

Dredging Project Summary to Date

May 3, 2007

Columbia is a place where we believe it is important to ensure the land is respected and its ponds and lakes are maintained as pristine community gathering posts. To ensure the beauty and health of the lakes for the future, an initiative was developed to carry out needed dredging for Lake Kittamaqundi and Lake Elkhorn, Columbia's two largest lakes. The CA Board approved funding in the FY 2007 budget to supplement existing funds designated for the dredging project. In support of CA's efforts to maintain the water quality of the lakes, the General Assembly approved \$475,000 in the state's budget, and Howard County approved \$100,000. Columbia's lakes collect sediment from throughout Howard County and keep it from traveling downstream to harm the Chesapeake, making it more than just a local concern.

Throughout the past year, CA Open Space staff and dredging consultant prepared and presented very detailed information to the CA Board, Board Committees, and community groups to inform and educate. Ultimately, the CA Board is responsible for approving any of the recommendations presented. The dredging project has been a fully open process which allows residents an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Resident input is a vital part of the Columbia process, and is very helpful in assisting the CA Board with making the appropriate decisions for Columbia.

Upon the completion of presentations held at Owen Brown and Town Center community meetings in early April, there was another briefing held at the April 26 CA Board meeting. A large number of residents from the Town Center and Owen Brown neighborhoods attended the meeting and shared their ideas and concerns about the dredging process and the associated viable staging options. Being examined were two methods for dredging the lakes, three viable options for a staging area at Lake Kittamaqundi, and two viable options for a staging area at Lake Elkhorn. Residents raised a variety of concerns; ranging from traffic volume and noise associated with the equipment to questions on the content of the dredged sediment. CA staff and consultant documented the concerns of the community, did the research, and then published the various results. This information, along with all the up-to-date details regarding the dredging project is currently posted on the CA website at www.columbiaassociation.com/dredging.

At that April 26 CA Board meeting, following testimony from many residents, Board Members voted on the dredging method and staging areas for both lakes. Lake Kittamaqundi at Town Center will be dredged using hydraulic equipment, and will use the South Entrance Property, adjacent to South Entrance Road as the staging area. Lake Elkhorn at Owen Brown will also use hydraulic equipment, using the Lake Elkhorn Park, adjacent to the parking lot, as its staging option. Complete details on all options can be found at www.columbiaassociation.com/dredging.

With these decisions made, CA staff and consultants will now move forward with the next step which is the permitting process. With several agencies involved, including local, and state. The time-line for preparation of documents, submittal, and response is estimated for up to six months.