

**South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee**  
**Meetings conducted In-person and Zoom**  
**July 15, 2024**

Committee Members Present: John Beauregard, Bob Biciocchi, Chris Carlyle, John Roberts, Pete Trelenberg, Chris Vanuga, Dave Wilson

Guests: Rich Mallon-Day from AlgaSci.com

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

Minutes from the June 11, 2024, meeting was unanimously approved.

Bob Biciocchi, in his additional role as liaison to the Town Council, kicked off the meeting by providing an overview of the context and new guidance coming from the Town Council on this committee's efforts, which is reflected in the working draft document of the CWQC Fiscal Year 2025 Update & Plan handout distributed to all committee members. The plan includes an updated mission, scope, and strategy to accomplish the objectives of the CWQC. It was emphasized that it is important to keep this Plan updated to measure Progress. Bob noted we are facing Water Quality issues and other major concerns, including 'keeping the canal waters where they belong', i.e., flooding along with navigability and dredging.

The committee had a robust discussion about the proposed mission, purpose, and scope of the CWQC. With some edits, it was put to vote and unanimously approved. The next step is to present it to the Town Council for consideration and approval for FY 2025. Bob Biciocchi will submit it for inclusion in an upcoming Town Council meeting agenda.

Discussion continued around the remainder of the updated plan in the document, with the committee making various changes, edits, and improvements. Several key areas addressed included clarity around the need for year-round canal maintenance efforts, more clarity on the reduction of all contaminants being a priority along with tidal flow, and agreement on the need for enhanced water monitoring, including more transparency of the information to the public.

The committee also clarified and supported the idea that South Bethany's future efforts around the canals must focus on addressing the primary driver of the challenges of water quality and related issues: the design and structure of the canal network. It was agreed that the most effective approach to dealing with this is to engage an engineering firm to prepare a canal network master plan (CNMP) that would provide a clear set of actions prioritized to address the most important objectives balanced against the cost and benefits along with sources of funding (i.e. grants, lagoon authority).

The CWQC recommends that we develop a CNMP before we move forward on any other major project. This should be considered for FY 2025. Bob Biciocchi will forward this to the Town Council for consideration in their next working session.

A revised version of the plan with the edits would be circulated to the committee, along with a request to present this update to the Town Council at their next meeting.

An update on Envirotech's ongoing routine seasonal cleaning maintenance services was provided. Cleaning took place on June 24 and 25, and the July clean-up was taking place today and tomorrow, July 15 and 16. No specific issues have been raised so far this season.

The committee reviewed the proposal from engineering firm Anchor QEA for assistance with the Dredging project. Anchor QEA is working on three of the local dredging projects currently underway and has experience working with South Bethany previously. A motion was made to send to the Town Council for consideration and approval of hiring Anchor QEA for tasks 1 through 3 of the proposal which includes: sampling to update the Woods Hole Group study findings of the suitability of vacuum dredging and disposal of the spoils which has become dated and the detailed engineering design and bid packages for South Bethany to send out for the dredging. The work would include cost estimates for the full project as well as for budget planning purposes for the Town. The motion was approved unanimously. Bob Biciocchi will bring this to the Town Council for inclusion on an upcoming agenda.

A routine update on the water quality was made, and as typical for this time of year, the results indicated that dissolved oxygen (DO) was below State standards for all testing sites, along with other monitored contaminants that were also below standards at many of the sites. The committee discussed performing additional testing at location SB12 (the gulch at Jefferson Creek) as it is our best control point for comparing the water quality in the surrounding inland bays to our readings in the mid and dead-end canal testing sites. As discussed previously in committee, our quality improvement goals won't be any better than the surrounding inland bays ecosystem that we are part of. Adding SB12 as a routine testing site for all contaminants was agreed to, and we would notify Ed Whereat from the UD community testing program about this change to the regular testing scope and schedule.

Related to this discussion, a reminder was made that swimming is not allowed in the canals per the Town's guidance. Discussion around how we can improve the reporting of this quality information on a more regular schedule to the public resulted in a recommendation to work with the Town staff to see how we can do this through the website or other means. We will follow up on this and provide an update at a future meeting.

Rich Mallon-Day from AlgaSci.com addressed the committee to provide an update on the development of their algae cleaning systems. Rich previously tested a prior model in South Bethany, and he would do additional testing with the new system. After some discussions on the new system's capabilities and other considerations, the Committee agreed to support Rich in performing another test. It was agreed that he would coordinate with Dave Wilson, and they would report back on the results at a future meeting.

No additional public comments were made, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am.