

Council ready to tackle flooding and failing underground systems

BY MICHAELE DUKE news@kingstreenews.com Feb 27, 2019 Updated Feb 27, 2019



The Town of Kingstree is poised to make substantial changes to the city's failing infrastructure. On February 18, Kingstree Town Council heard a presentation by Dennis Corporation Project Manager McSwan Armfield who laid out a plan to address pipes, water backups and the canal or formerly known as Kingstree Branch. Armfield suggested the town consider the canal as a top priority. "The problem comes in the deferred maintenance and overgrown vegetation and sediment

buildup in that canal," said Armfield. He said that in itself would improve the flow and help other locations along its path such as Eastland, Lexington and Madison Avenues. The cost just for the canal exceeds \$580,000.

Armfield continued, pointing to undersized pipes such as one on Eastland Avenue that runs under the road. It begins as a 60-inch pipe, which he said is barely enough to handle flow. However, he said further down the pipe turns into 48-inches, which is the reason behind the backups. He said there are other pipes that contain large amounts of sediment that hinders flow. Armfield recommended upgrading those pipes or dig them up and replace them with an open channel. Other recommendations include rehabilitating culverts on Wee Nee Drive, Nelson Blvd., and Reed Street at a cost of just under \$250,000. A stretch along Longstreet Street from

Jackson, Academy and Gilland Streets need their undersized pipes replaced and the addition of curb inlets. Armfield added Short and Maple Streets experience backup because they are so close to the river. Lastly, Charles Avenue, is the smallest project at \$15,865.

Please turn to **pipes,5 5** station, Armfield repeated his recommendation to make the canal a top priority. "Rehab the canal first," said Armfield. "That's going to be the biggest bang for your buck, the biggest value and improve the highest number of trouble spots." He suggested breaking down the work into phases beginning south of Main Street and working back. But also he added the town should sit down and talk with the Corps of Engineers about funding and how they can contribute. Kingstree Town Manager Richard Treme said representatives from the Corps of Engineers recently visited the canal to review damaged caused by flooding in 2015 and 2016 to evaluate what repairs they would make.

The canal, which Williamsburg County and the Town of Kingstree, are held jointly responsible for maintenance, has been plagued with flooding issues for decades. The drainage function of Kingstree Branch dates beyond to 1916. One of its earliest uses was to reportedly divert water from a bay located east of Eastland Avenue behind the Williamsburg Packing Company. The earliest known study of the canal was an August 1967, letter report prepared by the US Army Corps of Engineers for a clearing and snagging project.

In a February 1971, USACE-Charleston District report, reference was made to the May 1970 Kingstree Branch Detailed Project Report noted that a recommended channel enlargement project would reduce flood damage but would not provide complete protection against flooding. The Small Flood Control Project was developed and a construction contract was awarded. Work was successfully completed in June, 1977.

In 2007, The Town of Kingstree commissioned a record site and topographic survey of the canal requested by the USACE-Charleston District. In a report, the condition of the canal was rated as Minimally Acceptable and improvements were to be made by September 2010.

In 2009, The Town engaged Hybrid Engineering to perform a Hydrologic & Hydraulic Evaluation of the canal. Lining the channel bottom and sides with cast-in-place concrete slabs was recommended. The Preliminary Engineering Report was completed and submitted to the USDA-Rural Development in January 2010 but it was rejected.

In 2015, a USDA Rural Development grant in the amount of \$1,125,900 was awarded to the town with \$187,750 from the town, and \$187,750 from Williamsburg County to be provided in in-kind services. Council voted to set aside \$225,000 in the budget for the work.

At the end of his presentation, Armfield repeated his recommendation to make the canal a top priority. "Rehab the canal first," said Armfield. "That's going to be the biggest bang for your buck, the biggest value and improve the highest number of trouble spots." He suggested breaking down the work into phases beginning south of Main Street and working back. But also he added the town should sit down and talk with the Corps of Engineers about funding and how they can contribute. Kingstree Town Manager Richard Treme said representatives from the Corps of Engineers recently visited the canal to review damaged caused by flooding in 2015 and 2016 to evaluate what repairs they would make.

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