

**DIVERSION AUTHORITY
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
FARGO CITY HALL – RIVER ROOM
FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2019**

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 27, 2019. The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Rick Steen, Cass County Commission; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; and Jacob Gust (via phone), Cass County Joint Water Resource District; and Vern Bennet, Cass County Commission.

The following Committee members were absent: Grant Weyland, Clay County Commissioner; Joel Paulsen, Moorhead City Council;; John Strand, Fargo City Commissioner; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Others present were: Mary Scherling, Cass County Commissioner; Jason Benson and Matt Samness, Cass County Engineers Office; Gregg Thielman from HMG, Tammy Jo Taft and Rocky Schneider, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.

The meeting was called to order at 1:32 p.m. by Rodger Olson. Mike Thorstad motioned to approve the minutes from the January meeting. Kevin Campbell seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

ND LEGISLATIVE UPDATE AND TRACKING

Rocky Schneider presented a trifold that was used in Bismarck when legislators have asked for information. He noted that efforts in Bismarck have focused on funding and the State Water Commission budget.

MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Mr. Schneider noted a bill was introduced in the state of Minnesota for \$39 million in funding for Moorhead's flood protection. The work is complementary to the Diversion Project. Rodger Olson inquired about the DNR and any requests the agency has made for defending permit decisions. This year the DNR asked for money to defend the permit decision.

Kevin Campbell noted local leaders sent a letter to the governor and other legislators, outlining the goal of reaching \$86 million in Minnesota funding and the \$39 million is part of that. He noted the funding would address current issues in city limits and is part of the overall project. There was discussion about Minnesota funding and land acquisition and mitigation.

PARTNERSHIP WITH METRO COG

Jason Benson updated the committee about Metro COG's efforts, road planning projects and draft RFP the group is working on for a year-long study. Rodger Olson

asked if the work would be part of the other contracts for the project with the P3 developer or USACE. Mr. Benson noted that most of the recreation features will be within the P3 work area. He noted the ideas for trails and connected trail systems. There was discussion about motorized activities on trails and various management and organization engagement opportunities. Rick Steen asked about future funding sources and spending parameters. Mr. Benson noted the study will help identify future things so various funding avenues including grants could be utilized. Mike Thorstad encouraged Mr. Benson to ensure the group is engaging early with the park district and state park district in regards to integration and long-term maintenance issues.

LANDS OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Mr. Schneider said letters, maps and other information is prepared to go out to various property owners along the project and vary based on the state and location. He noted land agents are prepared to be assigned for various properties and there was a letter in the newspaper regarding the effort. He also noted project staff are contacting various jurisdictions to notify them their citizens will be receiving letters.

Rodger Olson inquired about impacts to Comstock, MN. Gregg Thielman noted that hydraulic modeling results were included in the permit applications with the DNR and the Buffalo Red Watershed District. These results showed small impacts in Comstock, MN. The results did not include all of the design details for the parallel drainage ditches along the Southern Embankment, including culverts that would be installed through roadway crossings. These culverts and details have now been added to the model and there are no longer modeled impacts in Comstock, MN. Mr. Olson also inquired about impacts in Wolverton. Mr. Thielman said there are two residential structures impacted along the small channel through Wolverton and outreach to the community to determine the best mitigation is needed. There was discussion about the contested permit filings with the Minnesota DNR. Mr. Campbell noted there may be opportunities to make various community improvements through a project like the Diversion. He also noted the ongoing efforts communicating with the town of Georgetown, MN. There was discussion about further outreach to other townships and township association meetings. Kevin Campbell noted he will be presented to Becker County and Ottertail county boards and update those boards about the project.

Mike Thorstad asked about outreach to the town of Horace, ND. Jason Benson said there have been ongoing discussions with Horace, Fargo and the county. Rodger Olson asked about outreach to the Kindred School District. and if an update is needed. He suggested contacting the school to see if they want updated information about the project.

NEW DIVERSION WEBSITE

The group reviewed the website analytics report and watched a Three-Questions video featuring Chuck Hendrickson.

OTHER BUSINESS

Vern Bennet inquired about the protocol for compensating people for project impacts. Rocky Schneider said there is a process set up for structures that are impacted and the process for outlining farmland impacts is still being developed. He noted there have been multiple studies to help clarify the impact to farmland and calculations. Mary Scherling noted the Diversion Authority has some time to study and make informed decisions in the process. There was discussion about mitigation, flowage easements and compensation. Rodger Olson noted recent meetings with agriculture banking lenders to discuss these processes as well.

Mary Scherling notified the committee that the County would be releasing information for residents to prepare for flooding this spring.

Rick Steen moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:32 p.m.. The motion was seconded by Kevin Campbell and approved unanimously.