



700 Sunset Boulevard North • Sunset Beach, NC 28468
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Website: www.sunsetbeachnc.gov • Email: sunsetbeach@atmc.net

Hiram Marziano, Interim Town Administrator

November 7, 2018

Dear Property Owner:

For the last several years Sunset Beach Town Council has deliberated on issues related to shoreline maintenance and dredging. You probably know that several important decisions have now been made and the process is moving forward. This letter provides up-to-date information about the project, although it is still a work in progress.

The timing of this project continues to depend on several factors including weather and prompt state issuance of appropriate permits. The first permit application is for Mary's Creek and Turtle Creek. The application has been on hold until our more complete dredging plan was devised. Our consultant, Moffatt & Nichol, has now asked for the hold to be lifted and the application considered. A decision is expected by mid-December. Assuming that is favorable, the dredging of these two waterways will begin around early January and be completed by early March.

The second permit application is for South Jinks Creek, the feeder canal, the finger canals, and the bay area. It has been submitted for a completeness check, and our consultant is now assembling additional requested materials. When verification of completeness is received, a 75-day clock for public comments is opened. Details about that process will be provided.

A decision on the permit application itself should be received sometime around January 10th. If approved, it will likely include a requirement to provide access to the ICW through North Jinks Creek or to the Atlantic Ocean through Tubbs Inlet. Because the Town has not made a commitment to dredging either of these areas, the Town will then apply for a variance from this requirement to the Coastal Resources Commission at their mid-February meeting. Their decision on the variance should be received by us around mid-March. If favorable, the dredging of South Jinks Creek would begin promptly and be completed by the end of April, 2019.

The feeder canal, the finger canals, and the bay area would then be dredged in the 2019-20 dredging season (November through April) assuming everything works as anticipated.

The sand dredged from South Jinks Creek has been determined to be compatible with our beach sand, so it will be hydraulically piped to the beach between 5th and 12th Streets – the area that experienced the most sand loss during recent storms.

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Mayor: Greg Weiss • Mayor Pro-Tem: Mark Benton
Town Council: Jan Harris • Richard Cerrato • John Corbett • Charles Nern

Part of North Carolina's Brunswick Islands



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The sediment from Mary's Creek, Turtle Creek, the feeder canal, the finger canals, and the bay area is non-compatible with our beach sand. Once dredged, it will either be taken directly (our strong preference) to its end site – a landfill off Old Georgetown Road – or moved temporarily to one or more sites for de-watering before being moved to the landfill. The landfill owner has agreed in principle to accept the spoils, although the cost has yet to be finalized. If temporary sites are needed, Council has made clear it does not want to use the Majestic Oaks site on the island. Our consultant is working to identify alternative de-watering locations in case they are needed. Identification of these sites must be provided in order for the permits to be issued.

Altogether, an estimated 105,000 cubic yards of material will be dredged. The current estimated cost of the entire process is \$4,490,000 although that is a soft number that could change when actual costs replace estimates and when terms of the permits are communicated. Of that amount, we anticipate that the state will be paying 2/3 or \$2,994,000, and our 1/3 Sunset Beach share will be \$1,497,000. This is pending expected approval by the state of re-issuing our grant (because the original one – due to an error by the state agency – expired) and increasing our grant amount to cover an increased total cost estimate of \$250,000. We have been told that the revised grant is likely to be approved. As before, property owners will be responsible for moving their own piers and docks. The dredging contract will specify the distance the dredge equipment must stay away from them and bulkheads in order to minimize the chance for damage.

We should note that if dredging is not cleared to start in 2018, there may be an option to do all of the dredging in one dredging cycle in 2019-20. That would require a larger contractor effort over a shorter period of time.

The question of whether or not North Jinks Creek will be dredged will be addressed by Council at a later date and may involve at least one Special Meeting of Town Council. Discussion is on hold until the current permitting process has been completed and Sunset Beach sees what, if any, guidance or conditions are provided by the state and federal agencies.

As occurred at the time of the last dredging (2002) and in line with state statutes, the program mandates that the owners of property sitting on any of the dredged waterways will be assessed a fee so as to cover the Sunset Beach portion of the total cost. Council determined at the July 2nd, 2018 meeting that: (1) the fee paid by property owners will be based on the number of linear feet of waterway frontage, and (2) the fee may be paid in installments (without interest) over a two- or three-year period.



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However, Council is still examining options for the process used to determine the assessment fee, and a mandated Public Hearing will be held prior to finalization of details. As it currently stands, property owners with an average number of linear feet of waterway frontage will be assessed between \$4,000 and \$5,000. This range is only an estimate and is subject to change.

Current Council members are aware that this round of dredging should have been done some years ago and that property owners would ideally be given a longer period of time over which to pay. Council has no way to estimate when the next dredging will be needed. It could be 5, 8, 10 or more years depending on how Mother Nature treats Sunset Beach. Our consultant tells us that costs for future dredging will likely be similar to those in this round, although that depends on timing and changes in materials and labor.

In anticipation of this situation, a previous Council requested and the state has already passed legislation to enable Sunset Beach to establish a dredging tax district to prepare for the round of maintenance dredging after this one. Under this tax district, affected property owners will be assessed an annual fee for a number of years leading up to the dredging. The details of the “dredging tax district” have not yet been finalized.

Now that this long-awaited project is almost upon us, the Town will attempt to keep everyone informed about its progress and any other developments. If you have questions or comments regarding the dredging process, please send them to gweiss@sunsetbeachnc.gov. All messages will be forwarded to all Council members, Interim Town Administrator/Planning Director Hiram Marziano, and Town Clerk Lisa Anglin.

TOWN OF SUNSET BEACH

Sincerely,

Gregory L. Weiss

Gregory L. Weiss
Mayor

Mark Benton – Mayor Pro-Tem
Richard Cerrato – Council Member
John Corbett – Council Member
Jan Harris – Council Member
Charles Nern – Council Member