

Dredging work for Lynn ferry out to bid

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LYNN The city is seeking bids for a dredging project that represents the beginning of the end of the Blossom Street Extension ferry project.

“This is the start of Phase III, the final phase of the project,” said Economic Development and Industrial Corporation Executive Director James Cowdell on Wednesday.

The \$400,000 project will be funded through a grant from the Seaport Advisory Council. In June the Seaport Advisory Council awarded the city \$3.2 million to pay for Phase III of the project. The council has invested a total of \$5 million in hopes the project could see a ferry in port in under two years.

Bids are due for the dredging on Oct. 9.

“It’s a very short window,” Cowdell acknowledged. “We’ll award a contract immediately and the dredging will get going early November.”

Dredging season is on a short, very specified timetable in the Northeast, running from November to Jan. 15, 2013. Cowdell said dredging must be completed before the final Phase III work can begin.

“It’s deep-water, it’s the same (channel) that Horizon’s Edge, the old gambling boat, used,” he said. “But to do the construction the dock area needs to be dredged.”

Cowdell said he hopes the final work, which includes the actual pier for a ferry, installing a 60-foot wave attenuator and inland property upgrades, would get under way next spring.

“Then all that will be left to do is shopping for a boat,” Cowdell said.

The project is already four years in the making. Phase I was completed in 2008 when EDIC rebuilt the boat ramp at the end of Blossom Street Extension and tore down an old building, as well as upgraded the drainage and put down new asphalt for the driveway. Phase II included installing a steel bulkhead that protects the shoreline while also expanding the waterfront access from 60-feet to 150-feet.

The dredging and ensuing construction are the last hurdles.

“It’s a good positive step,” Cowdell said. “It’s all engines forward.”

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