

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
FEBRUARY 1, 2012

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on February 1, 2012, at 8:30 a.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, Chairman; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner; and Gerald VanAmburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District. Brad Wimmer, Fargo City Commissioner, was absent.

Also present were Tom Waters, CH2MHill; Eric Dodds and Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., Brad Dahl, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Robert Thompson, North Dakota State Water Commission; Trana and Gail Rogne, MnDak Upstream Coalition; and members of the local media.

Minutes

It was moved by Kevin Campbell, seconded by Brenda Elmer and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2012, meeting.

Public outreach

Kevin Campbell reviewed a letter he sent to the Wilkin County Commissioners stating that the Corps of Engineers will have inundation reports for Wilkin and Richland Counties ready early next week and that they will be requesting a meeting with leaders of Cass, Clay, Richland and Wilkin Counties. Scott Wagner, Cass County Commissioner, was going to notify Richland County about the matter.

Brenda Elmer asked what information inundation reports provide. Tom Waters said they show what the water level would be on properties from a specific event. Mr. Campbell asked if they will be detailed enough to answer questions on individual properties. Mr. Waters said they will show more of an entire quantity, but the goal would be to get to street addresses. Gerald VanAmburg asked if the information is based on what would happen as more water is allowed to run through the Fargo-Moorhead area or on the original design. Mr. Waters presumed it did not allow for more flows through Fargo-Moorhead, but he needs to verify that.

Rodger Olson said they need to continue to present that the project is for a 100-year event and that it would provide an opportunity to fight a 500-year or greater flood event.

Mr. Waters said informal meetings will be held with Bakke and Hickson leaders in a couple of weeks to answer any questions and to help clarify project information. Mr. Campbell said he would like to see something similar in the Comstock area. Mr. Waters said they also plan to meet with Comstock and Christine officials. Meetings with the townships will be held after that. The meetings are based on the land management process. Mr. Waters said they will continue to work with Public Outreach Committee, as well as the Land Management Committee.

Mr. Campbell reported on an inter-government retreat to discuss issues with state leaders. Congressman Collin Peterson is on board with helping to get the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion authorized. He is also working hard to get language in the Farm Bill that will assist with building retention projects. He is strongly encouraging water boards to come up with projects as soon as possible. He anticipates funding will be available this year and whoever has the projects ready are the ones that will get funding. Mr. Olson said that funding would come through the Red River Retention Authority (RRRA) and it would be available for projects on both sides of the Red River. Mr. Campbell said Congressman Peterson would like to get projects in place to help impacted areas before the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion becomes operational. Mr. VanAmburg said the next step is to work with property owners and explain how land can be used for agricultural purposes during non-flood event times, similar to the North Ottawa Project. Mr. Olson said acquiring land for retention projects is difficult, as is funding, but the hardest thing is the permitting process. It takes a long time and it is expensive, but the RRRA is working hard to make changes in the process.

Mr. Campbell suggested putting together a short video that would explain the North Ottawa Project, including interviews with landowners that owned the land before the project was built and with the people that operate and maintain the project. This could be shown at outreach meetings and would help answer common questions that property owners have. Mr. Olson said the RRRA could lead this effort.

Mr. Olson said General John W. Peabody was very encouraging and made supportive remarks with regard to the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion. He did point out that the benefit to cost ratio of the project is of concern with the deficits and economic climate in the country right now, but overall, he was very positive about the project and believes the design will proceed. He said the Corps of Engineers is committed to the people if we have another flood. Mike Thorstad said we need to keep working on the benefit to cost ratio to lessen the cost and increase benefits.

Website update

Daron Selvig reported that information from the visit from General John W. Peabody, Commander of the Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, on January 30 and 31, 2012, has been added to the website.

They are also working to add a "flyover" video of the project on the website.

Right of Entry Committee report

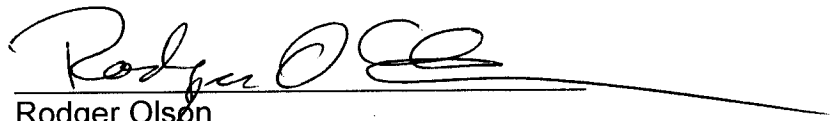
Brad Dahl reported that the Corps of Engineers has issued the final request for 2012 surveying. Phone calls have been made to property owners that have not yet returned Access Agreements sent to them. Those not received will be turned over to the Attorneys to move forward with the Court process.

The committee will be working with the Corps of Engineers in the fall to obtain access to upstream properties. Mr. Olson said meetings will be held in late summer to let property owners know what will be requested.

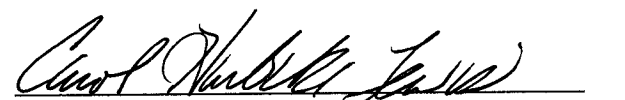
Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the committee, it was moved by Brenda Elmer, seconded by Mike Thorstad and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:


Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:


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