

Metro Flood Study Work Group Meeting
October 7, 2010
3:30 p.m.
Fargo City Commission Room

A meeting of the Metro Flood Study Work Group was held at 3:30 p.m. on October 7, 2010 in the Fargo City Commission Room.

Work Group Members present: Fargo City Commissioner Tim Mahoney, Moorhead Council Members Nancy Otto and Diane Wray-Williams, Cass County Commissioner Scott Wagner, Clay County Commissioner Kevin Campbell, Cass County Water Resource District Manager Tom Fischer, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Manager Gerald VanAmburg.

Work Group Members absent: Fargo City Commissioner Brad Wimmer, Moorhead Council Member Dan Hunt, Cass County Commissioner Darrell Vanyo, and Clay County Commissioner Grant Weyland.

Staff Members present: Fargo City Administrator Pat Zavoral, Fargo City Engineer Mark Bittner, Fargo Senior Engineer April Walker, Moorhead City Manager Mike Redlinger, Cass County Engineer Keith Berndt.

Others present: Fargo Mayor Dennis Walaker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Craig Evens and Brett Coleman, Fargo Assistant City Attorney Butch McConn, West Fargo City Commissioner Mike Thorstad, Dilworth Mayor Chad Olson, Red River Basin Commission Executive Director Lance Yohe.

Approval of the September 9, 2010 Minutes

Scott Wagner moved the minutes from the September 9, 2010 Metro Flood Study Work Group meeting be approved. Tom Fischer seconded the motion. All members present voted aye, and the motion was declared carried.

Status Report

Brett Coleman stated the feasibility study has been extended due to the fact that downstream impacts could not be identified at a zero impact. He said as part of the process the Corps is looking at alternatives to find a zero impact point downstream through various concepts. With the schedule, he said, the Corps is shooting for a revised draft EIS document in the spring of 2011.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mahoney regarding when to expect the first shovels on the diversion, Mr. Coleman said the Corps anticipates construction to start in fiscal year 2013.

Mr. Coleman said one of the goals of the group that is looking at the Hydraulics and Hydrology modeling is to try to have zero impact around the Thompson area. He said if

the downstream impacts go past the Thompson area that will be an indicator to the Corps that other alternatives need to be looked at.

In response to a question from Commissioner Mahoney regarding when the Corps anticipates having a solution to the downstream issues, Mr. Coleman said the Corps is still working on that and with the modeling of this system it is very complex. He said the Corps is working as quickly and efficiently as possible; however, right now would not be a responsible time to give a date when the Corps is not certain a specific date could be met.

In response to a question from Commissioner Campbell as to how this change to the downstream impacts will affect the cost/benefit ratio, Craig Evans stated the cost will have to be relooked at; however, he does not feel that what the Corps is looking at will kill the project.

Downstream Impacts

Lance Yohe said there is an effort underway to produce a Basin Wide Comprehensive Strategy and Report with recommendations to be reported to the North Dakota and Minnesota legislatures starting in the Fall of 2010 and early 2011. He said the full report should be complete by June of 2011. He said right now the Basin Commission is working on basin flow reduction efforts and is looking at tributaries trying to find out what sites are available that watersheds may be able to build retention sites on. This information, he said, will then be passed on to the technical people who will provide a specific site to focus in on as relationship modeling is done for this project.

Report on formation of Red River Retention Authority

Sean Fredericks said last spring an update was given on a Joint Powers Agreement the MN Red River Watershed Management Board and the ND Red River Joint Water Resource District were negotiating. He said the Joint Powers Agreement was executed in May of 2010 and the group is now called the Red River Retention Authority. He said the idea is to make the objective of the group very clear to everyone and he feels that the group has accomplished that. He said the whole idea is to get seamless coordination from both joint boards on either side of the River in terms of planning for retention and facilitating construction of retention projects.

Mark Bittner said he strongly supports basin wide protection and retention is also a big part of that; however, there needs to be an understanding that the Corps project has to be a stand-alone project and can only deal with conditions as they are right now. He said the Corps cannot bank on proposed retention; therefore, the project this group is trying to put together is a self-contained project because it has to meet certain criteria.

Joint Powers Agreement

Butch McConn said the attorney group continues to focus on the issues inside the Joint Powers Agreement and one of the primary issues that have been discussed is the insurance requirement. He said discussions will continue with the attorney group unless otherwise advised by the Work Group.

Cass County Sales Tax

Scott Wagner said there are four public meetings scheduled to discuss the proposed Cass County Sales Tax. He said the goal of the meetings is to inform the public about the tax and to secure the other half of the local funding for the diversion.

Next Meeting Date

The Committee agreed to meet again sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 p.m.