

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
OCTOBER 23, 2012

The Diversion Authority Agricultural Policy Subcommittee met on October 23, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Present were those whose names appear on the attached roster.

Chairman Rodger Olson called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

Approval of agenda order

It was moved by Jon Evert, seconded by Mark Brodshaug, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda, as presented.

Minutes

It was moved by Mark Brodshaug, seconded by Ken Bergh and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the September 18, 2012, meeting.

Project operations

Gregg Thielman and Lee Beauvais discussed anticipated operational characteristics of the Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Project. A map was presented showing an upstream staging area duration comparison.

Mr. Evert asked about the difference between having an inlet weir and a gated structure. Mr. Thielman said the water would need to get up to a certain level on the weir before entering the project, and gates would allow water to run through the project sooner and stage water later. Gates would also help the area drain out.

Crop impacts from staging water

Summaries of presentations at the September 18, 2012, meeting on soil and crop impacts from staging water were presented. The committee indicated they were interested in having additional experts speak to them about potential crop impacts. The information could then be updated and finalized.

Impacts to property from retention were discussed. Mr. Olson suggested inviting someone to the next meeting from the Bois de Sioux Watershed District to talk about the North Ottawa Project.

Mark Bittner suggested looking into payment for damages associated with the Manitoba Diversion. Ken Bergh said he knows people that live east of there and he could get information from them on the matter. Eric Dodds said he has been in contact with people there also. Jason Benson said they were very open and knowledgeable when they toured the area.

Land acquisition options

Mr. Olson said there are property owners that also farm the property, property owners that lease it out and those that lease the property. Someone that leases land would like something to protect them from damages. Some type of program will need to be developed that seems feasible to the Corps of Engineers and the Diversion Authority.

Jon Diebel reviewed agricultural land acquisition alternatives with the committee.

Mark Ottis said one of the goals is to not have such an impact on agricultural property. If all the land needed is purchased, it will change the flow of ownership in a large area. Payment could be made to property owners for damages as they occur. Mr. Bittner believes it makes the most sense to purchase and re-sell the land with Flowage Easements attached.

Mr. Ottis asked if someone can study the effect of selling that amount of land at one time. Mr. Dodds said he has talked to NDSU officials about helping to define the value of flowage easements. He also pointed out that the property would probably be purchased over 3-5 years. Ken Bergh said he is all for negotiating and working through things reasonably.

Mr. Olson presented the idea of installing tile on property as part of the flowage easement package. This would bring instant value to the property and it would lessen the chance that they would not be able to plant a crop. Tile could also be a benefit during dry conditions. Mr. Diebel said the idea has merit and is worth considering. Mr. Evert agreed it should be looked at.

Mr. Olson asked the committee members to review the alternatives presented and they can discuss them further at a future meeting.

Risk Management / Crop insurance

Mr. Diebel reviewed a summary of information on crop insurance. The matter will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to be considered by the Subcommittee, the meeting adjourned without objection.

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

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