

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 6, 2023**

This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE: Joe Schnierlein, Chairman; Steve Bartush, Dick Harris, Diane Lauricella,
Geoff Steadman

OTHERS: William Mooney, Health Department

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schnierlein called the meeting to order.

ROLL CALL

The roll was called. A quorum was present.

COMMUNICATIONS:

- **DEEP** – No report.
- **Dept. of Aquaculture** – Steve or Geoff – No report.
- **Dept. of Health** – Bill or Dept. of Health Rep. – No report.
- **Harbor Commission** – Geoff or John – No report.
- **Planning and Zoning** – No report.

OLD BUSINESS

**Recommendations sent out to Common Council, Heads of
Departments, and state politicians representing Norwalk.**

Mr. Schnierlein also said that he emailed the recommendations out to the Common Council and all the local Representatives and Senators for the area. There have been four responses along with Alexis Cherichetti and Robert Stohler. Discussion followed about including the letter a part of the record.

PFOS sampling on Norwalk R. – Dick Harris

Mr. Mooney displayed a document on the screen regarding “The Need for PFAS Testing to Help Protecting Drinking Water & CT’s Oyster Industry”.

Mr. Harris explained that he had become involved with the issue after a discussion with Ms. Washer regarding the fact that the material in the artificial turf athletic fields cannot be recycled. He noted that the artificial turf fields only last 8 years and numerous people have been injured on them. There are also documented cases of baseball players who played on the fields in 1980 now being diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer.

Mr. Harris then spoke about a Notre Dame physics professor who is the world renowned expert on artificial turf fields. Professor Peasley spoke with Mr. Harris and others and encourage him to create a baseline study for the three proposed sites.

At the Broad Avenue site, there is a dual catch basin which leads directly to the Norwalk River. He described the locations where the testing sites were and reviewed the results of the testing. He reminded everyone that these were forever chemicals and could remain in someone’s body for 8 years. The State has come up with a new set of numbers to manage these products. Mr. Harris then reviewed the details of the test results and the location of the Kellogg Deering wellfields.

The next site that was examined was the Allen’s Meadow over the Cannondale Wellfield aquifer in Wilton. There are community gardens directly north of the wellfield and Aquarian has a series of wells in the area. When the results were given to the Town of Wilton, they hired their own consultant. His test results mirrored Mr. Harris’ results. The approval for the new school turf field is on their May 3rd agenda. There is also a retention pond nearby. The tests cost \$295 each and are processed by York. He described the collection process.

Mr. Harris said that he would like to do the testing for the Saugatuck River and the Five Mile River, which would complete the watershed data. The State has announced a health advisory for PFOS of .02 parts per trillion and for PFOA of .004. The new standard is 4 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS as of September 2024. New York State has their limits set at 10 for PFOS and PFOA while New Hampshire set their standard at 11.

These playing fields are dangerous. Mr. Harris listed a number of groups that have experienced increased levels of cancer due to their contact with PFOS and PFOA. Maine and Vermont have outlawed artificial turf playing fields and everything else that has PFOS in it, such as paper, cosmetics, pesticides and other products. Connecticut has Bill SB 100 that will provide the towns along the coast \$70 million dollars to do the work but this will not start until next year. Cutting it off at the source will be important along with providing tap water filtration.

Mr. Harris then displayed the Silvermine River test results, which were much better than the Norwalk River results. He also spoke about a different type of less expensive testing that other municipalities were using. Landfills, railroad tracks, fire Departments and fertilizers also are source points for PFOS and PFOA. Two test samples were done on Norwalk's drinking water also.

Ms. Lauricella said that the State had moved quickly after the chemical spill that leaked into the river at Farmington was because the environmental groups had banded together to provide the information. There is pressure from the chemical lobby to slow roll this initiative. The CT PFOS Free group would like to stop the sources. Ms. Lauricella thanked Mr. Harris for presenting.

Ms. Lauricella asked if the State had started testing oyster meats. Mr. Harris said that they were looking at Groton and New Haven right now.

Ms. Lauricella said that she had requested the Norwalk Ordinance Committee to pause the plans for an artificial turf field at Broad River and also mentioned that there could eventually be a ban of artificial turf fields in the future. She reminded everyone that Norwalk led the effort to ban plastic grocery bags and plastic straws. This is a much bigger health concern.

Ms. Lauricella said she would be willing to help with the testing for the other artificial turf fields in Norwalk. She reminded everyone that she had requested a comparison of natural turf to artificial turf because it is important to have facts and data. The EPA has been proposing drinking water standards, but not surface water standards. Mr. Schnierlein said that the EPA had just posted a link for recreation standards.

Mr. Steadman joined the meeting.

Mr. Steadman asked what DEEP's involvement was. Mr. Schnierlein said that DEEP was involved in the administrative level and the Governor has formed a Committee. He noted that he had not observed any action on their part. Discussion followed.

Ms. Lauricella suggested that the Committee write a letter to the Mayor and Common Council regarding a temporary pause on artificial turf playing fields and also making the public aware of the presence of PFOS and PFOA in their drinking water. There are about 22% of the residents using private wells, which will likely be less contaminated. She added that she had spoken with the Health Director about the blending of well water with reservoir water. She said that she would forward copies of the email to Ms. D'Amore, the Health Director, about this issue.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Diane's suggestions on MS4 to be sent to DPW

City of Norwalk
Mayor's Water Quality Committee
Regular Meeting
April 6, 2023

Ms. Lauricella said that the State wants each municipality to send in their plans for the year with the reports on last year's efforts. She said that it doesn't appear that there are fines for late reports. The current report from the DPW seems to have similar language from the previous year's report. She asked if anyone had read the report and would like to see the Committee letting DPW and the City know that the Committee was interested in working with them.

Mr. Schnierlein said that they could offer suggestions but the Committee could not get involved in the hands on work. He noted that Ms. Lauricella could send her suggestions to the administration as a private citizen. Discussion followed.

**** MS. LAURICELLA MOVED TO FORWARD ANY CHANGES TO STORMWATER MANAGEMENT TO THE CHIEF AS WELL AS A COPY TO THE MAYOR, THE COMMON COUNCIL PRESIDENT WITH THE CAVEAT THAT THE MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE IS AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND JUST MAKING SUGGESTIONS.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Steadman suggested that they include the fact that they may submit additional information, Comments or recommendations as available.

**** MS. LAURICELLA MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

AND MAY SUBMIT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, COMMENTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS AS AVAILABLE.

**** MR. BARTUSH SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

b) Developing a guide for who to contact over water issues

Mr. Schnierlein noted that there was a number listed on the City website for people to call about issues. Customer Service then directs the call to the appropriate department staff. Mr. Schnierlein asked Ms. Lauricella how much of a guide on water issues would be necessary with the Customer Service resource available. Ms. Lauricella said that she was familiar with Customer Service but they would not know to ask appropriate questions. She said that they may not know what should be referred to the correct authorities, zoning enforcement officer, State of Connecticut or the Federal Departments. She said they needed a more specific form and suggested an ad hoc subcommittee to review how other people handle these type of questions.

When she was regulator, she found that they need a user-friendly process and also have an anonymous submission process. She listed a number of questions that would help Customer Service direct the call more accurately. At the DEEP, they had a check list to help determine the criteria for the issue. Discussion followed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS
if time permits

There were no members of the public present.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• **March 2, 2023.**

**** MS. LAURICELLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2, 2023 MEETING.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 2, 2023 MEETING AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Next meeting is May 4, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. LAURICELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at _____

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services