

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 7, 2022**

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

OTHERS: William Mooney, Health Department

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schnierlein called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

COMMUNICATIONS:

DEEP – Mr. Schnierlein said that Mr. Malik had retired but no one had been appointed to replace him at this time.

Dept. of Aquaculture – Steve or Pete – Mr. Schnierlein said that there was a proposed project for a shellfish bed off Veteran's Park. Aquaculture will back the Committee in applying for grant funding.

Dept. of Health – Bill – Mr. Mooney briefly spoke about assembling information on septic tanks.

Ms. Lauricella said that there was a lot of free information available from the State.

Harbor Commission – John R. or Geoff – Mr. Steadman said that they had provided their comments and recommendations for the Walk Bridge project. They listened to the DOT/DEEP evidentiary hearing, but it was still not clear how they intend perform water quality monitoring. The next event is the Coast Guard application which has to do with public safety.

Mr. Steadman said that they were working with Aquaculture to enhance shellfish resources in the vicinity of Veteran's Park, but these beds would not be for harvesting. They will support the ecosystem in that area regarding water quality. The Shellfish Resource and Enhancement Project will improve environmental quality.

Planning and Zoning – Michelle – No report.

OLD BUSINESS –

Mr. Schnierlein said that they still need replacement for Jim Bartley and Chris Malik. He mentioned a potential candidate from the State.

NEW BUSINESS

Shellfish Grant potential, Vet's Park or any other ideas- Louise

Ms. Washer said that this was a group effort between the City, Harbor Watch and Mr. Harris. Mr. Harris said that there was some interest from the Long Island Future Fund to establish a grant for an engineering study for the area. The City is concerned because they have to control the overview of the bidding process.

Ms. Washer said that the Long Island Future Fund has reduced the matching fund percent. This would involve a scoping analysis study grant. The next step is to get estimates from engineering groups. There's a Great Marsh project going on in Stratford and Ms. Washer is trying to connect with the Wildlife service for a potential engineering group.

Mr. Steadman said that the project that Ms. Washer was speaking about involved plantings around the edge of the park while the project he had referred to earlier involved the intertidal zone for shellfish restoration. They will be trying to combine the two separate project into one grant package. He said he had contacted the Aquaculture School about this.

City Annual Stormwater Plan MS4: Awareness and Public Comment - Diane

The Draft Report: 164 pages

[https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/26110/2021---MS4-Annual-Report-DRAFT--3-1-2022?bidId=UCONN NEMO Resources](https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/26110/2021---MS4-Annual-Report-DRAFT--3-1-2022?bidId=UCONN%20NEMO%20Resources)

<https://nemo.uconn.edu/ms4/implement/public-education.htm>

Additional Resources

<https://cfpub.epa.gov/npstbx/index.cfm>

Ms. Lauricella said that since it was Earth Month, she was working on providing resources. She said that it would be important to follow up on MS4 plans. MS4 stands for Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems. This is a tool to fulfill the Water Quality, Shellfish and Harbor Management goals. It is based on the 1972 Clean Water Act and there over 7,000 MS4 entities in the country as of 2021. Norwalk is one of those entities. The City must put together a storm water plan, especially since the Storm Water Phase II rules were amplified in 1999.

Ms. Lauricella then gave a brief summary of the history of the Clean Water events since 1972. She said that she was charged with insuring the 15 regional planning agencies were engaged in public participation. The annual reports about Storm Water Run-off were available online. Norwalk has developed its own storm water management plan, which was uploaded online. She asked the Committee members if they thought they should review it and submit comments during the next month. She said that she was very interested in public education and participation and suggested that they discuss this at the next meeting.

Ms. Lauricella said that the MS4 plan should involve other committees such as Planning and Zoning and Conservation. This is a perfect time to make people aware of this and the MS4 Plan focuses on what the City should do. The plan now includes not only point source, but non-point source run off. It is important to insure that everyone is moving in the same direction, especially since the report on the Upper Harbor was less than favorable.

This is a real opportunity to move forward. She said that the City was mandated to contact the State with their annual report.

Ms. Lauricella was asked what the window of opportunity was for submitting comments. She said that she had not been told that public comments were being accepted, but would be requesting they extend the comment window for another month. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lauricella said that the link was included in the agenda and there was an excellent resource included on the agenda, also.

Mr. Johnson said that he and Mr. Bartush attended some sewer meetings and that the Committee had gone in to Executive Session five minutes into the meeting.

Mr. Schnierlein said that he had looked at the report but there was no mention of the issue in Wilson Cove. He said that he had sent a note about this to Anthony Clark and suggested that others contact him with concerns. Discussion followed about establishing links with the WPCA and the Conservation Committees.

WQ List Outreach: Diane

Schedule Presentations of our WQ List this Spring and Summer to select bodies, such as the WPCA, Planning and Zoning Commission, Conservation Commission, Council DPW Committee, Council Public Safety and General Government Committee.

Ms. Lauricella said that this was an effort to connect the dots with the other commissions and agencies that have similar goals as the Water Quality Advisory. It would be good to share what they have learned. She said that she would be happy to participate.

Organize Virtual Library Event: Diane - with partners like Conservation, Harbor and Shellfish Commissions, NRWA, etc. about Alternatives to Pesticides. Possible special speaker from Beyond Pesticides.

Ms. Lauricella said it would be important to let people know about environmental issues. She said that she would like to establish a program that would address a virtual environmental issue of the day, like fertilizers and pesticides. It would be good to establish partnerships with other groups to spread the information. June is Rivers Month and perhaps the Libraries could put on an exhibit. Discussion followed.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM 3/3/2022.

**** MR. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2022 MEETING.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2022 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Watcher thanked Mr. Harris for his advocacy about pesticides. Hearing from the Shellfish community was a very powerful thing.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. BARTUSH MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THERE WAS A SECOND.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services.