

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 4, 2021**

ATTENDANCE: Joe Schnierlein, Chair; Jim Bartley, Steve Bartush, John Crespo, Dick Harris, Pete Johnson, Chris Malik, Geoff Steadman, Louise Washer, Diane Lauricella (6:10 p.m.)

OTHERS : Tom Closter

This meeting was conducted by Zoom/Teleconference.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schnierlein called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Closter announced that a quorum was present.

COMMUNICATIONS

- **DEEP** – Mr. Malik said that he was still waiting for a phone call to schedule a meeting.
- **Eversource** – There has been no communication received from Eversource.
- **Dept. of Transportation via Shellfish Comm.** – No new information.
- **Dept of Health** – No new information.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to consider at this time.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Save the Sound - their protocols as well as their standards for evaluation.;
Rebuttal for their standards for their next Report for 2022.**

Mr. Schnierlein asked the Committee Members for any comments that they should pass along to Save the Sound.

Mr. Bartley said that he felt that the data collection was not bad. Mr. Schnierlein said that he had no objection, but felt that they needed to be more accurate about when the data was collected.

Mr. Steadman asked Mr. Malik if he remembered who they should reach out to about the proposed DEEP monitoring. Mr. Malik said that he did not know.

Mr. Steadman then spoke about the wastewater treatment plans from Save the Sound. He felt that there might be an adjuditory hearing rather than a public hearing.

Mr. Harris said that he still did not understand how the mid-Harbor rated a B- and the upper Harbor received an F. Mr. Schnierlein agreed. There are over 60 rivers that flow into the Norwalk River and none of those tributaries have crystal clear water.

Ms. Lauricella joined the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Ms. Lauricella asked if the Earth Place Lab and SOS would consider adding some type of gradation.

She also asked if there would be a willingness to discuss the report with each of the towns before the report is released publicly. Having outside environmental organizations reviewing the information is helpful, but there could have been better communication about the data results. They should work together in a more cooperative manner.

Mr. Schnierlein remarked that Dick and Sarah did not have input into the grading of the report.

Mr. Crespo pointed out that they had been judged on the lack of seaweed in the Inner Harbor. He felt that this needed to be clarified. Mr. Schnierlein said around 2016, the Inner Harbor has a heavy layer of sea lettuce.

2. Dick Harris – water sampling during bridge work that he has done. Is there more good news?

Mr. Schnierlein asked for more details about the bridge work. Mr. Harris said that he shadowed the company when they placed some cables in Saugatuck. Mr. Harris said that he had done two cores, one from the north of the bridge and one south of the bridge. He then gave his thoughts as to why this was.

Mr. Harris then spoke about the lead concentration in the cores and what the results were. He spoke about the process that was used for excavation, the construction of curtain booms and the other details. All the data is being assembled into a report. The company comes from Maine and is employee owned. They are known for being very sensitive to

the environmental impacts. Mr. Harris said that he now has a baseline for comparison and felt the company was doing a very good job.

Mr. Steadman asked if anything had gotten out of the curtain booms. Mr. Harris said that he had checked and there was no disturbance.

Mr. Harris complimented Mr. Steadman for his work on the 1-95 bridge run off and mentioned that the workers had completely deck off the understructure before the chipping began.

Mr. Steadman asked about how Mr. Harris works with Harbor Watch. Mr. Harris said that he collects samples for Harbor Watch. This helps to protect shellfish resources along with other aspects of water quality.

3. Diane Lauricella –City budget pertaining to water quality.

Mr. Schnierlein said that they had not received any funding from the City for water quality. Any funding would have to come from Shellfish.

Ms. Lauricella said that many of the items and requests were made over the winter, there is always a chance that they could still have influence.

The DPW Operating Budget presentation is scheduled for next Thursday, March 11, 2021 and includes the sewage treatment plant.

The Harbor Commission's budget will be heard on the 16th, and the overall Operating Budget will be done on the 24th. These will be the opportunities to speak on issues.

The Mayor is currently looking over the Capital Budget and let the BET know his findings on the 15th. There was a lack of efforts to include green infrastructure such as pervious surfaces, green roofs, rain gardens and other similar measures. Hopefully there will be Federal funding for shovel ready projects.

Ms. Lauricella suggested that next time, they could take a more active role in speaking with the department heads about water quality.

Mr. Steadman said that the last NHMC meeting, there were applicants and developers who referred to the City's new storm water management manual. He said that he wanted to make people to be aware of this. Ms. Lauricella requested a copy of that manual.

Ms. Lauricella said that under DPW, the MS-4 permit is supposed to include active public participation. This had not happened for several years. The regulation states that the municipalities must do more things actively rather than just posting it on the website.

This means that they should be talking with business owners and others to make people more aware of storm water management. Discussion followed.

4. John Crespo and what he is seeing from graphing the DOT sondes' data.

Mr. Crespo displayed the chart which contained one month's work of data and identified the various types of information contained in it. Discussion followed about what causes turbidity and the fluctuations that showed on the graph.

5. Anything else?

Mr. Schnierlein received a letter from Ms. Jones regarding drainage issues and an organization where she lives. Because she lives in a private enclave, DPW does not have any authority in the area.

Mr. Steadman point out there were two issues addressed in the letter, the drainage pipes and the Norwalk Yacht Club. The Wilson Point road permit supposedly is in violation, but it is on a private road. The Norwalk Yacht Club should be handled by the DEEP. The concerns about the issue were forwarded to the DEEP. The Harbor Commission was not included on this.

Ms. Lauricella said that she wanted to thank Ms. Jones for bringing this issue forward and felt that it should be sent to the Harbor Commission because there were natural shellfish beds close to this area. The Harbor Commission is looking at the impact that docks have on the shellfish beds. It is important to have residents on the look out for this kind of issue. Mr. Romano, the Harbor Commission Chair, had been sent a copy of the letter.

Ms. Washer then spoke about two bills, one to do with foam and another one regarding food packaging. She is working on a letter regarding the food packaging and would like to hear from the Committee. She will send copies of the food packaging bill along with her comments.

Ms. Lauricella said that Bill #961 addresses an increase in certain underground storage tank and provided the link. Ms. Washer said that she would send some information on Bill 961 and why it may be a problem. This bill addresses onsite septic tanks that are not monitored and many of them do not work. Discussion followed about the Westport YMCA septic system and septic system from the School Sisters of Notre Dame convent. that is letting chlorine enter a nearby brook.

Mr. Malik spoke about a note that he had received from Alexa about a contractor who was doing an excellent job and are following the required guidelines. The City has it in the plan to upgrade the pump station in the coming year. Discussion followed.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no one who wished to comment at this time.

G. READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Jan. 7, 2021

**** MR. BARTUSH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2021.**

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 7, 2021 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Feb. 4, 2021

The following corrections were noted:

Page 2, under **NEW BUSINESS**, paragraph 3, line 1: please change the following from:
“report came out in 2021” to “report came out in 2020”.

Page 2, under **NEW BUSINESS**, paragraph 4, line 1: please removed the following:
“Mr. Schnierlein said that it was his understanding that an estuary was not normally hypoxia. Mr. Harris agreed.”

Page 2, under **NEW BUSINESS**, paragraph 5, line 1: please change the following from:
Discussion followed about sediment reconditioning and tracing the hypoxia back to the sources.” to “Discussion followed about sediment reconditioning.”

Page 2, under **NEW BUSINESS**, paragraph 7, line 1 and forward: please change all references to “Mr. Lucey” to “Mr. Lucy”

**** MS. LAURICELLA MOVE TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021 AS CORRECTED.**

**** MS. WASHER SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 4, 2021 AS CORRECTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

H. Next meeting tentatively scheduled for April 1, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

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

**** MR. HARRIS SECONDED.**

Mr. Malik said there were several good questions asked during the meeting but he would appreciate it if the Committee Members could email him in advance so he can have the information available.

**** THE MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services