

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
JANUARY 9, 2013

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on January 9, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Brad Wimmer, Fargo City Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner and Jacob Gust, ad hoc Committee Member. Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; and Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; were absent.

Also present were Tom O'Hara, CH2MHill; Eric Dodds, Daron Selvig and Rocky Schneider, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; Lyndon Pease, Moore Engineering, Inc.; April Walker, Fargo City Engineer; and Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer.

Brad Wimmer called the meeting to order.

Minutes

It was moved by Kevin Campbell, seconded by Mike Thorstad and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2012, meeting.

Right of Entry Committee report

Lyndon Pease informed the committee that access has been obtained to all sites needed for the installation of piezometers. They are working on access for Phase I cultural surveys on a few different sites and for Phase II on additional testing sites that were not completed last fall along the Sheyenne River.

They are starting to get access to properties between Main Avenue and 5th Avenue North for downtown levees. It is hoped that this project will be bid by the end of the year. Work north of the Maple River is also a priority.

Outreach meetings

Approximately 200 people attended the meeting last night regarding the ring levee concept for Oxbow, Hickson and Bakke Subdivision. Presentations were made by the Corps of Engineers and local officials. There was some dissention, but it was a good meeting to get information to the residents. Residents in Bakke Subdivision expressed they would like an opportunity to vote on whether they would like to proceed with the proposed levee or not. They also had questions regarding property value and impacts

to septic systems. Tom O'Hara said it was emphasized that property values are expected to level out, but residents did not accept that statement without seeing proof.

The committee discussed property values after the flood in Grand Forks. Property values did rebound after approximately a 5-year period.

Around 60 property owners (approximately 1/3 of the total property owners in the Oxbow, Hickson and Bakke Subdivision area), scheduled one-on-one meetings over the two days following the public meeting.

Mike Thorstad said people do not seem to think there will be larger floods than what we have already experienced. Mr. O'Hara said that cannot be predicted and pointed out the recent flooding at Minot as an example of what can happen. The purpose of the Diversion is to reduce that risk. Mr. Campbell suggested directing people to the Red River Basin Commission report where it states the metro area should strive for 500-year protection. Brenda Elmer added that the report is backed up with data and that we have not seen the largest flood yet.

Property owners expressed concern about living behind a levee. The proposed levees would be monitored, as well as other safety issues. April Walker said the city inspects existing dikes annually.

Ms. Walker pointed out that the vote relating to the Oxbow, Hickson and Bakke Subdivision is not to decide whether it will be built, but whether it should be included in the Environmental Assessment (EA). Cass County would make a recommendation to the Diversion Authority on the matter and the Diversion Authority would vote whether to keep it in the Environmental Assessment. The EA would be published in May and there would be a 30-day comment period, along with another public meeting. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process would be complete in July and a decision would be finalized.

Updates on legislative open houses and business outreach

Water Day at the North Dakota Legislature is scheduled for February 12, 2013. An open house is planned that afternoon to provide information and answer questions relating to the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project. There is \$102 million in Governor Dalrymple's budget for flood control.

Attendance at upcoming North Dakota and Minnesota legislative forums was discussed.

E-Newsletter

Daron Selvig reviewed topics of articles that will be included in the next E-newsletter that will be released Monday.

FMDiversion.com update

Mr. Selvig said new videos, along with new questions, answers and comments have been added to FMDiversion.com.

Eric Dodds said they are meeting with city and county GIS departments to discuss development of a web GIS feature for public use.

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