

South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee
Meetings conducted In-person and Zoom
January 27, 2025

Committee Members Present: Chris Vanuga, Chair, John Beauregard, Town Council Liaison Bob Biciocchi, Chris Carlyle, John Roberts, Dave Wilson
Excused Absence: Pete Trelenberg

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

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

Mr. Biciocchi provided a Liaison update:

- The Town Council did not meet in December; however, a roll-call email vote was taken, and our emergency request to purchase a new replacement water quality testing device for our broken one was approved.
- Our budget request was submitted, and a brief overview was provided to the Finance Committee last week. The Town Council will meet during February and March to work through it. We may get an opportunity to discuss further at one of the workshops.
- A follow-up discussion from last week's DE grant programs webinar with Jim Sullivan from DNREC is being set up in the next week or two. He will provide additional guidance and considerations for our specific grant-seeking efforts.
- The bulkheads issue is getting some additional focus. Mr. Biciocchi joined a review of some of the key locations of concern within South Bethany. The Resiliency Committee will also be taking on this topic. He will keep us connected.
- This spring, a new survey of all Town property owners will gather the latest considerations and areas of concern.
- DeIDOT update to reconfirm they take care of new requests for rain gardens and other drainage, while South Bethany is responsible for their maintenance.

Envirotech completed the fall clean-up the week of November 19th. We are still waiting on the final report. The town manager will follow up to get that for us. Mr. Biciocchi will work to set up a meeting with Envirotech and the Town staff to discuss the overall services. The town has expressed interest in bidding out the contract again this spring. We will follow up with the Town Manager to confirm this status.

Algae harvesting services are set for two sessions in the spring: April and mid-May. Whether we need one or both sessions, the goal will be to complete them before the Memorial Day holiday. We will also follow up with the Town to confirm that advance notice is sent out to all residents on the date(s) to allow better management of boat launching and other canal activities.

We continue to look at our budget for where we might pursue grants.

The next step for the Canal Circulation and Tidal Flow Project is to get our interest in pursuing grants and town funding to the Town Council. Mr. Biciocchi will confirm the timing and process.

Mr. Vanuga was added to the Center for Inland Bays proposal review committee for the Hydrodynamic Modeling RFP, which is currently underway. A couple of sessions are scheduled, and we await the responses. He will provide an update at our next meeting.

We reviewed the latest Water Quality report. The new meter was received and is being set up. After using it, we will provide feedback at our next meeting. Ice is present on all the canals, with some dead fish noted. The team will continue monitoring the canals for additional fish kills or other changes.

Public Comment: Mr. Ray Saunders was present at the meeting and provided the following comments for the Committee's consideration:

- Asked if the Town would update the online calendar and send a notice when Committee meetings are canceled, as ours was in December but was still on the calendar.
- There wasn't any clear evidence of a positive impact from Envirotech's routine and fall cleaning. He emailed some photos that we will share with the Town Manager. In the future, it would be helpful if the Town announced cleanings through normal communications and the calendar.
- For the algae harvesting, can the process include doing only one side at a time to allow residents to move their boats?
- Can the Town require that any bulkhead work have the pilings left higher to prepare for increasing the height later?
- The town should set up a "clean fill" dump site for residents.
- He continues to see evidence of oil or other material on canal water in certain areas. Some think it may be from pine needles and other organic matter leaching. We will look into this further.
- The town should consider adding a code for mandatory leaf pickup.
- He brought up again the idea of a "canal watchers" role that the SBPOA may be interested in supporting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25