

News Flash from Lagoon Point

April 20, 2009

Dredging Update – Aaron Lowin

Further progress! The LPCA board and Division 234 Architectural Committee have selected the dredge-and-dispose strategy we will submit for permitting.

The LPCA board and the AC reviewed some eleven dredge-and-dispose options developed for us by our engineering consultant. At the board's April 14th meeting the board, by unanimous vote, and AC chose for our dredging a method that would use a relatively small hydraulic dredge barge, small enough to fit through our channel on high tide, to cut into and break up the sediment accumulating in the central basin. The resulting "slurry" of sediment + water would be pumped through a 8 or so inch pipe placed through our channel and onto a large "haul barge" moored outside the channel.

As the slurry begins to fill the initially empty barge, most of the sediment would settle to the bottom and the water part, above, would become that much cleaner therefore. As hydraulic dredging continued, the barge would continue to fill. Once the barge filled entirely, the next batch of pumped-in water would clarify some but then it would begin to spill over the sides of the barge.

Protecting the nearby water environment now becomes crucial. Several protections would be built in to our permits. Dredging could be limited to ebb and flood tides. And we will have to come to agreement with the permit agencies on the maximum turbidity and minimum oxygen levels allowed at specified distances and depths around the haul barge. Turbidity and oxygen would be regularly measured and reported.

As water spills out around the haul barge nearby surrounding water quality would likely begin to deteriorate and in time might exceed the allowed environmental maximums. If that happened, dredging would halt and the haul barge would be towed out to a location in Admiralty Inlet where sediment dumping is allowed. (Our sediment has been tested and found free of chemical contaminants.) The empty haul barge would be brought back, and hydraulic dredging would begin again. (Or we might use two haul barges, one to be filled while the other is towed away for dumping.)

This method has been used nearby, successfully. Our engineering consultant informs us that this combination of hydraulic dredging and sediment settling into a haul barge was carried out in 2001 by the Port of Skagit County for maintenance dredging of the county's north and south marinas. The Skagit project was about four times larger than the one we intend at Lagoon Point. Water quality levels around the Skagit project haul barge reportedly remained within permit requirements throughout the dredging. There were no

complaints from boat owners, local businesses or homeowners. We will check to confirm this reports.

We anticipate our permitting will take two years, possibly more, plus add a half-year to solicit bids and contract for the dredging work. Carrying out the actual dredging will depend on season of the year. It cannot be done in the spring, when fish spawn.

Our new uncertainty is financing. The financing conditions and bank loan included with the special assessment approved by the Lagoon Point homeowners in November 2007 may still be adequate to pay for the work, but getting the loan is crucial. As you are no doubt aware, as compared with 2007 banks today are far less willing to loan to homeowners and to homeowner associations such as LPCA.

In 2007 several banks had indicated initial interest in talking with us about providing us a loan. The LPCA president and treasurer will be contacting the banks again to meet with them to determine the current credit environment. Of course the current credit environment in the next two years may ease considerably from what it is today. We will keep you informed.