

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meetings conducted In-person and Zoom
August 19, 2024

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

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am.

Minutes from the July 15, 2024, meeting was unanimously approved.

A summary of our updated CWQC plan presentation to the Town Council on August 9th was reviewed. Our revised purpose statement and scope of our focus and plans, including alignment with resilience efforts, were accepted. Copies of objectives have been circulated among the team and are intended to be the blueprint as we advance.

An Anchor QEA dredging engagement proposal was re-introduced and highlighted as a near-term priority as part of the presentation to the town council. While not specifically in the Town budget for FY 25, the discussion was generally supportive. However, there is no decision yet. Looking for other sources of funding, including grants, was referenced. Acknowledgment was made that this needs to be part of the master plan for the canal network that the CWQC is recommending to the Town Council to procure, and which is a key component of the CWQC updated plan and focus.

An update on the ongoing monthly seasonal canal cleaning was provided. Two efforts remain for the season, in August and September. The CWQC will contact Envirotech for any additional updates and feedback on how the new process using netting is working. We will follow up with the Town Manager on the contract renewal status for the one-time Fall clean-up and report back at the next meeting.

The updated efforts around dredging were discussed. The engineering firm and the mayor are scheduled to meet on Monday, August 26th, to discuss the proposal for the updated sampling based on the Woods Hold study parameters, dredging design, and permitting support. The committee discussed whether there was a way to understand how the anchorage forebay was functioning from the observations from the last clean-out by DelDOT and the new retention pond at Sea Colony relative to our canal water quality readings and amount of sediment. There will be a follow-up with the Town Manager to see what we can learn. There is also interest in seeing what insights may have come from the just-completed Assawoman Canal dredging. The committee also wants to explore discussions with DNREC and other stakeholders about dredging the Jefferson Creek and surrounding area's access points to our canal network.

There was an update on the tidal flow pilot. The key focus needs to be seeing if we can achieve a target value of dissolved oxygen (DO) equal to that of the inland bay as the outcome. We

agreed that we must do additional research, including securing examples of similar successful projects and getting engineering firm support before presenting it to the Town Council for consideration. A follow-up call with the engineer involved with the prior tidal flow study will be conducted to get additional insights and guidance. We will report back to this committee in a future meeting.

An update on the operating status of our US1 rain gardens was provided. Their condition is varied, supported by sample pictures and some questions about the locations. The committee will follow up with the Town Manager to better understand if an inventory was completed during the recent stormwater review and who is responsible for the maintenance and restoration of the rain gardens. We will have a follow-up discussion with this information at a future meeting.

A routine update on the water quality was made. As typical for this time of year, the results indicated that dissolved oxygen (DO) was below DE State standards primarily due to elevated water temperatures and high levels of other contaminants such as bacteria. Continued discussions around how to best summarize and publish critical data and information about the canal water quality for the residents. We will follow up with the town staff on how we can regularly add information to the website, which will be aligned with our updated strategy and communications plan supported by the town council. An important reminder is that the information should be informative, simple, and set in the context that our canal water quality will only be as good as that of the surrounding inland bays. There was also a recognized need to continue providing content to the Town newsletter.

No public comments were made, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:42 am.