

DREDGING COMMITTEE MEETING

JANUARY 14, 2021 AT 300PM

MINUTES

## DRAFT

COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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

S. Magdeburger, G. Murphy – 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):

P. Schuchman, R. Menominee, several residents and members of town council

Rymer called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm

After the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, the committee discussed and approved the draft minutes from the December 2, 2021 meeting that were previously provided to the committee.

Rymer mentioned the need to re-arrange the original agenda to focus on the Archeological study, Sediment sample results, overall cost estimate for a “Seatowne-like” project and the listing of major tasks and timeline first including public participation to ensure we cover those items before reviewing the detailed consulting proposal for next steps in the project. The detailed proposal will be discussed at the end and the committee may need a follow-up meeting to review the consulting proposal.

Steve Bagnull then provided the following updates:

- The committee was provided the final Archaeological study performed by a third party. As mentioned in the December meeting, there was a single anomaly identified in the southern boat channel. This anomaly was not “large” and is buried (depth uncertain). Based on the consultants’ experience, they feel it is necessary to hire professionals to perform additional steps to identify exactly what the item is (digging around the item, removing sediment etc). At that point, we can propose remediation steps to USACE/SHPO. The consultants believe it is more appropriate/more efficient to perform these additional efforts and remediate (if appropriate) as opposed to adjusting the proposed dredging channels because the anomaly is located in a “T” intersection of the channel and the channel would have to be moved 50-75 feet

to avoid the anomaly and surrounding area. These additional research efforts would cost \$10,000 and are part of the larger “next steps” proposal.

- Final sediment sample results were received from the third-party lab and provided to the committee along with a summary of findings. Bagnull and Pratt stated that the findings are consistent with expectations for the bay area and while there were a few chemical test results that were outside of government tolerances, these exceptions were minor and would not cause a problem during the permitting process. In addition, Bagnull and Pratt mentioned that the “percentage-of-sand-to-overall-sediment-composition” was lower than previous test results (2019 efforts) and the sediment contained finer grains of sand and a higher content of “silt”. These results are more favorable to a beneficial-use, wetlands replenishment project (thin-layer spray) consistent with the discussions surrounding Seatowne. They also pointed out that the lower percentage of sand and finer grains make the dredge materials less attractive for an upland placement for real estate development (previous project plan). As part of this discussion, the committee emphasized the need to further understand the lab’s policy regarding how long the lab will hold the sediment samples (currently 21 days after final results provided). The committee would like to avoid the need to “dig again” if additional testing is needed. Bagnull stated that there will likely be a fee for the lab to retain the sediment for a longer period and would provide that information to the committee along with his recommendation at its next meeting (or prior to the 21-day window whichever is sooner).

- Bagnull then reviewed the estimated range of construction costs associated with a “Seatowne-like” project. This estimate was based on many assumptions (primarily related to the actual placement site) and he highlighted these costs are purely estimates. The estimated project cost was \$1.395 million but had a cost “range” of \$1.26 million to \$1.88 million. This compares to a cost range of \$886,000 to \$1.07 million for the upland placement project that was previously investigated but is no longer a current option (see previous meeting minutes). The cost increases primarily relate to the need to pump the materials a greater distance (will need an additional pumping barge) along with all efforts needed for thin-layer spraying and material placement consistent with a wetland replenishment project. Committee discussions focused on options to reduce these costs through volunteer work (marsh plantings) and DNREC support for channel markers etc. Fenwick does not have the financial resources to pay for a project of this magnitude on its own. It will be imperative to identify additional sources of funds from local, state and federal agencies/stakeholders for this project to be successful. While the town proceeds with the permitting process, steps will also be taken to obtain additional funds. These steps will be led by Pratt.

- Bagnull and Pratt then reviewed the proposed timeline and major tasks necessary for a “Seatowne-like” project. Bagnull stated that he feels this is an aggressive but achievable timeline. Many items were discussed on the schedule including the need for “alternative site research”. The largest steps and dates presented are as follows:
  - Approve next step proposal by January 31
  - Complete follow-up archaeological “anomaly” research and “alternative site research” by March 16.
  - March 17 Joint Permit Processing (“JPP”) meeting with relevant governmental agencies
  - Complete all necessary steps and file permit applications with USACE and DNREC by June 1
  - Anticipate a six-month permit review process and final approval by USACE and DNREC on December 1.
  - Finalize contractor procurement process and construction begins Jan 1, 2023
  - Complete all construction by March 31, 2023

Public input and participation occurred throughout the above discussions on the four topics.

After completing the review and discussion of the first four major items, Bagnull then provided insights into the “next steps” consulting proposal. The proposal was separated into four categories: Follow-up efforts from archaeological study (\$10,000), site alternative research necessary for permitting process (\$15,000), placement site investigation and evaluation (\$22,500) and project design and full permitting process (\$44,500). Total cost is \$92,000. After the overview and insights provided by Bagnull, the committee agreed that more time is needed to review the proposal and have follow-up discussions prior to making a recommendation to the Town Council regarding this proposal.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled for January 25 at 9am.

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 4:33pm.