

Flamingo Isles Municipal Utility District Dredging Project Underway

Flamingo Isles Municipal Utility District is currently advertising for bids to dredge the main channel and the south channel at Harborwalk. The District's Board of Directors authorized its engineer to move forward with design and bidding of a dredging project at its meetings on August 24, 2018 and September 28, 2018. Bids are expected to be received in late November with work commencing in January 2019.

The current project will consist of mechanical dredging of the main channel to a depth of 8 feet over a bottom width of 40 feet and upland disposal of spoil with alternates for additional dredging of the south channel and miscellaneous bulkhead repairs.

Contrary to a claim reported in the Galveston Daily News on October 22, 2018 from the owner of the Harborwalk Marina that the District has refused to dredge the main channel for months, the Board authorized the actions needed to undertake a dredging project promptly after becoming aware of complaints. At its meeting on June 12, 2018 the Board authorized investigation of a hump in the channel and at its meeting on July 18, 2018, the Board asked its engineer to check on potential contractors to clear the hump on a regular basis. By August 24, 2018 it had received a bathymetric survey of the entire channel and authorized the design and the solicitation of bids to dredge the full length of main channel.

Currently, the District's ability to dredge the main channel to a greater depth or over a greater width is limited due to the locations available on the site where the District is permitted to place spoil. The District must use mechanical dredging, which is more expensive than hydraulic dredging, and the upland spoil site is visible to some Harborwalk residents who object to placement of additional spoil there. The Board has directed the engineer to locate and obtain permission to use other spoil sites which will allow the District to alternatively use hydraulic dredging and place material that will not be visible to Harborwalk residents.

The District has performed three dredging projects on the main channel and one on the south channel since 2011. The last one was in June of 2017. The Board believes that the rapid silting in of the main channel since the last dredging is likely due to Hurricane Harvey and is seeking funds from FEMA to reimburse it for some expenses associated with the upcoming dredging, as well as for other repairs.

Flamingo Isles Municipal Utility District is a political subdivision of the State of Texas and operates under the Texas Water Code. Its boundaries are coterminous with Harborwalk. The District is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the registered voters in the District. Currently the Board consists of five homeowners in the District who serve without compensation.

The District's operations are funded by property taxes paid by the residential and commercial taxpayers in the District. It has an annual operating budget of approximately \$230,000. In addition to dredging, the Board uses its operating funds to repair and maintain all the bulkheads and bulkhead caps in Harborwalk and funds its administrative expenses. The District is also required to pay debt service on its bonds from property taxes which are collected and deposited to a debt service fund separate from the operating fund.

As required by the Texas Water Code, the District's financial statements are audited annually. The District's audited financial statements for the last 11 years are posted on its website, www.flamingoislesmud.com.