



May 2008

Compiled by Janet Dickey
and Kelly Giuliano

A message from the Chairman of the Board of Governors. By Tony Zimmitti

There is a rumor making the rounds that needs to be "SQUELCHED." Rumor has it that Grove Beach Point Association, Inc., (GBPA) hired the dredging contractor "Dredge Maryland." **This is absolutely not true!** The selection was made by the Town of Westbrook with assistance from the Harbor Management Commission.

As many of you have noticed, the project is way behind schedule, and as of the date of this article (May 10) is still far from being completed. I want to remind you that the start date was to have been the 3rd of April, and that it should have taken 10 to 12 days, as estimated by no less than the dredger himself. GBPA was contractually obligated to the Town to be ready to accept the dredged material and have a dewatering system in place by the 2nd of April, or face the risk of financial penalties. By the same token, the Town is obligated to deposit 6000 cubic yards of sand on Grove Beach Point beach prior to the expiration of the D.E.P permit. The Schumack Construction Co. of Clinton, the contractor that GBPA hired to dewater and spread the sand, a truly professional outfit, and Jim Lally, it's president, assured me that the date would be met, and it was, with days to spare. Jim, the gentleman that he is, has thus far been very patient, and has kept the heavy equipment and the operators on the beach since March 28th, far longer than anticipated. The GBPA end of the project has been managed flawlessly and in compliance with all D.E.P. requirements, thanks to Mr. Lally and his people.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the management process of this project, nor for Dredge Maryland. This firm has demonstrated such a high level of incompetence, that one must wonder why it

was selected. Surely, the Town could not have asked key questions that would have revealed DredgeMD's flaws and incompetence. DredgeMD has also displayed a general lack of professionalism and, as admitted by its owner, a total lack of experience in dredging in tidal waters such as ours. Again, why wasn't this significant deficiency uncovered? It alone should have summarily disqualified DredgeMD. To compound matters, their equipment not only proved to be inadequate, but it was also in such poor condition that it required nearly a week and a half for serious repairs and pipe connections, before the first attempt at dredging would take place on April 12. Since then, a project that the D.E.P. called a "win-win" proposition, has turned into a nightmare. As if broken equipment, broken pipes, and a general lack of knowledge about dredging in tidal water was not enough, DredgeMD's crew walked off the job a few weeks back because the owners failed to pay their wages. Today, I was informed that a second crew has also left, and the owner, as he did three weeks ago, is presently driving them home to Maryland, and is again looking for replacements. The drive to and from Maryland, as it was explained to me, is because the crew personnel do not own cars. The contractor is not due back until May 13. More wasted time. In nearly seven weeks, there have only been two good days of dredging. In total we estimate that approximately 700 cubic yards of sand has been deposited on the beach. Throughout the rest of the time, the dredging has been sporadic at best and frustrating for us, especially when the weather was just perfect, but the equipment wasn't operational, or there was no crew.

The hiring of Dredge Maryland, the low bidder, may yet prove a far costlier proposition for the Town than was at first foreseen.

The D.E.P., aware of the importance of this project, has deemed it wise to extend the deadline for a second time. The original deadline was May 10. The Town request for an extension to May 15 was granted, as was a second request for an extension until June 1. What is so disturbing, given the circumstances, is the fact that while these deadlines come and go, there appears to be no real concern shown by the Harbor Management Commission, nor the Town for that matter. Rick McGinley and I have addressed the issue. We have proposed

hiring a different hydraulic dredging company, in particular one that had been interviewed by all parties (Kentucky Dredge) and found to have all the necessary qualifications and salt water dredging experience. In addition, Kentucky Dredge have a dredge at their disposal that is self propelled and can reach a depth of 20 feet, unlike the one operated by DredgeMD. Most importantly, it would in no way disrupt boat traffic to any degree. In comparison, DredgeMD needs to have pilings driven into the bottom in order to pull itself on cables, disrupts boat traffic considerably, and can barely reach the depth of 12 feet. At high tide, therefore, it cannot reach bottom. This deficiency alone should have been cause for not hiring the firm. But it was not.

Admittedly, the Harbor Management Commission was reluctant to adopt the pump-dredge method, preferring instead the old bucket and barge, and dump the sand at Cornfield Shoals disposal site. The thinking is that this method is less expensive. GBPA's research indicates that this is not true. The costs are comparable. The pump-dredge technology is not only more efficient, and the preferred method by many states, but it also makes possible and affordable beneficial beach nourishment. The GBPA has for years urged the D.E.P. to adopt it. Unlike that which has been reported by the media, the catalyst driving the use of the pump-dredge technology in this area has been the Grove Beach Point Association, Inc., and Rick McGinley. We kept saying that our project is a dress rehearsal for the upcoming beach nourishment for Hammonasset State Beach in Madison using the method we are using here. During the few hours of operation, when everything was working well, the method proved to be very productive. Imagine how effective it could be with an appropriate dredger and competent crew.

It is interesting to note that the Town did not initially want to pursue this project using the hydraulic dredge method. The Town felt that it could achieve the dredging of the channel for less using the bucket and barge method. Is it mere coincidence that the Town is now indifferent to the missed deadlines? That they hired a firm that was incompetent and underfunded? One wonders and speculates that this project may have been preordained to

fail. One can also surmise that at the last possible minute the bucket and barge method can be put in place and "rescue" the project as a whole. It would set an unfortunate precedent for future dredging operations if this were the case and we hope that the D.E.P. takes notice of the full scope of this project, not just the end result. But, after all, the channel must be dredged; an economic necessity for the Town and for the marinas.

Nonetheless, given the extra time, there is reason to be optimistic that the project will be completed, albeit not on schedule, via the pump-dredge method, and the sand placed on the beach. There is another very good reason for optimism: Brewer's Pilot Point Marina general manager Rives Pots has personally taken full control and is driving the dredging operations. Not only has he provided a most suitable staging area for DredgeMD, but also marina facilities and personnel to effect all necessary dredge repairs. Rives has said that all the little things that were bound to break on the dredge have been fixed, and has had all the necessary pilings driven into the channel bottom. He is doing all this during one of the marina's busiest times. Rives has also assisted the Association by providing personnel and work boats to install the yellow turbidity curtain we see stretched between jetties. For that we thank him. We also recognize that Mr. Pots has a huge stake in the success of the project. After all, Pilots Point Marina's reputation as of the best, if not the best, in the North East must rest, among other things, on a well maintained channel that allows adequate depth for the large vessels to sail in and out at all times.

There are people who are not happy with the mess at the beach. No one is. No one thought that this operation would go on for so long. And, as it has been said, this is a great opportunity for GBPA.

And now on to other things. Please remember that the Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, May 24, 2008. You have already received the call. Please attend. Thank you and have a good summer.

**Beach Committee
By Gary Bazzano**

With summer soon approaching, the idea of boating is on many of our minds. The

beach committee will be offering a safe boating course on July 6, 2008 at the patio. One of our members, Beth Robinson (Mongillo) is a certified instructor and she has offered to teach a one day course on July 6. Upon passing of the course, participants will be able to receive their safe boating certificate. The price will be \$45.00. Starting around 9am, the course will be approximately seven hours of instruction. This is a great way for ANYONE to get their boating certificate. If you would like to participate, please contact me at gbazz@cox.net.

Council of Beaches Report
By Gerry Dyar
www.westbrookcouncilofbeaches.org

The Town Budget will be going to a referendum on 5/27/08. The time will be determined at a Town Meeting on 5/15/08. Check the notice board outside Town Hall for the voting times.

There will be a regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 7:00pm on 5/22/08, at the Mulvey Center. Public input about the Tax Assessor's performance is invited since he is up for reappointment to the position in June. You can either write to the Board of Selectmen in advance or tell about your experiences personally by attending the meeting. We have excerpts from the Special BOS meeting that took place on 3/27/08 and included a discussion of the Assessor, posted on our web site at www.westbrookcouncilofbeaches.org. Click on "Schedules". This is a great opportunity to tell the BOS about your personal

experiences with the Tax Assessor. Don't miss it.

Board of Governors:

Anthony Zimmitti – Chair
860-669-9962

Gary Bazzano – Vice Chair
Chair, Beach Committee
860-604-0500
gbazz@cox.net

Al DuBois – Clerk
860-633-3285
aldord@aol.com

David Brault – Treasurer
dbrault@interludehome.com

Maureen Shanley – Board Member
mmkmmkmm@aol.com

Rick McGinley – Chair, Beach Preservation Committee
buildermcg@aol.com

Joe Palmieri – Chair Special Project
860-669-2827
Bonnjoez3@aol.com

Ken Penfield – Board Member
Kpenfield@bcifinancial.com

Kelly Giuliano – Board Member / Newsletter
kgiuliano@hill-hill.com
860.669.9040



WE NEED YOU...



TO HELP WITH THE 4TH OF JULY BREAKFAST ON THE BEACH!

The Social Committee is looking for volunteers willing to Chair and arrange this event.

Please contact Sue DuBois at 860-633-3285 for more details!!!