

# Suffolk News-Herald

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Suffolk, Virginia

## ■ Bennett's Creek

# Council OKs dredging plan

## Next issue is how to pay for it

By Thomas Russell  
Staff writer

On Wednesday the City Council approved a resolution that will allow City Manager Richard L. Hedrick to authorize a local cooperation agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers on the Bennett's Creek Dredging project.

The resolution, which defines the specific terms of the project, confirms that the council is willing to go through with the project that has been discussed for 30 years, but has never become a reality.

"This has been an ongoing project," said Councilman Johnnie E. Mizelle. "If we miss out on this opportunity, we would not get to this point in another 20 to 30 years."

The project, which has been delayed over the years primarily because of lack of fund-

ing, will entail dredging a 60-foot wide, 6-foot deep channel that leads to the mouth of Bennett's Creek.

Removing 55,000 cubic yards of sand with the use of a hydraulic pipe dredge, will significantly improve conditions at a 2,500-foot area at the mouth of the creek where navigation is considered quite difficult. During low tide the area is considered to be impassable.

Now that council has announced a support of the local cooperation agreement, it will have to determine how to pay for the project.

In January the council voted to finance \$168,000 of the total \$462,500 project cost.

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The members have also offered to let the city borrow money to help pay for the project.

City Manager Richard L. Hedrick told council members that the city would probably not have to borrow money from the citizens, but that a private or commercial financing option may be necessary.

The city will consider the funding option in September during a review of the Capital Improvements Budget.

Hedrick, however, suggested the city move forward to have the project completed.

"We will need to work diligently with the Corps to move the project along," he said.

A site for dredge spoils will most likely be placed on a section of land on the Harbour View property owned by the Jorman Group. According to Hedrick, the group has already said that it will secure the site until July.

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The Corps' schedule would have the site preparation occurring in early 1992, but the city, in an effort to save time and money, may have that part of the project begun before that time.

Most are simply pleased the project has come this far.

"There has been a tremendous amount of enthusiasm to have this accomplished," said Robert Nelms,

president of Robert Nelms Consulting. "We feel very positive this project will secure jobs along Bennett's Creek and the hiring of additional jobs."

"A lot of good citizens have worked long and hard to make this dredging project a reality," said Mizelle. "I commend their efforts and trust the city will to support them on this project."