experienced engineering firm. This would be a comprehensive study that would help guide the Committee and the Town on the next best actions, and that would leverage our data and recent studies such as the Woods Hole Group report.
 - g. Chris V. will reach out to a few Firms with specific experience for initial discussions to get their advice and counsel on how we might engage them for this type of study and plan. This will be discussed more fully in the next meetings, with a potential recommendation for the Town Council to consider such as the retention of an appropriate professional engineering firm to complete this study.
9. Public Comments
- a. No one attended, so no comments.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:38 am.