

Lewes Board of Public Works
Contingency Committee Meeting Minutes
October 17, 2023
2:00pm

Committee Members

- Barbara Curtis, BPW Assistant Treasurer, chair
- Earl Webb, BPW Board Director
- Austin Calaman, BPW General manager
- Tim Ritzert, City Council Ex-Officio
- Mark Prouty, Committee Member
- Donna Colton, Committee Member- Virtual
- Sumner Crosby-Committee Member-Virtual
- Daphne Fuentevilla, Committee Member-Absent
- Bob Heffernan, Committee Member

Others Present

- Sharon Sexton, BPW Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 2:05pm.

Key Takeaways

- The committee discussed the new format of minutes, recommended enhancements, and agreed to review and provide feedback within two weeks.
- The main topics discussed were wetland discharge, wastewater treatment plant locations, and continued discussion on Aqua Nereda Aerobic Granular Sludge technology. Open questions included wetland regulation, treatment plant locations, and permit challenges. Next steps include implementing improvements, meeting with wetland discharge experts, and collaborating with stakeholders on regulation and treatment.

Wastewater Treatment and Wetland Regulation

- Discussed locations for wastewater treatment plant and ownership of areas.
- Explored regulating wetlands instead of constructing a wetland approach.
- Talked about collaboration with the State of Delaware and conducting a study to address State Park issues.
- Considering options like freshwater effluent to hold back saltwater intrusion, ocean outfall, and treating water in the park.
- Mr. Crosby has an upcoming meeting with Dr. Allman, from the University of Delaware, to discuss wetland discharge.

Aqua Nereda Technology

- Many committee members attended Aqua Nereda Webinar held on October 14, 2023.
- "In the webinar, they shared their positive opinions about the technology's resilience and water-saving aspects." There are 68 Aqua Nereda Granular Sludge plants operational worldwide, with 6 in the U.S.
- The granule waste can be handled like regular waste. Mr. Medlarz from Sussex County confirmed that this type of waste could be managed by the county.
- Talked about plants in Downingtown, Pennsylvania considering adopting the Aqua Nereda technology.
- Difficult to price demolition and reuse of existing equipment. The committee would like to repurpose current equipment if possible.
- Aqua Nereda will be making a presentation to the Contingency Committee on October 23, 2023. The Board is invited to attend, but Ms. Curtis highlighted a directive from council stating board members shouldn't ask questions at the meeting so that the Board remain in compliance with FOIA regulations. Mr. Medlarz will attend.

Goals

- Exploring the takeover of Cape Henlopen State Park wastewater treatment plant and implementing new technologies.
- Showcase an alternative wastewater treatment approach.
- Building a treatment plan on a small footprint.
- Explore wetland regulations with the introduction of freshwater effluent to saltwater wetlands.
- Encourage BPW Board of Directors, Sussex County, and public officials to attend upcoming presentation of alternative technology; Aqua Nereda Aerobic Granule Sludge. Collaboration with stakeholders is important.

Concerns

- Inefficient review and approval process for well pumping permits in construction projects, causing frustration and delays.
- Encountering delays in obtaining permits for water division construction projects.
- Wolfneck plant plans have frozen project status due to archeological findings. Detailed information unavailable.
- Saltwater intrusion is a concern for the current BPW wastewater treatment plant site. Saltwater intrusion did not affect the Aqua Nereda system in Dublin.
- Voiced concerns about the wasted space related to the parcel of land across the street from current wastewater treatment plant site and the height of the suggested elevated footprint.

Timeline

- The Contingency Committee must present their recommendations to the BPW Board of Directors by January 31, 2024.

Follow-up Meeting

- Aqua Nereda presentation will be held October 23, 2023, at 2:00pm.
- Berlin Wastewater Treatment Plant tour will be on October 26, 2023, at 10am.
- Scheduled a tentative meeting for November 6, 2023, at 2:00pm.
- Agreed to review minutes and provide comments within two weeks.
- Mr. Calaman to arrange a meeting with the Alabama Aqua Nereda Plant manager.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted
Sharon Sexton
Executive Assistant