

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meeting conducted in person and Zoom.
March 18, 2024

Committee Members Present: John Beauregard, John Roberts, Tim Shaw, Chris Vanuga, Dave Wilson

Absent: Chris Carlyle, Bob Fisher, Pete Trelenberg

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am.

Minutes from the February 19, 2024, meeting was approved.

The meeting began with a discussion of the update on the approved budget, with all line items approved except for the master plan study and the new water testing instrumentation. Again, it was advised to seek other funding sources, including grants.

Following the budget approval for the seasonal and fall clean-ups, we will contact Envirotech to finalize the contract for the seasonal recurring cleaning of the canals. It is of the utmost importance that the contract clearly outlines the requirements and expectations of the scope of the work and how there will be appropriate confirmation of acceptable completion. We also need to agree on a reasonable time schedule for the cleaning, including the option not to perform it if conditions support it.

Reviewed highlights from the discussion with the Chair of the Fenwick Dredging efforts, including the importance of getting assistance during the approval process. A proposal from Anchor QAE engineering firm was reviewed that would provide this assistance, from developing the overall work plan and completing the sampling testing to augment the Woods Hole Group study results that are now somewhat dated to confirming locations for the spoils dumping and, ultimately, the submission of the permits' documentation and support.

Given the current budget challenges, the committee was informed that the study and efforts around dredging may need to be included in a comprehensive set of funding requests for the Town, potentially related to resiliency efforts. This could necessitate a bond or other funding options that require a Townwide vote or referendum. Considering the upcoming year-end activities, including elections, this matter may not be addressed for a few months.

There was also a discussion on gathering all the available data and information from previous and new studies into one database that could support a GIS mapping system. This would help support all the project ideas and funding requirements.

An update was then provided from the discussion with the UD Grant Assistance Program (GAP). The guidance was also that Bonds were more likely to be the most viable funding source versus grants due to the scope of the work.

Agreement has been reached with DNREC on the coordination and some of the funding for the upcoming Algae Harvesting with the assistance of Solitude. DNREC will provide the equipment and staff to haul the harvested algae to the state location for approved dumping. DNREC will also split the

mobilization costs for the Solitude equipment. The plan is still to have two weeks of harvesting in May. With the other local work Solitude will be involved with, they will also be available to flex the schedule to best time the peak of the Algae blooms.

An update on the efforts of the Volunteer water quality testing group was made, noting that the organic matter seen much earlier than normal last month was a species of Algae. However, the Algae levels were significantly reduced compared to those seen in the previous few weeks. An update was also provided on the barley straw as an approach to minimize Algae growth; however, the research has indicated that this would not be an effective approach in our canals.

A Committee member provided a brief update on the continued exploration and research of the viability of connecting certain canal ends to increase water circulation. An update will be provided in an upcoming meeting.

A resident spoke during public comment addressing the following items: adding the recipe for the vinegar-based weed control on the Town website, inquired on the status of making rakes and nets available for residents to clean the canals themselves (he was informed that the Town did not support this program at this time), asked about the status of bulkhead heights (was informed that this is an ongoing discussion), brought to our attention that certain properties' silt fences either weren't in place or weren't effective in preventing materials from entering the canals and asked again about bulkhead inspections. He was informed that bulkhead inspections were being conducted.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:08 pm.