

MINUTES OF MEETING
DIVERSION AUTHORITY AGRICULTURAL POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE
CASS COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT
WEST FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA
DECEMBER 9, 2013

The Diversion Authority Agricultural Policy Subcommittee met on December 9, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. at the Cass County Highway Department, West Fargo, North Dakota.

Present were Rodger Olson, Chairman; Members Mark Brodshaug; Mark Bittner; Matt Ness; and Mark Askegaard. Carol Harbeke Lewis, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Secretary-Treasurer; Brittany C. Moen, Cass County Joint Water Resource District Administrative Assistant; Eric Dodds, Mark Lambrecht and Dustin Dale, Advanced Engineering and Environmental Services, Inc.; Don Nelson, property owner in the Comstock area; and Trana Rogne, MnDak Upstream Coalition.

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

Approval of agenda order

It was moved by Mark Brodshaug, seconded by Matt Ness, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda, as amended.

Minutes

It was moved by Mark Askegaard, seconded by Mark Brodshaug and unanimously carried to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2013, meeting.

Proposal for Crop Insurance Study

Eric Dodds distributed and reviewed a proposal for an agricultural risk analysis regarding the Metro Flood Diversion Project submitted by Watts and Associates, Inc. The proposal suggested exploring several potential approaches to risk management and mitigation such as a private “supplemental” insurance policy, a Federal insurance product, valuation and purchase of a “flowage” lease, valuation and purchase of impacted land, subsidy / installation of drainage tiling systems, as well as a combination of these.

Watts and Associates, Inc. indicated a draft Concept Overview document will be developed once they are formally engaged in the Crop Insurance Study, at which time the Subcommittee will need to decide upon an approach to risk management and mitigation presented by Watts and Associates, Inc.

Rodger Olson suggested that a representative from Watts and Associates, Inc. be invited to a future meeting to discuss their proposal with the Subcommittee and to answer questions.

Agricultural Impacts Mitigation Plan – Decision Paper

Mr. Dodds distributed Decision Paper No. 33 regarding flowage easements and crop insurance included the Agricultural Impacts Mitigation Plan for the Project. A key component of the proposed Project is the upstream retention, or staging area, immediately south of the southern embankment of the Project. The Project will utilize the staging area to temporarily store flood waters on agricultural land to mitigate downstream impacts. The Diversion Authority has recognized the need for the staging area as a necessary component of the Project and also recognizes the need to mitigate for impacts to agricultural lands.

The impacts of drain tiling within the staging area for the project were discussed. Mark Askegaard said he sees no negative effects from tiling, but recognizes that some areas benefit more from tiling than others. The possibility of property owners taking flowage easement dollars to tile their property was discussed. Mark Brodshaug asked Moore Engineering, Inc. to look at the infrastructure in the area and the use of surface drainage along with tile.

The Subcommittee discussed the impacts the proposed project may have to organic farmland. Mr. Askegaard says he and 4 other organic farms are in the proposed staging area on the Minnesota side of the project, and explained the impacts the project could potentially have on the organic certifications to those farms. The Subcommittee discussed insurance options for organic farming. Mr. Dodds suggested Watts and Associates, Inc. also look into options regarding organic agricultural land.

Discussion topics and schedule for next meeting

The Subcommittee will discuss flood debris removal at the next meeting and will invite Mike Opat to attend discuss the impacts of drain tile. The Subcommittee will not meet until a draft Concept Overview is received from Watts and Associates, Inc.

Adjournment

It was moved by Matt Ness, seconded by Mark Askegaard and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

APPROVED:

Rodger Olson
Chairman

ATTEST:

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