

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF AN
) ALTERNATE PLAN TO RENOURISH
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON) CRAB BANK
)
TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT)

WHEREAS, Crab Bank is a man-made spoil island situated near Shem Creek in the central portion of the harbor. Crab Bank was created in 1958 utilizing dredge material and in following years has become a local shore bird rookery, though it was not originally designed for this purpose. Crab Bank has become a valued environmental asset; and,

WHEREAS, Shem Creek is an iconic feature of the Town of Mount Pleasant and is home to many businesses, including vital marine-based businesses, and residences and provides recreation opportunities for Mount Pleasant citizens and visitors; and,

WHEREAS, Shem Creek provides a popular waterfront restaurant district with numerous dining options, panoramic views, shopping, watersports, and passive recreation. All of these activities serve to provide positive economic impact; and

WHEREAS, due to significant erosion and the loss of upland area, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has undertaken an effort to revitalize and enhance Crab Bank which will provide numerous ecological and recreational benefits. In order to achieve this goal, the USACE has put forth a plan to place approximately 825,000 cubic yards of dredge material, which is substantially more than the amount of material used in the 1950s, to create additional upland; and

WHEREAS, the USACE project, as currently proposed, does not consider potential negative effects to the Shem Creek mouth area as well as potential negative economic effects to the Town and its citizens. The proposed project affects no municipalities other than the Town and the Town bears the burden of project consequences. These concerns led the Town to commission separate engineering and economic studies in order to determine potential negative effects as well as to provide project alternatives; and,

WHEREAS, the engineering study was performed by ATM Design Engineering Consultants and findings are included in a report dated December 2018. The report is attached as Exhibit A. Findings include:

- Adding approximately 825,000 cubic yards of dredge material to Crab Bank will increase sedimentation in the primary and secondary access channels as well as the mouth area of Shem Creek;
- Based on modeling, Hog Channel will become non-navigable, except during high tide, within two years;

- The proposed USACE plan will not prevent continued northern migration of Crab Bank and the increased materials will result in a connection to the mainland within ten years. Crab Bank will lose its habitat value as a bird rookery as predators will have access. This counteracts the very reason for renourishing Crab Bank;
- Data from the 1950s demonstrates how migration of the renourished bank can detrimentally affect navigation by causing shallowing in the federally marked channel of Shem Creek;
- The proposed USACE plan could result in loss of recreational water uses due to sedimentation of the Shem Creek secondary access channels;
- The proposed USACE plan could result in increased dredge frequency of Shem Creek. The USACE typically dredges Shem Creek every ten years, the last time being in 2013, however, dredging will likely be required more frequently and there is no guarantee that funds will be appropriated for the regular ten-year dredging projects. This will likely result in significant financial burdens to the Town and its citizens; and
- The proposed USACE project could destroy Crab Bank and the Shem Creek mouth as a recreational destination for dolphin and bird watching;
- Modeling of alternate plans shows that by placing dredge materials farther southeast and by using a lower volume of materials, all of which can be achieved under current permits, would meet overall goals of the project and reduce the adverse effects to Shem Creek and the Town.

WHEREAS, in order to measure the potential economic impacts of the proposed USACE plan the Town commissioned an expert to investigate potential project effects on business owners, commercial property owners and residents of the Shem Creek Business District. Joseph C. Von Nessen, Ph.D., Research Economist, prepared a report dated November 2020 and concluded that economic loss to the Town that would likely arise from the reduction of depth by two feet is estimated to be \$82.9 million annually. This corresponds to a loss of approximately 966 full-time equivalent jobs and \$34.1 million in labor income. Losses are expected to increase to \$126.1 million annually if the depth of Shem Creek is reduced by six feet. The report is attached as Exhibit B; and

WHEREAS, based on sound research it appears that the USACE could achieve the goals of its plan and minimize impact to Shem Creek and the Town, its citizens and business owners by implementing a feasible alternate plan; and

WHEREAS, no improvements to Crab Bank represents the least risk to Shem Creek and the Town, however, the Town proposes and advocates a project alternative which mitigates risk and improves the project.

THEREFORE, the Town Council of Mount Pleasant urges the USACE to review and consider an alternate Crab Bank revitalization plan, as researched and modeled by ATM Design Engineering Consultants. The proposed alternative plan will allow USACE to meet all project goals, extend the project life and mitigate identified risks and potential consequences.

THIS RESOLUTION SHALL BE EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY UPON ITS ADOPTION.
SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED THIS _____ DAY OF _____, 2021.

J.W. Haynie, Mayor
Town of Mount Pleasant

ATTEST:

Christine Barrett
Clerk of Council

_____, 2021

Adopted at Council meeting: _____, 2021

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

David G. Pagliarini
Corporation Counsel

DRAFT