DREDGING COMMITTEE MEETING

DECEMBER 2, 2021 AT 330PM

MINUTES

**DRAFT**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

W. Rymer, G. Murphy, J. Armstrong, J. Pyne at Town Hall

S. Magdeburger, C. Madden – via zoom

OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS (both via zoom):

S. Bagnull – Anchor QEA Engineering

T. Pratt – T Pratt Consulting

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (in person or via zoom):

R. Menominee, several residents and members of town council

Rymer called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm

After the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the committee discussed and approved the draft minutes from the October 28, 2021 meeting that were previously provided to the committee.

Rymer led a discussion regarding a recent site visit to Seatowne (small bayside community just north of Fenwick). G. Murphy, B Rymer and Rahm Mohan (Anchor QEA principal) met with two folks from the Seatowne HOA to tour the 19 acres of wetlands that Seatowne would like to be replenished/restored. After the two-hour visit, Rahm Mohan provided summary thoughts about the location and feels it is an excellent candidate for a wetland replenishment/restoration project. As a result of this visit and response from Mohan, the committee asked Anchor QEA to provide a proposal to perform an initial feasibility study and preliminary conceptual site design/plan which would be the first step in proceeding forward with a permitting process.

Before committing to any additional spending, the committee needs to hear the final results from the outstanding archaeological survey and second round of sediment sampling. Steve Bagnull provided the following updates:

* Sediment samples are still with the third-party lab and those results are anticipated in the next week or two but things have been delayed as a result of the pandemic. After those results are received, Anchor QEA will have to perform certain analysis work on the data before providing a final report back to this committee. Bagnull expects all of that work to be completed during December/early January and will be available for our next committee meeting.
* Archaeological survey site work was completed in early November. The final report is not yet completed but QEA was made aware of one anomaly identified in the southern boat channel. This anomaly was not “large” and is buried (depth uncertain). Based on location and prelim descriptions of the anomaly, the consultants don’t believe it will be an impediment to the project and will likely need to be removed during the actual dredging process. If the final report is consistent with these initial reactions, the final resolution will be determined in discussions with DNREC/USACE during the permitting process. The final report is expected during December/early January and will be available for our next committee meeting.

In addition to this local community option, Pratt will research other options such as rebuilding previously eroded islands in Assawoman Bay, recreating habitats/wetlands or expanding the beach head near the kayak launch just north of Fenwick. However, both Bagnull and Pratt feel that the Seatowne location should be the committee’s focal point.

During the committee meeting, the committee discussed creating a timeline and list of steps needed to begin the permitting process (including a Joint Permitting Process “JPP” review) and ultimately obtaining a final permit.

As discussed in previous meetings, this type of project (wetlands replenishment/restoration) will likely result in a longer time frame for completion and incur greater costs than the original upland site project. The committee discussed the need for an initial estimated range of costs that would resemble the contemplated project with Seatowne. Bagnull will be able to provide these estimates during the next committee meeting.

It will be imperative to identify additional sources of funds from local, state and federal agencies/stakeholders for this project to be successful. While we progress in the permitting process, steps will also be taken to obtain additional funds. These steps will be led by Pratt.

As part of public participation, Amy Kyle agreed with the need for the cost estimate. Ms. Kyle also asked about the potential to perform sediment sampling on Fenwick’s lagoons/canals if the town’s goals are to dredge those locations as well. The committee agreed with the desire to have the lagoons/canals dredged and felt it will likely become the next major project after these two boat channels are completed. Nothing to begin on that front and significant research will be needed including understanding the stability of the bulkheads along the canals/lagoons.

There was no other public participation.

Significant steps to be reviewed/discussed at the next committee meeting will include:

* Final results of the archaeological survey and sediment sampling tests
* Proposal to perform an Initial feasibility study and preliminary conceptual project design
* Proposal to perform initial cost estimates for a project similar to the discussed Seatowne wetlands replenishment/restoration efforts
* Timeline and steps needed to file a permit and ultimately obtain approval from the appropriate agencies (i.e. Gantt chart)

The next meeting of the committee was not scheduled. Rymer will communicate with the committee members to determine the best date/time for the next meeting. This date will then be posted on the town’s website/public calendar.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Armstrong and seconded by Pyne to adjourn the meeting. The motion was passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 5:06pm