

CC Commission OKs C'ville River project

Conditions set
to preserve
shellfish,
habitat

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The reaches of the Centerville River will not exceed the town's grasp.

Last week, the Cape Cod Commission approved Phase II of Barnstable's maintenance and improvement dredging plan

for the Centerville River/East Bay estuary system. This will involve three reaches to the east of the Bumps River intersection.

The dredging, sought by the town and residents of the area for more than a decade, is intended to improve navigation in

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Centerville River...

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the river channel. The commission was unanimous in supporting work on all but one of the reaches, the one that runs 1,500 feet from the channel to the north fork of the river and to the Craigville Beach Road bridge. Three members voted against that part of the project, not enough to

prohibit it.

Susan Kadar, the member from Truro, said she voted in opposition based on her interpretation of the commission's standards that a substantial public benefit must accrue from improvement dredging and that the agency's minimum performance standards must be met.

There were concerns that

dredging of the upper reach would benefit principally people with private docks and piers, and that such work could open the way for further shoreline development.

"There is no way to get dredge equipment past the (Centerville River) bridge at this point," Centerville resident Dom Gautrau told the commission in an attempt to ease concerns about development. Gautrau, a longtime advocate of the project, was one of several home owners who spoke in favor of the work at last

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Thursday's meeting.

Gautrau said dredging of the upper reach was necessary because silt from it will otherwise "flow right back into the main channel."

The commission's decision found that its minimum performance standards would be met because "the project will improve navigation by alleviating some safety issues arising from public use of certain shallow and narrow waterways; fortify coastal beaches and critical habitat; and provide

a sediment source for the littoral system."

Spoils will be used to renourish Craigville and Long beaches. Dewatering and storage of dredged materials will take place on Craigville Beach. Material not appropriate for being returned to the beach system will be disposed of off-site in Sandwich. Other conditions imposed by the commission will require the town to remove and replant shellfish from affected areas and post "no wake" warnings in sensitive areas.

After the vote, commission chairman David Ansel of Barnstable drew a laugh when he said, "I do want to know, Mr. Gautrau, what you are going to do with your life now."

In fact, Gautrau had answered that question earlier in the afternoon when he mentioned that it had been 75 years since the river had been dredged. "I've already signed up my grandson to come before you in 75 years," he said, "and he's not even born yet."