

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
FEBRUARY 10, 2016

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on February 10, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Elly Peterson, Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce; and Jacob Gust, ad hoc Committee Member (by phone); and those whose names appear on the attached roster.

Absent were Melissa Sobolik, Fargo City Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; and Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Minutes

It was moved by Mike Thorstad, seconded by Kevin Campbell and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2016, meeting.

Right of Entry Committee report

Lyndon Pease gave an update on Right of Entry. The Corps of Engineers submitted the 2016 Right of Entry survey and property acquisition list for the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Mr. Pease stated local sponsors are currently reviewing the list and pre-acquisition activity has begun for the diversion inlet structure south of Horace. *Right of Entry* requests were sent to property owners affected by the diversion channel alignment, diversion inlet and associated Cass County Highway 16 and 17 realignment properties. Phase I cultural resource surveys will be done on a few parcels along the diversion channel.

Chairman Olson stated pre-acquisition activities will continue for the diversion inlet structure and it is important to note the location of the diversion inlet structure is the same for both alignment alternatives.

Federal update

Rocky Schneider presented a *Federal Funding Summary*, which provides a brief history of the Metro Flood Diversion Project, details on federal funding and the potential construction activities for 2016.

Mr. Schneider gave a brief update on the news conference held on February 9, 2016, with the mayors of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, and Dilworth. It was reported the Corps

of Engineers has selected the Metro Flood Diversion Project as one of six projects that will begin construction in 2016 and \$5 million has been allocated by Congress to start construction.

Discussion was held on the process and timeline for the Corps of Engineers to obligate federal funding, the Metro Flood Diversion Project split delivery system between the non-federal sponsors and the Corps of Engineers, the permitting process, potential flood peaks in regard to construction on the diversion channel, and impacts to farmland.

Mike Thorstad stated it is important for the public to understand that a Resolution exists to ensure construction on the Metro Flood Diversion Project will continue, even after the \$5 million allocated by Congress to the Corps of Engineers to begin construction has been expended.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) update

The final EIS will be published in May 2016. Mr. Schneider stated approximately 200 comments were submitted to the Minnesota DNR regarding the draft EIS. Based on the comments submitted, the responses will be divided into six different topics.

Discussion was held on the process by the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works, to assess the progress of all state environmental reviews and regulatory requirements and the lawsuit filed by the Richland-Wilkin Joint Powers Authority.

Community outreach update

Jason Benson and consultants met with the Horace City Council and discussed pre-acquisition activities for the diversion inlet structure on February 1, 2016. Mr. Schneider stated council members were able to share their concerns and appreciated the information. Mr. Benson also gave an update to Stanley Township officials on the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Brief discussion was held on possible transportation disruptions to Cass County Highways 16 and 17 during construction of the Metro Flood Diversion Project, potential long term drainage solutions for Drain #47, and the level of permanent flood protection needed to reduce flood insurance for property owners located in the floodplain.

Aaron Snyder, Corps of Engineers, and Mary Scherling, Cass County Commissioner, gave a Metro Flood Diversion Project update at the Red River Basin Commission conference in Grand Forks, on January 19-21, 2016.

Mr. Schneider gave a presentation to the Moorhead Rotary Club on February 9, 2016. He stated they are very supportive and believe in the need for permanent flood protection.

Chairman Olson suggested consultants continue to communicate and provide regular updates to Governor Dayton's office.

Water Topics Overview Committee update

The Water Topics Overview Committee will meet on March 7-8, 2016. The Diversion Authority will present information on the Public-Private Partnership (P3) regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Business Leaders Flood Task Force update

Elly Peterson gave an update to the Committee and stated a few members of the Business Leaders Flood Task Force were present at the news conference on February 9, 2016. Greg Nelson, Northwestern Regional Director for the Minnesota DNR, will be discussing the process for release of the final EIS and the permitting process regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project at the Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce on March 1, 2016.

E-Newsletter topics

Daron Selvig updated the Committee on the articles published on the website. An E-News Alert was sent regarding the news conference held on February 9, 2016, with the mayors of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, and Dilworth. Mr. Selvig stated Chairman Vanyo's *Diversion Authority Goals for 2016* letter was published on the website and in the *North Dakota Water* magazine. Another article focused on retention projects and how they will benefit the Fargo-Moorhead area.

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Based on the analytics from January, many people reviewed online information about the P3. A suggestion was made to put a link to examples of successful P3 projects on the website.

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