

# **Special Meeting of the Town of Highland Lake, Alabama To Discuss Dredging of the Lake**

The Highland Lake Town Council held a special meeting on January 7, 2014 at the Anchor. Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Skip Davis gave the invocation. The Mayor led the pledge of allegiance.

All council members were present.

Council member Shani Ort made a motion to suspend the rules for normal proceedings. Peek seconded. Roll call. All voted yes. Motion carried.

Mayor Bailey stated that a special committee was formed to look into the feasibility of dredging the lake. The committee was charged with looking into the possibility of dredging, how the lake would be dredged, cost, etc. Bill Rush was appointed chairman of this committee and has done a fantastic job getting information together for the council. The committee has been meeting for almost a year and has gotten to the point where they can go no further until the council decides how to proceed. The Mayor thanked Bill Rush and the committee for their efforts. The council will now need to determine if the need is great enough to go forward. The Mayor encouraged the attendees to ask questions after the presentation.

Committee Chairman Bill Rush stated that an engineer must be involved in this project due to the cost and scope of work. This was confirmed with the League of Municipalities and others. The committee researched several engineering firms and found Tetra Tech out of Atlanta, GA. Bill introduced representatives Brian Watson and Marc Achenbach from Tetra Tech, engineers who helped develop a proposal for dredging services.

Brian Watson of Tetra Tech addressed the council and reviewed their feasibility study for dredging Highland Lake. Mr. Watson presented the following points:

1. Phase 1 – Task 1 – Hydrographic Survey and Sediment Thickness Evaluation of Brasher Creek and Sand Creek - Quantify how much sediment is there.
2. Phase 1 – Task 2 – Lake wide Hydrographic Survey - This survey would provide a baseline with a global view and would be valuable to the community for the future.
3. Phase 2 – Task 1 – Watershed Sediment Source Assessment – identify locations where sediment is coming from.
4. Phase 2 – Task 2 – Dredging Feasibility Assessment – putting the plan together.
5. Phase 3 – Support with Bidding Process

Tetra Tech does not recommend the dredging process that returns sediment back into the lake. The committee will continue to research places to dispose of the sediment. Discussion took place.

**The Mayor opened the meeting to the public.**

John Hanby requested additional details regarding identifying the sources of sediment. Discussion took place.

Laura Parenteau questioned would the mapping be repeated at the end of the project to ensure sediment was removed as planned.

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Sandra Smith questioned if Birmingham would need to be involved since Highland Lake flows into Inland Lake. The Mayor responded the town has a good working relationship with the Birmingham Water Works Board and that in fact, they conduct our quarterly lake test samples.

Steve Poer questioned the cost of the project and how would the town pay for this. The Mayor responded we are looking at \$30,000.00+ for the surveys to decide if we want to dredge. Further research would have to be done to determine where the money could be obtained.

Steve Poer also questioned if other engineering companies were researched to compare costs. Bill Rush responded yes, but the committee found Tetra Tech out of Atlanta and they handled dredging services for a project of this scale.

Marlin Vest questioned if Tetra Tech was associated with a particular dredging company. Tetra Tech responded no.

Marlin Vest also questioned could we use the sediment in the wetlands. The response was no.

Ramzi Malek questioned if there are really effective ways to prevent sediment from coming into the lake. Tetra Tech responded yes there are numerous options.

Joe Hayden commented he doesn't believe the town will gain anything from determining where sediment is coming from and that we should just estimate how much sediment we have.

Steve Poer questioned if ADEM and EPA have rules and regulations to control agriculture runoff into the lake, and perhaps the town could go through the courts to make land owners to be responsible for the runoff.

Donna Hanby commented we would be better off to get the survey done instead of pursuing individual lawsuits with landowners who may be contributing to the sediment.

Mayor Bailey questioned if there is anything we can do to keep sediment out of Brasher Creek. Tetra Tech responded yes. Detention ponds were also discussed.

Sandra Vinson commented she respected and thanked the committee, the council and the process because we are thinking of the future of the lake and not rushing into the project without thorough research.

Anita Poer questioned if there was a particular time of the year to do this type of work. Tetra Tech responded the surveys could be done now and the dredging would depend on the town's schedule.

Wayne Bailey questioned if the lake had to be lowered to dredge. Tetra Tech responded no the lake does not need to be lowered to dredge. It depends on the depth. However, if the lake is lowered you could dredge at the same time.

Joe Hayden questioned if the town has the money to do this project and where do we intend to dispose of the sediment.

John Hanby stated there are low interest rates right now should the town decide to borrow and we shouldn't delay in getting a loan.

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Josh Anderson questioned the outcome if we don't dredge. The response was that the sediment will increase, it will not fix itself.

The Mayor stated the council now needs to study this proposal and decide if we need to move forward. We should not be in a rush, but should research thoroughly before making a decision.

Tim Peek made a motion to adjourn. Jamb Lamb seconded. All said I. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

Submitted 1-13-2014

Approved 1-13-2014

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Cheryl Storey, Town Clerk

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Gail S. Bailey, Mayor