

# Citizens ask for stronger stand against drainage district proposals

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CORRESPONDENT

Village of Waterford officials continue to hear an earful from some residents living along the Fox River who are concerned about issues with the Norway-Dover Drainage District, including an upcoming dredging project and temporary drawdown of the Rochester dam to accommodate it.

The Village Board on April 13 gave a citizen group the opportunity to make a public appearance and speak to the issue, which previously was discussed during a special question-and-answer public meeting held last month with representatives from the state Department of Natural Resources.

The citizen's group also asked the Village Board to take more of a hard line stance against the drawdown, rather than maintaining a more neutral, hands-off, stance to the issue.

As she took to the microphone, Charlotte Winters, a longtime resident along the Fox River, said she has concerns that run far deeper than a drawdown.

"I've made a significant investment in this area," Winters commented. "If you take the water away, (the property) won't be worth much."

Winters said local waterways have experienced a rise in nitrates due to such contaminants as fertilizer chemicals. While she once caught white bass and similar breeds of fish, Winters said she now is unable to catch much of anything in Fox River's waters.

Speaking to the drawdown, Winters said, "We don't need this. It's destroying the environment and our property values."

Concerns about the potential drawdown and dredging project, which has been spearheaded by the Norway-Dover district, surfaced early this year when village officials raised concerns about a perceived lack of transparency.

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— Tom Roanhouse  
Village Board  
President

The village was not receiving meeting notices from Norway-Dover. While there was some contention raised at last month's special public meeting, the parties expressed a willingness to do a better job of disseminating information to the public.

During last week's discussion, Village President Tom Roanhouse said he would like to continue dialogue with Norway-Dover. While the drainage district technically does not serve the village — a reason cited for the lack of information and meeting notices — possible decisions by Norway-Dover can impact landowners living along the river.

"I think, somehow, we'll have to get the drainage district more involved," Roanhouse commented. "I just want to make sure everything we do here is done right."

During deliberations about next steps, Roanhouse further stated he believed it is important to continue gathering as much information as possible.

"Information is no good if we don't use it," he said. "We can't just put it on a shelf and leave it there. I think there's a solution to this."

Village Attorney Marcy Hasenstab suggested the board make a formal position at a later date as more pieces of the puzzle come together.