

**South Bethany Canal Water Quality Committee**  
**Meetings are conducted in person and on Zoom**  
**May 20, 2025**

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

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

Minutes from the April 28, 2025, meeting were approved.

Mr. Biciocchi provided his Town Council Liaison update, beginning with a review of highlights from the Town Council's reorganization meeting held yesterday. He is staying on as the CWQC Liaison and was also named mayor pro tem. He reviewed communications and other procedural expectations of Committees such as ours. We discussed our Mission Statement, as committee members raised concerns from comments heard at the reorganization meeting about our committee being too proactive. Mr. Biciocchi noted that our and other committees' mission statements were modified to clarify that the Town Council provides direction and guidance on all activities and communications. We agreed to review the new statement at next month's meeting.

Discussed that Solitude and DNREC completed our algae harvesting during the week of Monday, May 5th. Due to the nominal amount of algae present, harvesting only resulted in a single bobcat bucket of material. We have formally requested that DNREC add us to their list for a potential return trip later in the season, as necessary, for algae harvesting under their separate contract with Solitude. There is no guarantee that this would happen if our canal conditions worsen due to increased algae blooms, but we are on the list for consideration.

The Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) program continues to be underway, with continued data monitoring. Additionally, widgeon grass "seed harvesting" is still planned to occur throughout our canals from May 27th through 30th. A few members of this committee will meet with key project leads for the SAV program onsite on Wednesday, May 22, 2025, to discuss their efforts and other ideas on overall canal water quality improvement considerations. A report on these discussions will take place at our next meeting.

Regarding the potential for water treatment options, Mr. Biciocchi met with the town manager, who is following up with Solitude and DNREC to obtain more information and guidance on their assessment and support. Discussion around the continued concerns overall with any "water treatment" and potential impacts to other vegetation, such as widgeon grasses. We remain interested in running a pilot program on one or more canals. We reiterated that due to the newness of these treatment options in the inland bays, we would help coordinate a joint public-private partnership (JPP) between South Bethany, DNREC, and Solitude. Dr. Beauregard will

continue to be on point, with a near-term goal of developing a one-page summary to present to the town council as soon as it's complete, seeking their approval to pursue this JPP opportunity.

We requested an update on the rain gardens' improvement recommendations and budget request. Mr. Biciocchi noted that there is no update on the final budget figures, so we don't yet know where this request stands. Mr. Trelenberg reiterated that he has more detailed information on the status and requirements for each of the rain garden locations to help address any additional questions.

The committee revisited the set of code changes and additions we submitted to the Code & Charter Committee a couple of fiscal years ago. Overall, they are generally focused on reducing the amount of contaminants and other organic matter getting into the canals. A copy was shared with the new council member and Chair of the Code & Charter committee, Mr. Mark Giler, who attended the meeting.

Regarding support for the hydrodynamic modeling, we are still awaiting a draft proposal from the professor and program leader at Rowan University, who previously worked at the University of Delaware and developed coastal models, including those for Lower Sussex and South Bethany, for the Delaware Department of Transportation. He provided an update stating that due to the academic year-end activities, he was unable to complete it, but planned to do so in the next month, before our next meeting. We are investigating whether the timing will permit us to request inclusion on the June town council meeting's agenda for review.

Mr. Vanuga did reach out to both the Center for Inland Bays (CIB) and the University of Delaware's Grant Assistance Program (GAP). GAP directed us to get time on their consultation calendar for this discussion. This will be scheduled before our next meeting. He will follow up again with the CIB. Mr. Wilson reported a \$10K grant opportunity funded by Delmarva Power and administered by the University of Maryland for Environmental Stewardship. This may be a potential funding source for the 2025 nutrient analysis. Applications are due by July 14, and work is scheduled to start in September. He will prepare a one-page summary of this grant and our initial thoughts to present to the Town Council, seeking their approval to move forward with the grant request.

Regarding our water quality updates, Mr. Giler presented the recent testing results, which were obtained from the morning of this meeting. Mr. Giler is also a member of the volunteers who do this routine testing with Mr. Wilson. He led today's testing as Mr. Wilson was out of town. In general, results are relatively typical for this time of year.

Public Comment: None.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.