

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 3, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Schnierlein, Chair; Steve Bartush, Jim Bartley, John Crespo, Dick Harris, Pete Johnson, Diane Lauricella, John Romano, Geoff Steadman

OTHERS: Thomas Closter.

This meeting was conducted by Zoom Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schnierlein called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. There was a quorum present.

COMMUNICATIONS:

DEEP – No report.

Dept. of Transportation via Shellfish Comm. – No report.

Dept. of Aquaculture– Mr. Bartush gave a brief overview of a recent meeting with the Department of Aquaculture involving the restoration of some intertidal shellfish beds. The Department of Aquaculture is interested in doing some survey work, including creation of a database and determining the feasibility of the two sites: the west side of the Five Mile River and the southern terminus of Veteran's Park. Mr. Bartush thanked all those who attended, and Mr. Steadman for his excellent presentation to the group. A brief discussion followed the potential funding, and the issue of clean water vs. clear water.

Dept. of Health – No report.

Harbor Commission – No report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

Introduction of Bill Mooney, new Sanitarian from Dept. of Health to WQ. Farewell to Tom Closter.

Mr. Schnierlein thanked Mr. Closter for all his hard work.

Update from Dick Harris on Mitten Crabs

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Mr. Harris thanked Mr. Closter for all his assistance over the years in his work.

Mr. Harris said that they received another crab, which was a pregnant female. The total is now 15. He said that he would send some pictures and his report to the Committee members.

Mission Statement – Geoff Steadman

Mission Statement from Tom Closter: Notes found from the Harbor Management Plan 2009 Amendment indicate the Mayor formed a Water Quality Committee in the fall of 1990 to analyze pollution problems and recommend measures to protect and improve the quality of water in Norwalk Harbor. The Committee should identify sources of pollution and increase public awareness of water quality concerns. Recommendations formulated by the Committee should be implemented by the Mayor's Office, Common Council, Harbor Management Commission, Health Department, DPW, and other City offices with authorities and responsibilities to protect water quality.

Mr. Steadman said that the Committee is not based on City Code or statute but was based on a recommendation from the Harbor Management Commission to protect water quality. The original mission statement was to "objectively analyze pollution problems and recommend measures to protect and improve the quality of water in Norwalk Harbor and along Norwalk's Long Island Sound shoreline." The Committee was to investigate solutions and sources of pollution and prepare recommendations for implementation by the Mayor, the Common Council, the Harbor Management Commission, the Shellfish Commission, DPW and other City agencies with authorities and responsibilities to protect Water Quality.

Mr. Steadman said that the original motivation for this were complaints that the Waste Water Treatment Plant was polluting the Harbor. It turned out that the storm drains were a major source of the bacteria in the Harbor.

Ms. Lauricella said that Terry Backer had indicated there were some issues with the Waste Water Treatment Plant at the time. Mr. Schnierlein noted that there were also a number of beach closures that impacted the shellfish beds. Canada geese were another source of e-coli via their feces.

Mr. Schnierlein stated that if anyone had any potential changes to the mission statement, they should email it to the members for discussion at the next meeting. Discussion followed.

Norwalk River Watershed Initiative to have meeting on July 9 via Zoom.

Mr. Schnierlein announced that the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative would be reforming via a Zoom meeting on June 9th at 3 p.m. Discussion followed about adjusting the timing of the meeting.

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Recommendation to City for future discharges from private neighborhoods into Norwalk waters have approval of DPW, Harbor Commission, Shellfish Commission.

Recommendation to City to fund another low tide intern survey for discharge pipes into Norwalk waters.

Mr. Schnierlein said that these recommendations had come about because of the issues at Wilson Point. He said that having the intern survey would help in identify the discharge pipes. Mr. Steadman suggested that they consider redirecting the Harbor Watch interns onto the project. Discussion followed about reallocating the resources, which would be approved by the Health Department in conjunction with Harbor Watch. Ms. Lauricella had several suggestions regarding how the project should be handled. She will draft a summary of her remarks for the Committee. Discussion followed regarding follow up on submitted “as built” plans.

The discussion moved to the upcoming Shellfish Commission meeting where the issues regarding the Norwalk Yacht Club marina was on the agenda. Mr. Schnierlein noted that while there had been accusations of pollution, there was no documentation of it.

Ms. Lauricella said that the Water Quality Commission should encourage citizens who have concerns. Discussion followed about previous investigations. Ms. Lauricella objected to any negative language regarding this complaint and pointed out that there was citizen science involved. Additional discussion followed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one from the public that wished to comment at this time.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 5-6-21.

**** MR. BARTLEY MOVED THE MINUTES OF MAY 6, 2021.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 6, 2021 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Next meeting tentatively July 1, 2021.

Mr. Bartley asked if it would be possible to meet in person. Mr. Closter said that the administration had not approve in person meetings. Ms. Lauricella stated that she wished to know who was vaccinated.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. JOHNSON MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

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**** MS. LAURICELLA SECONDED.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services