

**CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR'S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2023**

This meeting was conducted via Zoom.

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

OTHERS: William Mooney, Health Department

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** – Dec. PFAS webinar -Joe and anyone else who saw it

Mr. Schnierlein said that he had watched the webinar and they are aware there is a problem. The Fire Departments are aware of the issue because of the firefighting foam they use and their turn out gear. He noted that he had emailed them asking if they would be testing the shellfish beds for PFAS, but had not gotten an answer. Mr. Schnierlein said that there had been a discussion about the Fire Department's concerns.

Ms. Lauricella said that she had listened to the live webinar also. She is a member of the PFAS Action Group, a State wide Ad Hoc environmental action group. The EPA has changed the PFAS amount but Ms. Lauricella noted that there was no plan to let the public know what type of water filters to purchase if they've had a positive test result or what to do if the Fire Department had an event and had to clean their turn out gear. She said that there was no discussion about what kind of filters to use. Mr. Schierlein said that they had encourage people to use the higher standard for PFAS rather than the new standards.

Mr. Schierlein said that there had been no effort to encourage the public to use activated charcoal filter which can reduce the amount of PFAS in tap water.

- **Dept. of Aquaculture** – Steve or Geoff.

Mr. Bartush said that there would be an Annual Gathering of Shellfish Commissioners on the 21st. Mr. Bartush said that he would most likely not attend

Mr. Steadman stated the had joined the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Mr. Steadman said that he would attend the Shellfish gathering and report if there was anything of interest.

• **Dept. of Health** – Bill or Dept. of Health Rep.

Mr. Mooney said that while the recent rains has helped, and the City had moved out of the water emergency status. The reservoir was still about 4 ½” inches below normal.

• **Harbor Commission** –Geoff or John

Mr. Steadman updated the Commissioner on the recent information about the Walk Bridge. They are anticipating a site visit in the new year.

There is an ongoing effort to amend the Plan of Conservation and Development. While the amendment is fairly simple and would support or endorse the recommendations of the Waterfront Industrial Zone study. This amendment will be presented to the Harbor Commission and it calls for increasing the residential density along the waterfront. This could be problematic since there was some flooding on Water Street a few weeks ago. While the properties are quite valuable, a similar type of proposal was made in the late 1980’s for increased office space development rather than residential development.

Ms. Lauricella said that on January 12th, there would be a virtual public meeting about the Water Street area and South Norwalk Resilience Plan. Participant have to register in advance on the Norwalk Tomorrow site. Discussion followed.

Mr. Schnierlein pointed out that the City was growing at such a rapid rate, that when there is a drought, they will have to endure a longer period of restriction. This past year illustrated this. He said that he had not heard any additional plans for drilling new wells.

• **Planning and Zoning** – No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Lauricella said that she would like to have the communication from Ms. Jones included on the agenda. She said that she would like to have it on the next agenda. Mr. Schnierlein said that he had just received the letter earlier in the afternoon and this meeting’s agenda had already been posted.

He noted that Mr. Peter Linderoth from Save the Sound would like to address the Committee at the February meeting and discussing Ms. Jones' communication would depend on how long Mr. Linderoth's presentation goes.

1) MS 4 suggestions from Diane

Ms. Lauricella said that she had sent the MS 4 document out to the Commission. She explained that this report should be updated on an annual basis. The City is required to do this by law. She said that many people do not look at the legal notices because most people do not read the newspaper now.

She said that when it comes time for the 2022 report to be presented to the public by the Department of Public Works, it will be important to optimize the public education aspect.

She said that while the document gives a good overview of what run off is, it will be important to utilize events like Earth Day for raising public awareness. This document should serve as the Water Quality Committee's Bible. She pointed out that there were new aspects to consider, such as Climate Change. In 2016, the City hired a consultant to analyze where the gaps were in the MS4 permit requirements. She suggested that the City do another gap analysis to pinpoint areas that might still need attention.

Ms. Lauricella said that she would like to see a better system for incidents and complaint reporting. She said that it would be important to identify which authority would be in charge of a particular complaint. The Customer Service Department does not have any type of form that would guide them in directing a complaint or concern to the appropriate department.

She said that they should consider adding a Storm Water Runoff and Sediment Control Board to generate revenue. It will be important to include both the Harbor Management Commission and the Shellfish Commission in the Water Pollution Control Authority. Collaboration will be important.

Ms. Lauricella then gave an overview of the current MS4 report to the Commission. Discussion followed about monitoring outfalls from private locations. Ms. Lauricella encouraged everyone to read the document and noted that there were other discussion

2) Mitten Crabs – Dick

Mr. Schnierlein said that they had collected a mitten crab that was gravid.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Recommendations to move forward to the Council and other community leaders.

Let's target getting it out by Mid January. Last year's attached below

Mr. Schnierlein said that he has several thoughts and suggested that they keep several of the previous recommendation. He said that they should prioritize PFAS, which will affect every resident of Norwalk. He added that Mr. Steadman had submitted a number of recommendations, many of which had been presented before.

Ms. Lauricella requested that Mr. Steadman forward his document to the other members of the Committee. Mr. Schnierlein requested the Committee members rank the suggestions in order of importance. He then read a number of the suggestions for the Committee to consider.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one from the public wished to comment at this time.

Mr. Schnierlein said that the letter that Ms. Jones mentioned a newspaper article about using the DNA testing to identify source pollution at Sasco Brook. He noted that Mr. Steadman had forwarded a final report that about how the DNA testing of water to identify hot spots had not proven to be reliable due to the high rate of contamination in the samples and it does not identify the source.

Mr. Steadman spoke said that he had been involved in the development of that study and felt that the information was useful and would like the opportunity to speak about the benefits in the future. He gave a brief summary of the way the study was developed.

READING AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM DEC. 1, 2022.

**** MS. WASHER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2022 MEETING.**

**** MR. CRESPO SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 1, 2022 PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Mr. Schnielein announced that the next meeting is Feb. 2, 2023. He added that Mr. Linderoth the Research Director of Save the Sound would be present. Ms. Washer said that representative from Veteran's Park Feasibility study would also be present. This will be an update on the consultant selection for the Committee

ADJOURNMENT

**** MS. WASHER MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** MS. LAURICELLA SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services