

NOTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
NOVEMBER 12, 2014

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on November 12, 2014, at 2:00 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; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Kevin Campbell, Clay County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; Jacob Gust, ad hoc Committee Member; Jessica Lee, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. Absent were Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Commissioner; and Melissa Sobolik, Fargo City Commissioner.

Also present were Rocky Schneider and Daron Selvig, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; Lyndon Pease, Moore Engineering, Inc.; and Brenda Lovgren, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Administrative Assistant.

Minutes

It was moved by Mike Thorstad, seconded by Gerald Van Amburg, and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2014, and the notes from the September 10 and October 8, 2014, meetings.

Right of Entry Committee report

Lyndon Pease updated the Committee that the need for surveys has been reduced over the years regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) is conducting measurements for water surface elevations and discharge elevations for water flow along the Maple River. URS Corporation has completed cultural surveys along the southern alignment where the embankment will be along I-29 and are currently doing geotechnical borings. The remaining properties will be surveyed in the spring once access is obtained from landowners.

Access to cemeteries are needed for cultural surveys and to determine if eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Surveys have been completed on 2 of the 6 North Dakota cemeteries. The Corps of Engineers plans to have cultural surveys for cemetery properties completed by next summer. Approximately 11 cemeteries will be impacted and each will have their own specific plan for mitigation.

Topographical surveys are needed in the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke area, limited to the area along Cass County Highway 25 in Hickson and 6 properties in the Bakke Subdivision.

Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update

The Chamber of Commerce continues to meet quarterly with approximately 35 business leaders and are eager to spread the word in support of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The next meeting is in December and a trip is scheduled to the North Dakota Capitol. There has been tremendous economic growth since 2010. Updates will be given on economic statistics.

Election review and legislative preparation

The Public Outreach Committee will present the progress of the Metro Flood Diversion Project to the elected officials. There is still funding available and the project is a priority to legislators. The project is anticipated to be in the North Dakota Governor's budget for 2015.

There are no anticipated legislative bills to date. The committee feels that legislators are under-informed regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Questions arose as to how to properly educate them. The diversion will be discussed at all round table meetings. Ken Pawluk will represent the history of how the Diversion Authority was formed. Mr. Pawluk will also request the Cass County Legislators be advocates for the Diversion Project.

Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Ring Levee Project Open House

An open house will be held on November 17, 2014 at the Hickson Community Center to update residents regarding the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Ring Levee Project. Invites were sent to 205 property owners.

Impacted residences mitigation option letters

A letter will be mailed to approximately 55 properties requesting voluntary acquisition of properties. Roughly 40 Oxbow residents will be displaced. Lots are available in Oxbow for rebuilding.

North Dakota Water Convention

The Joint North Dakota Water Convention and Irrigation Workshop is scheduled for December 3-4, 2014 in Bismarck. A booth will be available and a presentation will be given at the convention representing the Diversion Authority.

Diversion Authority letter to upstream entities regarding board representation

A letter was mailed on September 19, 2014, offering a position on behalf of the upstream entities on the Diversion Authority Board. There has been no response from any recipients to date.

Upstream storage efforts

There is \$25 million of funding through the Diversion Authority that is still available for detention projects. Acquiring land for detention projects has been an issue and land owners are not willing to store water. The public needs to be better informed about detention projects and the message about areas needed for water storage should be conveyed.

E-Newsletter topics

It was reported that business leaders find the newsletter to be useful and the new legislators will be signed up to receive the E-Newsletter.

Topics for the next E-Newsletter will include information regarding the open house scheduled November 17, 2014, in Hickson, a construction update on the Oxbow-Hickson-Bakke Ring Levee Project and the In Town Levees Project, and the Minnesota/North Dakota cooperation with the project.

FMDiversion.com Analytics

It was reported that 58% of visits to the website are new viewers. Most visits are on the Diversion Authority.

Meetings and tours

Local officials from the City of Fargo toured the water control structure in Winnipeg, Canada. It was found to be nearly identical to the Metro Flood Diversion project. Ken Pawluk suggested a tour for the Diversion Authority members to visit Winnipeg.

Kevin Campbell would like invitations sent out to the Home Builders Association and other business leaders with information about the Public Outreach Committee and the Diversion Authority meetings. Rocky Schneider will provide contacts to the Board.

Diversion Authority representatives recently took a trip to Washington D.C. A meeting with Senators from Minnesota and North Dakota was held regarding funding for the diversion project.

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