

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 2023**

This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

ATTENDANCE: Joe Schnierlein, Chairman; Steve Bartush, Dick Harris, Diane Lauricella, Louise Washer, Geoff Steadman, John Crespo, (6:09 p.m.)

OTHERS: William Mooney, Health Department; Peter Linderoth, Save the Sound; Robert Stowers

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Schnierlein called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

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

**PETER LINDEROTH OF SAVE THE SOUND ON GRADING
FOR THE NORWALK HARBOR**

Mr. Linderoth greeted the Commissioners and said that he was the Director of Water Quality at Save the Sound. He then narrated a PowerPoint Slide Deck on the recently released Long Island Report Card.

Mr. Linderoth said that they collect Open Water Grade Data and listed the organizations that they receive information from on a monthly basis. There is also a Unified Water Study Bays and Harbor study. There are over 200 monitoring stations. He then review the metrics for Tiers 1 and

2. He noted that they monitoring further west and explained that by standardizing the process, they were able to compare various locations accurately. The equipment has also been standardized. The monitoring is done for six months and hypoxia is monitored.

The next slides listed all of the participating organizations and the four fold 2022 Long Island Sound Report Card and the Executive Summary. Each report is a reflection of the data that was gathered the previous year. There is a white paper that gives an overview of the grading metrics and how the data is analyzed.

Mr. Linderoth said that he would send Mr. Schnierlein a copy of the document.

The Norwalk River was listed on the 2022 CT Impaired 303(d) Listed Waterways, which are rivers that are not meeting the requirements set by the Federal Government.

Mr. Schnierlein pointed out that the river had waterfowl such as geese, swans and other birds. If the river was a dead zone, the waterfowl would not be there. Mr. Schnierlein said that he was not challenging the data, but the grade. Discussion followed about the details.

Mr. Schnierlein pointed out that when the weather temperatures rise, the City cannot control the increased water temperature. There is no indication that the grades could be based on natural causes such as large schools of fish moving in or high water temperatures. He wished to know what can the City do to improve the grades? Mr. Linderoth said that there were some measures that can be taken such as reducing the temperature by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces and increasing the canopy coverage.

Mr. Linderoth then spoke about the Nitrogen Loading Model, which include things like treated sewage, septic discharge and fertilizer. He displayed a graph where hypoxia was present in Norwalk Harbor and the areas where the hypoxia was the greatest.

According to Mr. Linderoth, the City has about 32% coverage of impervious coverage and the recommended amount is 12%. Near the Inner Harbor, the impervious coverage is 52%. He noted that Norwalk was growing population wise and smart growth would be important.

The sanitary sewer system is aging and there have been a number of overflow and bypasses. Mr. Linderoth then mentioned the Consent Decree and said that it was a water stressor.

Some of the suggestions were having green infrastructure, smaller municipal project, rain barrels, or rain garden will help. Using electric lawn mowers and mulching leaves will help in an urban setting.

Mr. Steadman asked Mr. Linderoth about the development of the Consent Decree. Mr. Linderoth said that DEEP issues their own Consent Decrees. He said that sanitary sewer overflows contribute to this. However, Save the Sound does not have input on this. Discussion followed.

Mr. Steadman noted that there were three distinct efforts that the Norwalk Harbor Commission had made including the I-95 Yankee Doodle bridge run off and the more recent turbidity study around the area where the Walk Bridge will be replaced.

Ms. Lauricella said that the City has been working on updating the Zoning regulations. She also mentioned that the Wall Street Development Plans were also being considered. She asked Mr. Linderoth if there were any examples of model language available for these types of projects. Mr. Linderoth said that he would speak with the others in this area and send some suggested language.

Ms. Washer asked about how the sanitary treatment plants remove nitrogen. Mr. Linderoth gave a brief overview of the process. However, removing nitrogen has a cost.

Mr. Schnierlein said the USGS has been doing water quality monitoring at Perry Ave. over the Norwalk River, Cove Marina, and the Aquarium 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and for most of the year-yet their data was not mentioned. He wished to know why such a rich resource of data was being ignored? He also pointed out that for the last two years, there have been drought years.

Mr. Linderoth said that they had selected monitoring stations and that the one station in the Inner Harbor does not represent the true data for the Inner Harbor. Discussion followed.

Mr. Bartush asked about hypoxia reading and whether they group the low hypoxia reading in decreasing amounts for comparison. Mr. Linderoth said that was a really good question and would like to discuss it with Mr. Bartush at another time.

Mr. Linderoth left the meeting at 7:03 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was no public comment at this time due to time constraints.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business considered at this time due to time constraints.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business considered at this time due to time constraints.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

• Jan. 5, 2022.

**** MR. SCHNIERLEIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 5, 2023 AS SUBMITTED PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The next meeting is scheduled for March 2, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

**** MR. CRESPO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services