Snow Dumping in Channel to be Reduced

Tuesday, 11 December 2012

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Snow dumped from a dedicated pier on the spit may be ending. KMXT file photo

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The City of Kodiak has long disposed of snow in the streets by dumping it off a short pier at the end of the spit, but that practice will be changing in the future and may cost the city substantially more money.

Public Works Director Mark Kozak will be briefing the city council tonight (Tuesday) on the future of snow disposal in Kodiak. In his memo to the city manager, Kozak says someone complained to the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation about the city’s practices. He was contacted by the agency and urged to re-examine the state regulations.

In 2006, the DEC completed a study showing road salt, sand and grit, and some pollutants get dumped into the waters along with the snow. In response, they made snow dumping allowed only by permit. The alternative is stockpiling the snow in giant piles on land, which Kozak says might be hard here on the island.

Ideally, he said a storage area would be about two-acres in size, allow the snow to melt, leaving behind the road salt and sand, and drain without causing problems downstream.

Reducing, or even phasing out use of the snow dump on the spit is complicated by the fact that private contractors often dump snow from there, as does the State of Alaska’s own snow trucks on occasion.

Kozak says he plans to notify the DEC that for this winter, dumping off the spit will continue, but perhaps be reduced.

Kozak says the cost of snow removal will not likely change significantly this year, as the operation will be very close to how it’s always been done. But, given that the snow may have to be hauled much further away than just to the spit, it will cost the city much more in the future.

Kozak said he would like to have a study done by Dowl HKM engineers to identify likely spots for a snow storage yard, and present it to the council in the new year. In the meantime, he said

motorists and pedestrians should not see too much of a difference in snow removal in the downtown area this winter.

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