

DIVERSION AUTHORITY
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
FARGO CITY COMMISSION ROOM, FARGO CITY HALL
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on September 27, 2017, at 1:30 p.m. at the Fargo City Commission Room, Fargo City Hall, Fargo, North Dakota.

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

Also present were: Nathan Boerboom, City of Fargo Division Engineer – Metro Flood Diversion; Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; Sarah Rudlang, WDAY News and Michelle Anderson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District staff.

Minutes

It was moved by Jason Benson, seconded by Jacob Gust and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2017, meeting.

Metro Flood Diversion Project – litigation update

Rocky Schneider updated the Committee on the Cass County Highway 16 and 17 realignment project. Jason Benson stated Riley Bros Construction, Inc. began working on the Cass County Highway 16 and 17 realignment project approximately one month ago. Contractors were asked to stop work after Minnesota U.S. District Judge John Tunheim halted construction on the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Diversion Authority is seeking clarification for the Cass County Highway 16 and 17 realignment project. Mr. Schneider stated many residents in the area have called with concerns regarding the current situation. Mr. Benson stated the Cass County Highway Department has designed a temporary by-pass road to reconnect traffic on Cass County Highway 17 south of Horace. The by-pass may be constructed west of the original road alignment, which will remove the six-mile detour and be surfaced with gravel to allow for safe passage through the winter. Mr. Schneider stated the Diversion Authority has made it a top priority to get the road open.

Mr. Schneider stated an agreement signed earlier this spring allows construction to continue on the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Ring Levee Project. Mike Thorstad stated he is concerned the construction agreed to earlier this spring may lead people to think the Diversion Authority has not ceased construction according to Judge Tunheim's recent temporary injunction. Mr. Benson stated the majority of the construction is rerouting storm sewer on the east side in the City of Oxbow. A temporary road was built and recent heavy rain has made soft spots and slippery conditions in the area, which concerned City of Oxbow residents. Mr. Benson has been communicating with contractors, homeowners, fire and EMS services. Water has been pumped out and conditions should improve over the next couple of days. Mr. Benson stated the road will be paved by the end of October 2017.

The Diversion Authority is encouraged by talks between Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton and North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum. The Diversion Authority is hopeful increased communication will result in a positive resolution.

Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update

Rocky Schneider stated City of Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney and City of Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams will present updates to the Business Leaders Flood Taskforce on the Metro Flood Diversion Project and the federal lawsuit at a meeting on September 28, 2017.

Corps of Engineers Major General Richard Kaiser visit

Corps of Engineers Major General Richard Kaiser and Colonel Sam Calkins will attend a meeting with the Diversion Authority, congressional delegation and local government entities to discuss the Metro Flood Diversion Project at the Fargo Main Library on October 11, 2017.

FEMA Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) and plan for outreach to impacted properties

The CLOMR was requested by the Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority in October 2016. The CLOMR is confirmation from FEMA, if built as proposed, the Metro Flood Diversion will meet the minimum National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) requirements to warrant a future Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) revision. The CLOMR is a first step to certify that property will be protected from a 100-year flood event. Mr. Schneider stated FEMA issued the CLOMR, but the plan for outreach to impacted property has been put on hold until a resolution has been reached for the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

FMDiversion website and social media analytics

Rocky Schneider gave the Committee a brief update on the E-Newsletter, FMDiversion.com website and social media analytics. Mr. Schneider stated the videos are a popular feature on the website. Construction and collaboration updates with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project will be added to the website.

Video Series - “Three Questions”

Tammy Jo Taft presented “3 Questions,” a video featuring Clay County Commissioner Kevin Campbell regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The video can be viewed on the FMDiversion.com website as well as the Moorhead and Fargo public-access channels. The Committee complimented Mr. Campbell on the video.

Community Outreach update

Rocky Schneider presented correspondence from City of Fargo Mayor Tim Mahoney, City of Moorhead Mayor Del Rae Williams, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Commissioner Tom Landwehr regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Mr. Schneider stated the Minnesota DNR and Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton have communicated a strong interest in resuming discussions regarding flood risk management for Fargo-Moorhead and the surrounding area.

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