

Silver Lake Commission
November 5, 2025
5:30 PM
In person & Via Weblink

****DRAFT****

Members Present

Kathy Doyle
Michael Lewis
Anthony Morris
Carolyn Courtney
William Ardito
Cary Smith

Staff & Guests

Nichole Arnold, Parks & Recreation Staff
Bryn Wambaugh, City of Dover Environmental Scientist
Fred Neal
Tricia Arndt
Josh Barth- DNREC
Andrew Bell- DNREC
John Cargill- DNREC

WELCOME & CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM

MEMBER & STAFF INTRODUCTION

Brief Introductions around the table.

MEETING MINUTES

MRS. DOYLE HAD ONE CHANGE TO THE MINUTES REGARDING THE RIPARIAN BUFFERS, THOSE CHANGE HAVE BEEN DONE AND SAVED.

DOVER POLICE – PARK REPORT UPDATE

Dover Police were unable to attend the meeting; however, they sent Mrs. Arnold an e-mail stating that they had no concerns at that time about the park.

STORMWATER AND EARTH DAY UPDATES

Bryn presented to the group more information on storm water utilities. A stormwater utility is a dedicated revenue source to address problems caused by stormwater (pollution and flooding for example). The city has permission (from DNREC and the EPA) to discharge untreated stormwater into the river as long as the city is implementing best practices for reducing pollutants in stormwater. One of the best practices is to implement a stormwater utility.

Due to multiple complaints, council decided to put the funding back into the general funds until the city is able to develop a more equitable formula for assessing fees. Councilman Fred Neal explained that the formula is based on a property's impermeable surface area, and that large businesses with large parking lots were hit hard by the fee. He said that it is up to the staff to figure out a new formula.

SILVER LAKE AND ST. JOHNS RIVER PRESENTATION BY DNREC

Josh Barth oversees the Watershed Assessment and Management Section in DNREC's Division of Watershed Stewardship. His section specifically oversees the health of the state's surface water resources and takes actions to protect and improve water quality for aquatic life and human use. He briefly went over what gets monitored and assessed.

There are 137 monitoring stations throughout the state, with two around Silver Lake – one for water entering the lake, and one for water flowing out of the lake. Examples of what gets monitored in the surface water include dissolved oxygen, nitrogen, phosphorous, arsenic, and lead (among other chemicals). The key takeaway is that water quality within Silver Lake and the surrounding watershed has been improving over time due to focused efforts – but not all goals have been achieved, as the levels in many cases are still above what is acceptable for human health. All data is publicly available on their website.

John Cargill's job is to specifically analyze toxic contaminants in fish tissue that pose a risk to human health. He showed data that shows that chemicals of concern, including PCBs, Dioxins/Furans, Mercury, DDT and Dieldrin have all shown a decline, but are still – in most cases – above the acceptable limits for human health. (Dieldrin showed a spike following the development of Capital Station on the property of the old Playtex Plant.) Some of these toxins are "legacy" toxins which are no longer used (such as DDT) or are no longer active (the McKee Power Plant, Playtex, and Reichold Chemical Plants are no longer in operation) but it takes a long time for these substances to degrade. He is hopeful that by 2035, many of the reduction goals will have been

met. He mentioned that PFAS (forever chemicals) are a relatively new discovery in fish tissues (and soil), and the testing protocols and acceptable human health limits have yet to be determined.

Andrew Bell's specialty is the recreation water program which monitors bacterial water quality and provides general guidance to the public related to the recreational use of a water body. Enterococcus and Microcystin are the two most significant items that get sampled. One problem with the testing is that by the time the results of the tests are analyzed, the conditions in the lake have changed. Generally, tests are most useful for identifying trends and causes. At Lake Como in Smyrna, the town is kept aware, and people swim at their own risk. Healthy people without open wounds can generally swim without ill effects. He offered to test Silver Lake last summer, but the city declined. Councilwoman Arndt stated that she is very interested in ensuring that the city takes advantage of the free testing for 2026

SILVER LAKE MASTER PLAN

Roger Ridgeway was unable to attend the meeting but will update more at the next meeting. Ms. Courtney joined the meeting and stated she thought that all four phases of the Silver Lake Sub Watershed plan had been completed but was not entirely sure. Ms. Doyle said she would send Ms. Courtney more information about the four phases, and Ms. Courtney's findings can be part of the February 2026 meeting agenda.

Capital Station

Mrs. Doyle briefly shared the action she took on behalf of the SLC regarding the tree care at Capital Station (guide wires left on too long and mulch volcanoes, both contributing to decline in tree health). Prior to Capital Station getting development approval, they had to submit a landscape design to the city. Given their proximity to the St. Jones, Ms. Doyle felt this was an appropriate concern of the SLC.

ENDING COMMENTS

FOLLOW UP ON SUBWATER SHED WITH CAROLYN, CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE WITH DNREC AND HAVE THEM JOIN A FEW MORE MEETINGS. MRS. DOYLE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME ANSWERS REGARDING THE LETTER SENT TO CAPITAL STATION AND SOME MORE INFORMATION