

The Cape Cod Chronicle

WWW.CAPECODCHRONICLE.COM

HARWICH



EDITION VOL. 46 NO. 13 75¢

REGIONAL
DISTRICT
NAME CHOSEN
PAGE 5

MARCH 31, 2011



YOUR INDEPENDENT SOURCE FOR LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1965



2 SECTIONS

Town Officials Have Fingers Crossed On Allen Harbor Dredge Bids

by William F. Galvin

HARWICH –The town has issued a request for proposals for dredging the Allen Harbor basin with bids expected by mid-April. The present estimate for removal of several feet of silt in the bottom of the harbor is \$3.8 million, and funds will be sought in the annual town meeting.

Board of Selectmen Chairman Angelo LaMantia made a presentation last week to chamber of commerce members on the need for the project, which seeks to remove more than 40,000 cubic yards of silt from both public and private waters in the basin. The town has estimated that 60 percent of the cost will come from public funds and 40 percent will be assessed to 10 private property owners under a betterment program.

The town will seek funding in the annual town meeting and a debt exclusion vote on the ballot under a new law backed by Harwich officials allowing municipalities to borrow for dredging projects. The town was also instrumental in crafting a betterment bylaw that will allow private property owners to either pay in full for their share within 30 days or to be assessed an annual payment over a 10-year period.

LaMantia said Allen Harbor is a man-made basin that was created in 1926 and has not been well maintained by the town. There has been limited dredging there during that period. An area at the Allen Harbor Yacht Club was dredged in 1987 and there was some localized dredging performed in 1956.

“There are several feet of a black mayonnaise substance and you can’t drive a boat through. It’s tough to navigate,” LaMantia said. “When the bottom gets churned up it also kills the shellfish.”

He said in the 1960s there was a sand bottom there, but increased nitrogen entering the harbor creates vegetative blooms and die-offs, which create the organic silting that makes up the black muck.

“God’s upset at putting a harbor where it wasn’t meant to be and it’s filling in,” LaMantia said.



Board of Selectmen Chairman Angelo LaMantia and John Bologna, president of Coastal Engineering, Inc., explain plans for dredging the Allen Harbor basin to members of the chamber of commerce at a meeting Thursday night at the 400 East restaurant. WILLIAM F. GALVIN PHOTO

The plan is for the town to be responsible for paying for dredging around the town docks, mooring field and channel. Everything else will be paid by the private property owners, which includes Allen Harbor Yacht Club, Allen Harbor Marine Service and abutting property owners with docks in the harbor.

As recently as a few weeks ago, Coastal Engineering Company of Orleans, the town’s consultant on the project, was examining cost-saving measures, including looking at a ponding proposal into which the black mayonnaise would be pumped and allowed to de-water on local beaches before being removed.

In Thursday’s chamber meeting, town officials and John Bologna, president of Coastal Engineering, cited plans to return to a de-water plan using press equipment in the parking lot at Allen Harbor. The town was successful in winning state department of environmental protection approval to

A CAP FOR MR. ALBRO



Workers were busy on Monday replacing the asphalt shingles on the roof of the historic Albro House, a town property located to the west of town hall, with a new cedar shingle cap. WILLIAM F. GALVIN PHOTO

transfer the caked vegetative material to the town landfill to be composted.

This process is expected to save \$1 million from an earlier removal process that would have required trucking the material to a landfill in Bourne. Bologna said the organic silt has been tested and deemed to

contain no heavy metals or toxins and thus can be mixed with composting materials at the landfill.

Jeannie Wheeler wanted to know if the black muck would filter out of the harbor

Continued on Page 13

Special Town Meeting Tax Initiatives Called ‘Good Financial Planning’

by William F. Galvin

HARWICH – The seasonal rental and lodging tax proposals to be placed before voters in the special town meeting in May were defined as “good financial planning” when Town Administrator James Merriam spoke to members of the chamber of commerce on the initiatives on Thursday.

The Recession has been ongoing for several years, Merriam said, and state government has cut local aid for the past three years and possibly a fourth year. He said the town is projecting to break even with state aid this year, or “write a check back to the state. It’s a pretty sad commentary,” Merriam said.

Merriam said.

He said the selectmen’s tax proposals are “good financial planning. It’s a backup plan if state aid goes south,” Merriam said.

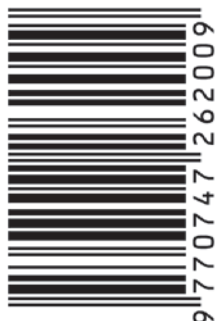
Selectmen are supporting implementation of a new seasonal vacation rental tax designed to collect revenues from those bed and breakfast facilities that do not come under existing tax laws, second home rentals, room rentals in homes and condominium rentals. The initiative is designed to capture revenues from rentals that extend up to 90 days.

Merriam and Board of Selectmen Chairman Angelo La-

Mantia stressed the seasonal vacation rental bylaw is what they prefer at this time, instead of the second article which would increase the local option hotel and motel tax from 4 to 6 percent. They see the lodging industry as not “playing on a level playing field” because they pay a 4 percent lodging tax while the owners in the other rental categories escape the tax.

Harwich is following the lead of Nantucket, which crafted the proposed bylaw to expand this taxation and will be acting

Continued on Page 13



INDEX

Almanac - 8
Classifieds - 45-46
Editorial - 22
Ent. Sampler - 29

Legals - 40-41
Letters - 23
Minding Your Biz - 21
Obituaries - 20

Real Estate - 33-38, 48
Sports - 25-26
Theater Guide - 30