

DIVERSION AUTHORITY
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
FARGO CITY HALL
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2017

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on February 22, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. at the Fargo City Hall, Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Jake Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District (by phone); Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; and Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer. Absent were: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District, Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; and Elly Peterson, Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce.

Also present were: Eric Dodds, Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; and Michelle Anderson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District staff.

Construction Outreach

On February 14, 2017, the Corps of Engineers issued a press release announcing Ames Construction, Inc. has begun to mobilize equipment to conduct pre-construction soil and frost depth investigation at the diversion inlet structure south of Horace. The contractor will provide the Corps of Engineers a construction schedule within the next two weeks.

North Dakota legislative update

Rocky Schneider presented a *Legislative Information* brochure created to provide updates, information relating to benefits and financial information to legislators on the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Committee briefly discussed House Bill 1020, which includes funding for the Metro Flood Diversion Project and other local flood protection projects. Past legislative sessions have committed \$570 million with \$304 million already appropriated. Legislative intent has designated the remainder over the next four bienniums, including \$66.5 million in the 2017-2019 session for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

In January, Colonel Samuel L. Calkins, Diversion Authority members and consultants met with Governor Doug Burgum and North Dakota legislators to discuss the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Minnesota update

Rocky Schneider stated the F-M Flood Protection and Upstream Mitigation Working Group (Working Group) met to identify and address areas of common concern, facilitate mitigation and discuss the *Dam Safety and Work in Public Waters Permit* for the Metro Flood Diversion Project on February 1, 2017. The Working Group will meet the first week of March to continue discussion.

Diversion Authority members and consultants are preparing information to present to Minnesota legislators in support of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Kevin Campbell serves on the Minnesota Transportation Policy Committee and attended the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Annual Conference in December 2016. Mr. Campbell stated the AMC gives updates on legislative issues and the new administration made positive statements about the collaboration between local entities and the Corps of Engineers to create the Public-Private Partnership (P3) for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Mr. Schneider stated Major General Michael C. Wehr, Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite and the North Dakota and Minnesota congressional delegation have been invited to the ground breaking ceremony at the diversion inlet structure south of Horace on April 17, 2017. Mr. Dodds stated the date is significant as it marks the 20th Anniversary of the 1997 Flood that occurred in the metro area.

Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update

Rocky Schneider stated the Business Leaders Flood Taskforce, area realtors and members of the Home Builders Association of Fargo-Moorhead were at the Capitol to attend committee hearings and connect with elected officials in support of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce hosted a reception on the evening of February 9, 2017.

Rights of Entry Outreach Update

Eric Dodds stated letters were sent to property owners in Cass County and Richland County requesting access for biotic and geomorphic surveys to monitor the Red River and tributaries of the Red River for the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The surveys are not within the boundary of the diversion, but are a necessary part of cultural remediation requirements determined by the Corps of Engineers. City and township officials were sent notification letters to help answer property owner questions or concerns.

Property owners are signing *Right of Entry Agreements*, but access is still required from many of the property owners for the Corps of Engineers to conduct surveys prior to construction. Mr. Dodds stated the Corps of Engineers stressed the importance of meeting the land acquisition timeline to prevent Public-Private Partnership (P3) ramifications and construction delays in the future. The Corps of Engineers will need access to the property by mid-summer.

Communications

Rocky Schneider stated an addendum to the *Communication Plan* will be presented for consideration at the next meeting. Mr. Schneider presented the *Outline* and stated Governor Doug Burgum provided consultants with creative suggestions to integrate social media into the *Communication Plan* for the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The addendum would expand the previously approved *Communication Plan* adopted by the Committee on October 12, 2016. Discussion was held on social media platforms, target audiences, content plan, and expansion of the *Communication Plan* for wider distribution of content through the Committee.

Mr. Schneider discussed various communication strategies, such as data mining to gain input from the public and property owners impacted by the Metro Flood Diversion Project and a Wikipedia page. Kevin Campbell stated a Wikipedia page could provide a significant amount of important information on the history and people involved in planning the project. Mike Thorstad stated many people do not realize the long-term commitment and planning involved in a project of this magnitude. Committee members suggested a video could be created illustrating the start and timeline of the project.

Metro Flood Diversion Project – one page information handouts

Eric Dodds and Rocky Schneider presented and reviewed informational handouts on the *Biotic and Geomorphic Monitoring Program* and the *Legislative Information* brochure for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Community outreach update

Eric Dodds stated an All Entity Diversion Authority informational meeting will be held this spring. Topics for discussion include goals, the construction timeline and lessons learned from the Red River Floodway and Red River Floodway Expansion, an artificial flood control waterway in Western Canada.

Committee members agreed to move the time of the Public Outreach Committee meetings from 1:00 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Metro Flood Diversion Project – litigation update

Rocky Schneider stated U. S. District Court Judge John A. Tunheim has scheduled a hearing to address the claims filed by the Richland-Wilkin Joint Powers Authority and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources on February 23, 2017. Brief discussion was held on the lawsuit filed by the Richland-Wilkin Joint Power Authority against the Diversion Authority.

e-Newsletter Analytics

The January e-Newsletter contained an article and video link to watch a panel discussion on the Metro Flood Diversion Project by the Corps of Engineers, members of the Diversion Authority and leaders from around the region.

FMDiversion.com

Tammy Jo Taft gave a demonstration to the Committee on the updates made to the meeting calendar on the FMDiversion.com website. An option to subscribe to the calendar is available, which will place the Diversion Authority meeting dates on various personal calendars.

YouTube and Social Media

Twitter feed statistics were added to the Social Media Engagement Report. Discussion was held on the impact of social media and sending out tweets regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Jake Gust stated he supports social media and sending out tweets to further public outreach for the project.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

Carol Harbeke Lewis
Cass County Joint Water Resource District
Secretary-Treasurer