

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meeting conducted in person and Zoom.
April 15, 2024

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

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

Minutes from the March 18, 2024, meeting were approved.

The Committee continued the discussions from previous meetings regarding dredging, addressing concerns about the delay in conducting necessary preliminary studies and project estimating. This delay is primarily due to the lack of specific funding in the finalized FY 2025 Town Budget.

The Committee discussed various aspects of the contributing factors to the poor water quality and conditions of the canal system, as well as the need to be more proactive to prevent the addition of organic and inorganic matter and to remove it more routinely. The idea of purchasing our own Harvester equipment and operating staff was also brought up again instead of contracting for this service. This will be revisited at another meeting after the new fiscal year. Also, the Town Council should consider the need to secure a location for the Town to launch and recover a harvester or other similar equipment safely to support this program.

In the meantime, since years of accumulated organic and inorganic matter in the canals contribute to poor water quality and recurring algae blooms, we need to pursue dredging now. This will address both the canal water quality per the Woods Hole Group Study from 2019 and potentially the tidal flow and overall navigability.

The next steps include initial data collection, analysis, field investigations, and sediment sampling. The Committee has identified an Anchor QAE engineering firm to perform this work, and the cost of the initial study components is estimated at \$54,000.

Discussion on the importance of the output of this initial study, as it would provide a preliminary estimate of the amount of spoils to be removed and their suitability for disposal in approved locations. This will also enable the determination of the preliminary estimates of the overall project costs for additional budgeting discussions with the Town Council, which is essential to submitting the overall project cost estimates for large projects that are now required.

There was consensus for asking the Town Council to consider this immediate funding request, which would likely be followed up during FY 2025 with additional funding requests for the other required Tasks for the engineering and bid package, permitting support, and viability study for

using the dredged spoils in different locations in the Town for its ongoing resiliency efforts (e.g., Cat Hill, York Road).

A motion was made to present to the Town Council a request that the Town proceed with the declaration that they will be proceeding with the dredging process, with approval for the funding for the initial study as the next step. The Committee voted unanimously that the CWQC recommends that the Town Council move forward with the overall dredging process by first approving funding for the initial study. This will be brought forward to the Town Council for consideration.

Regarding the upcoming Algae Harvesting scheduled for the weeks of May 6th and 13th, the Committee would like the Town to send reminder notifications and updates regarding the timing and any changes to all residents via email blasts and the Town Newsletter so that residents can consider delaying launching their boats until after the removal process is completed.

We await receipt of the renewal contract with Envirotech for the seasonal recurring cleaning of the canals from June through September. The updated contract will be forwarded to the Town Manager for final processing as soon as it is finalized. This is already included in the approved FY 2025 budget. The goal is to get in place to stay on track for the initial June cleaning.

An update was provided on the recent water quality testing observations and the overall status of the canals, which are typical for this time of year. It was noted that only nominal algae were visible. The Committee was also informed of the Center for Inland Bays' (CIB) request to look for any widgeon grass for possible seed harvesting. They will complete this on-water review in the next couple of weeks.

No public comment.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:12 pm.