

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 9, 2001 MEETING TO DREDGE BENNETT'S CREEK

At 7:00 P. M on January 9, 2001, approximately thirty-five (35) people attended a meeting at the Bennetts Creek Landing clubhouse to discuss the dredging of Bennetts Creek in Suffolk, Virginia. Buck Tysor and Neil Wilson organized the meeting. Invited participants were residents who lived on Bennetts Creek, commercial businesses located on the creek, and various federal and city government officials. This meeting was held to determine the need and the best course of action for dredging Bennetts Creek.

Government officials in attendance included Ms. Cindy Rolf, assistant Suffolk city manager; Ms. Linda Johnson, the city councilperson representing the Bennetts Creek area; and Mr. Richard Klein and Mr. Steve Powell of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mr. Klein and Mr. Powell discussed the need to have the channel dredged in the spring. The audience unanimously agreed that dredging must occur soon. The cost is approximately \$100,000, with the city paying 40% and the Corps of Engineers paying 60%. Mr. Klein can fund the dredging this spring, but this project is not in his planned budget. To receive dredging on a regular basis, this project must be elevated to a higher priority. Ms. Rolf will recommend to the city manager that the city fund their portion for this scheduled dredging. Ms. Johnson also indicated her support for this project.

Mr. Klein and Mr. Powell provided detailed survey charts showing channel depth history from 1992-2001. The channel was dredged to a depth of about 7 (seven) feet in 1992 and is filling in at about one (1) foot per year. In 1998, the channel was dredged again because of re-silting. Currently, the center of the channel is less than 4 (four) feet deep, the sides are about two (2) feet deep and the width of the channel has been reduced is less than 30 (thirty) feet. Soundings (water depths) are recorded relative to Mean Low Water (MLW), which is the datum by which all survey data is documented. In actuality, the depth of the channel is further reduced as tides routinely fall below MLW.

Based on the charts provided, as the depth and frequency of dredging increases, the costs increase. The issue facing the group was to determine the frequency and depth to dredge the channel. The channel is normally cut to a depth of six (6) feet at MLW by sixty (60) feet wide. The length of the dredging would be between the first and second markers, approximately three thousand (3,000) feet. Various types of dredging were discussed, and the group decided to use the Currituck, a one of a kind dredge, and to dredge the channel to a depth of five (5) feet at mean low water every two (2) years. Installing range markers was discussed as an option, and Mr. John Evans volunteered to contact the Coast Guard for more information.

Mr. Klein discussed the need to form a group to lobby with various levels of government for planned, scheduled dredging of Bennetts Creek. The group could elevate this project to a high enough level to have it in the Corps of Engineers budget. The group agreed and the following volunteer committee was formed: Mr. Neil Wilson; Mr. Buck Tysor; Mr. Denny Quinn; Mr. Hinton Hurff; and Mr. John Sims.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 P.M.

Submitted by Dan Forbes