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Council to consider plan to dredge Bennetts Creek

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STAFF WRITER

SUFFOLK — City Council tonight will consider a resolution to deepen Bennetts Creek just three years after the waterway's last dredging.

The creek, which curls north from Glen Forest into the Nansemond River, is home to a marina and a boat-building plant.

It also has a heavily-used public boating ramp and a shoreline with private homes and undeveloped waterfront land.

To keep waterfront jobs and revenue, the creek must be deep enough to use, said Tom O'Grady, director of economic development for the city.

Under the plan to be discussed tonight, the Army Corps of Engineers and the city would pay to move up a planned re-dredging, O'Grady said.

"There's existing businesses that depend upon the channel being maintained," O'Grady said. "After the channel was originally dredged, the city always intended to maintain it. But since it's filling in quicker than intended, we need to consider a more regular plan."

The proposal, he said, would develop a dredging program that would keep the creek at the depth necessary to sustain business operations, recreational creek-use and boating.

"We don't want to see Bennetts

Creek become unusable and people move their boats elsewhere," O'Grady said. Boat owners pay a city tax to keep boats at Bennetts Creek Marina.

The City Council is scheduled to meet at 7 p.m. in council chambers at Suffolk City Hall, 441 Market St. The meeting is open to the public.

Rezoning request for school site heads to Suffolk City Council

STAFF REPORT

SUFFOLK — The Planning Commission on Tuesday endorsed rezoning a 27-acre site on the west side of Nansemond Parkway, just north of Portsmouth Boulevard, for a new elementary school.

If City Council approves the rezoning in its meeting today, the site will be the home of a \$10 million facility by September 1998.

The new school would relieve crowding at schools in the heart of the city, education officials said.

The site is opposite the Beamon's Mill neighborhood, halfway between Portsmouth Boulevard and the U.S. 58 Bypass overpass.

The Planning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council.