

DIVERSION AUTHORITY
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2016
1:00 P.M.

The Diversion Authority Public Outreach Committee met on June 8, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

The following Committee members were present: Rodger Olson and Jacob Gust, Cass County Joint Water Resource District; Grant Weyland, Clay County Commissioner; Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commissioner; Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commissioner; Brenda Elmer, Moorhead City Council; and Elly Peterson; Fargo-Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce. Absent were Melissa Sobolik, Fargo City Commissioner; Gerald Van Amburg, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District; and Jason Benson, Cass County Engineer.

Also present were: Eric Dodds, Rocky Schneider and Tammy Jo Taft, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc. (AE2S); Jessica Lee and Aaron Weber, Senator Hoeven's Office; Diane Ista, MNDak Upstream Coalition; Karen O'Connor and Jer Plemling, OSSI; and Michelle Anderson, Cass County Joint Water Resource District staff.

Minutes

It was moved by Mike Thorstad, seconded by Grant Weyland and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2016, meeting.

Right of Entry Committee report

Eric Dodds gave an update on access for boundary surveys on property at the north end of the diversion channel. Discussion was held on the land acquisition process and communication to property owners. Mr. Dodds stated the land acquisition team is working with the Cass County Joint Water Resource District to send communication to property owners and direct land agents to contact property owners. Rodger Olson and Ken Pawluk stated it is important the land agents are diligent to make appropriate communications because property owners are making life decisions based on written communication and personal contact from the land agents.

Mr. Pawluk stated property owners need timely project updates on the status of the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Jake Gust stated it would be helpful to know the timeline for each phase of the project and to communicate the timeline to all property owners who will be impacted by the project. Mr. Dodds has been working with the Corps of Engineers on the Metro Flood Diversion Project timeline and stated potential Public-Private Partnership (P3) Developers are also interested in the land acquisition timeline.

Rocky Schneider introduced Tammy Jo Taft, recently hired by AE2S and she was welcomed by the Committee.

Community Outreach update

Rocky Schneider stated P3 opportunities and the Corps of Engineers construction components were presented at Industry Day on June 7, 2016. Presentations are available to view on the website at FMDiversion.com. Mike Thorstad and Ken Pawluk attended the event.

Mr. Schneider stated the candidate informational meetings were very successful and informational meetings will also be scheduled with candidates around election time in November. Discussion was held on meeting with West Fargo candidates and Commissioners to update them on the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

Business Leaders Flood Taskforce update

Elly Peterson stated a financial plan presentation was given to business leaders on May 25, 2016. Cass County and Clay County legislators were also in attendance. Task force members will encourage business leaders and Commissioners to support the signing of the *Joint Powers Agreement* and the *Project Partnership Agreement*.

Metro Flood Diversion Project – financial plan update

Rocky Schneider presented and reviewed the *FM Metro Flood Protection Financial Plan*. Discussion was held on options available to communicate the need for the extension of the City of Fargo and Cass County Flood Sales Tax to help fund the Metro Flood Diversion Project. Erik Johnson is putting together information and options available for the Sales Tax Committee. Brenda Elmer stated it is important communities outside Fargo are recognized for lending support through sales tax.

Mr. Schneider presented and reviewed the *Critical Path of Diversion Project Approvals* to keep business leaders updated on major approval events regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The Moorhead City Council will consider approval of the *Joint Powers Agreement* and the *Project Partnership Agreement* on June 13, 2016.

Mr. Schneider stated the Diversion Authority and officials from the City of Fargo and Moorhead will travel to Washington D. C. next week to update local and federal lawmakers on the progress of the Metro Flood Diversion Project.

ND Water Topics Overview Committee update

Mr. Schneider stated Cass County Commissioner Mary Scherling and Fargo City Commissioner Mike Williams will give an update regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project to the Water Topics Overview Committee on June 15, 2016. Sean Fredricks will present information on June 14 and June 15, 2016, on the importance of retaining the ability to use quick-take for water development projects in the state.

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) final *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)* release

Mr. Schneider reported the final EIS states after studying each of the proposed alternatives, the DNR did not identify any additional reasonable alternatives to the Metro Flood Diversion Project. The final EIS does have concerns regarding land use, water management plans and adequate mitigation. Mr. Schneider said the Diversion Authority has worked closely with the DNR to identify the concerns, which will be addressed as the project moves forward. The Diversion Authority will look for the Record of Decision for the Adequacy Determination in July, and then begin the permitting process.

E-Newsletter topics

Tammy Taft updated the Committee on changes made to the analytics report making it easier to identify statistics from the website, YouTube and E-newsletter readers. According to the analytics, E-newsletter subscribers have increased during the past five months, compared to the last five months of 2015.

FMDiversion.com

Mr. Schneider is working on a communications plan for construction updates. Many responses have been received through the website from potential P3 Developers. The Diversion Alignment Design Flyover video on YouTube is still popular.

Minnesota Legislative update

Rodger Olson reported on the Minnesota House Agricultural Committee listening session on the Regional Conservation Partnership Program hosted by Congressman Kevin Cramer on June 6, 2016. Brief discussion was held on flowage easements in the staging area and drain tile impacts.

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