

\$100,000 committed to Bennetts Creek dredging

By GREG SCHNEIDER
Staff writer

SUFFOLK — The odds rose Wednesday for the dredging of Bennetts Creek when the City Council agreed to spend an additional \$20,000 on the project, upping the city's commitment to more than \$100,000.

The council resolved last fall to spend \$80,000 if a site was found for the disposal of dredged-up sediments, but learned this month that the cost might go up if new federal guidelines clear Congress.

In addition to raising the local share of the cost, the new guidelines would make the city responsible for the upkeep of the channel, which could cost \$147,000 for the first five years.

The council instructed City Manager John L. Rowe Jr. to work with the residents and businesses of Bennetts Creek to see if they will contribute to the maintenance cost, and pledged to put pressure on the legislature to deny the new guidelines.

Rowe pointed out that residents were willing to contribute to the cost in the late 1950s and again in the mid-'70s, and said he was confident that something could be worked out.

A group of private citizens paid to have a channel dredged across the Nansemond River into the mouth of the creek in 1959, but since then the passage has become choked with silt.

Rowe suggested that local businesses could add a small user fee to their service charges, building up a reserve fund to put toward the \$147,000. The city, he said, could consider paying more than half of the cost.

Councilman Johnnie E. Mizelle, who represents the Bennetts Creek area, tried to make a motion to fund the full \$247,000, but backed down when other councilmen said they preferred asking the residents to contribute.

Rowe also told the council that a site on the bottom of the James River has been found where the dredging spoils could be dumped at little or no cost.

If the spoils site is approved by federal agencies and if the residents agree to pick up some of the maintenance cost, councilmen said, the project can be authorized.

The city must inform the Army Corps of Engineers of its intent by June 25.

Mizelle said he was worried that the city could miss the deadline, but Rowe promised to have a new report at the May 7 council meeting.

"We have been moving at the speed of light on our side," Rowe said, "but you're dealing with federal and state agencies and they have to study things to death."

OTHER CITY COUNCIL ACTIONS

Proposal	Disposition	Proposal	Disposition
Meeting with representatives of First Baptist Church, North Main Street.		Amendment to the 1976 Code of Laws of the City of Suffolk by the adoption of a new Article VI of Chapter 29 titled - Cross Connection Control Program - and adding a new Section 29-26 - Restriction of Interconnection with the City's Utility Systems; Cross-Connection Control Program.	Approved 7-0
Motion to hold a public hearing May 7 on the creation of a Sports Authority of Hampton Roads.	Approved 7-0	Appropriation of \$300,000 and acceptance and appropriation of U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration - Airport Improvement Grant funds; State of Virginia Department of Aviation Grant funds; and funds required from the Airport Commission's investment of proceeds from the timber sale for overlaying taxiways, constructing an apron and improving the drainage system.	First reading
New development briefing.		Repeal of Chapter 21 - Railroads, and adoption of the following new Chapter 21 - Railroads, of the Code of Laws of the City of Suffolk, pertaining to the sounding of whistles at crossings.	Approved 7-0
Report on criteria for taxing double-wide mobile homes as real estate.		Resolution to support the Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission in their desire to amend their Charter Agreement.	Approved 7-0
Amendments to Chapters 13 and 16 of the City Code, pertaining to abandoned vehicles.	Both approved 7-0	Resolution approving the terms and conditions of Amendment Number Three to the agreement between the City of Suffolk and the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development relating to the Residential Shoreline Sanitation Program.	Approved 7-0
Amendment to Chapter 13 of the City Code, pertaining to the demolition of unsafe structures.	Approved 7-0	Accepting and appropriating funds in the amount of \$42,650 or so much as may be received from the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development for participation in the Residential Shoreline Sanitation Program.	First reading
Motion to hold a public hearing May 7 on the proposed municipal budget for 1986-87.	Approved 7-0	Motion to support an additional \$20,000 in the local share of dredging the mouth of Bennetts Creek, bringing the city's commitment to \$100,000	Approved 7-0
Submission of five-year Action Plan for Parks and Recreation.	Approved 7-0	Resignation of City Attorney Edwin T. Coulbourn, effective June 30, 1986	Accepted with regret 7-0
Resolution allowing the city to become self-insured for general liability.	Approved 7-0	Appointment of Assistant City Attorney William C. Johnson to the position of City Attorney, effective July 1, 1986	Approved 7-0
Appropriation of \$200,000 from the general fund to create a claims reserve for self-insurance	First reading	Motion to begin advertising to fill the position of Assistant City Attorney	Approved 7-0
Motion to support the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce — Suffolk Council in the creation of a committee to study future growth	Approved 7-0		
Consideration of the City of Suffolk Secondary Road Plan for Fiscal Year 1986-87 and the priorities of construction projects incorporated therein.	Approved 7-0		
Appropriation of \$15,636 for a salvage truck for the Suffolk Fire Department - second reading.	Approved 7-0		
Amendment to the Building Code, adding to and reordaining Section 117.3-1 pertaining to the waiver of building permit fees for tax-exempt organizations for the 1985-86 fiscal year.	Approved 6-1 (Savage opposed)		
Reimbursement to the Liberty Springs Christian Church for building permit fees paid to the City of Suffolk.	First reading		
Motion to accept the quarterly cemetery lot sales report.	Approved 7-0		