

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
MARCH 7, 2012

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on March 7, 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; and Brad Wimmer, Fargo City Commissioner. Absent were Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner, and Gerald VanAmburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District.

Also present were Tom Waters, CH2MHill; Eric Dodds and Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc., Sharon Josephson, Congressman Collin Peterson's Office; Mark Brodshaug, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Brad Dahl, Moore Engineering, Inc.; Mark Askegaard, Comstock resident; Arden Breimeier, Oxbow resident; Frank Anderson, Fargo resident and Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer.

Minutes

It was moved by Brad Wimmer, seconded by Mike Thorstad and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2012, meeting.

Public outreach

Tom Waters said small group discussion will continue, leading to larger public meetings. Rodger Olson said the meetings have been very helpful. He acknowledged that it is hard for some property owners to provide feedback when they are opposed to the project and the committee is very appreciative that those people have been willing to meet with them.

Eric Dodds said there are a couple of ongoing study efforts that will have an impact on the staging and storage area. Mr. Waters said based on preliminary engineering reports, the Corps of Engineers does not expect the staging and storage area to go away. The analysis should be completed this summer.

The Corps of Engineers will host a meeting with Richland and Wilkin County officials on Monday, March 19, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. at the North Dakota State College of Science campus in Wahpeton. The two counties recently signed a Joint Powers Agreement which merges their legal powers together and clearly sets out their opposition to the project.

Daron Selvig said a few updates have been made to the website. The following has been added:

- The valued engineering document put together by the Corps of Engineers, along with questions and answers relating to the process;
- Information from the various meetings being held;
- The full public meeting schedule for 2012; and
- Agendas and minutes for Public Outreach Committee meetings.

Kevin Campbell stressed the importance of providing complete answers to questions relating to the project. Mr. Waters said they will continue to clarify the information on the website.

The importance of getting information to property owners and residents that will be protected from the project was discussed. The committee discussed using various media formats to distribute the information and the need to request funding from the Diversion Authority to do so.

Right of Entry Committee report

Brad Dahl reported that court proceedings will be held next week regarding access needed to North Dakota properties and at the end of the month for access to Minnesota properties. Less than 20 properties are on the court list.

Mr. Waters said the Corps of Engineers will send out letters late this fall regarding survey work in the staging and storage areas. Mr. Olson asked that information on this be presented at future public meetings and that those meetings are scheduled around the farming season in order to get the best attendance possible.

Other business / comments from those in attendance

Kevin Campbell informed the group that Brian Berg reported the series of meetings in Washington, D.C. went well. The message was very positive and they were encouraged to keep moving forward with the project.

Sharon Josephson asked the committee to be sensitive to the ag community and their time frame. The committee also needs to be sensitive to their problems and how the Diversion Authority could help them. The ag community is being asked to make a significant contribution for the protection and safety of this community. She also suggested that information be provided to Richland and Wilkin County officials about what the Corps of Engineers can and cannot do.

Frank Anderson asked if the project will be built or not. Brad Wimmer said there has been a lot of time and effort spent on the project and it is moving forward and will happen. Mr. Campbell said they are moving forward to complete this project for very important, significant reasons. While there are things out of their control, they continue to move forward in a way they can be successful. His confidence level is high that the project will happen.

Adjournment

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

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

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