

February 23, 2015

Pursuant to notice and due call a Public Hearing of the Upper Minnesota River Watershed District Board was held Tuesday, February 23, 2015, at the Ortonville Public Community Center at 200 Monroe Avenue in Ortonville, MN. Board members present were: Vice-Chairperson Toelle, Gillespie, and Haugen. Staff members present were: Radermacher and V. Meyer. Also in attendance were: Mark R. Deutschman, Lisa Odens, Houston Engineering Inc.; Kale R. Van Bruggen, Rinke Noonan Law Firm. Public Present was:

Vice-Chairperson Toelle called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Opening of Public Hearing – At this time Vice chairman Toelle spoke about the history of the Whetstone Restoration Project and the steps the UMRWD has taken to move this project forward including the original Engineering report from Houston Engineering and the addendum including alternative 2b. Also reviewed was the Whetstone Restoration Technical Advisory Committee and subsequent recommendations made by them.

Record of Notice Requirements –Radermacher read the statute requirements 103D.605 and presented records for inclusion in the pulic record.

Overview of Hearing and Legal Standard – 103D.605 subdivision 3(c) & 4. Van Bruggen spoke about the statutes that allow the District to make decisions and move forward with this project. Also he spoke about what will happen at this meeting and how this project will move forward if the board votes in favor.

Presentation of Whetstone River Restoration Project – Houston Engineering: Mark Deutschman spoke about the specs of the project and the engineers report. He reviewed the options that the board may take after this meeting. He also spoke about asking the public to comment on the project and what his job encompasses within this project. This project is being led & proposed by the UMRWD. The reason for this project is to restore the natural hydrology of Whetstone River and allow for mitigation of the flood conditions as well as improve ecological conditions. 9,000 feet of river channel will be restored. At this time Deutschman reviewed design criteria used to create the proposed project restoration. UMRWD wants to protect the biological life, housing, businesses, transportation, floodplain and agricultural land in that area.

Lisa Odens reviewed the 3 options that were proposed to the board for consideration. Each of these alternatives features different physical characteristics and provides differing amounts of protection. Due to agency and public comment, a 4th alternative was created named “2b” that includes setback levees. 2b provides that a small portion of the road will need to be demolished. Models of the levees and bank channel were also discussed. The main difference between the options is how much flow is going to be diverted to the historic channel and kept out of Big Stone Lake.

Deutschman then spoke about potential consequences to each alternative. Each alternative differs in terms of how much water can go in the downstream channel and sediment deposits. He also spoke about different changes that could be made to the system. Completion of this project will have effects on lake elevation, Highway 12 peak discharge, Highway 75 total volume, and Highway 75 maximum elevations. A hydrograph was used to explain how each alternative differs in consequence. How much land is hoped to be purchased and how much flood plain is needed was also used. He also briefly touched on purchasing flood and overage easements.

Costs range for this project is between \$2.5-\$8 million depending on the alternative, also not included in costs is land purchase.

At this time MD addressed some of the comments and concerns that were brought up by different agencies.

Houston Engineering recommends option 2b because this option is more consistent with a restoration project and will make the most positive impacts in the area. There are still details that need to be more specifically defined, this involved working with the DNR on structures, additional modeling, involving the COE,

Public Comments and Questions:

Harold Dimberg Jr., landowner (41274 US Highway 109 Big Stone City, SD), commented that this project should have been done 60 years ago. He is concerned about the closing of Highway 15. He would like to see a bridge instead of the road being demolished.

MD stated that he is aware of the concerns on this topic. He stated that the amount of CFS that will be diverted could cause potential problems and the bridge would need consistent maintenance.

Charles Moeller, (39669 Apple Valley Road, Ortonville, MN), President of Citizens for Big Stone Lake Association stated that he would like to express CBSL's support of this project. He felt like this is a project that the Association has been interested in seeing done for many years.

The UMRWD board thanked Mr. Moeller for his comments.

Mike Spoons, business owner, (3335 121st Avenue, Bellingham, MN) stated that at one time the MN and SD roads were joined. He felt like removing the road is not creating a longer travel time. Dimberg commented that he disagrees with that.

MD spoke about the upgrades to the other highway that would be made and the benefits.

Sandy Moeller, Big Stone Lake Resident, (39669 Apple Valley Road, Ortonville, MN). Sandy spoke about the improvements this project could provide for Big Stone Lake.

The UMRWD board thanked Mrs. Moeller for her comments.

Radermacher submitted the record letters of support for the project to Van Bruggen from Citizens for Big Stone Lake, and the Big Stone Environmental Services.

At this time the board was given time to discuss any concerns. The board felt there was no discussion necessary at this time.

Manager Haugen made a motion to direct staff to prepare the findings and an order consistent with the proceedings, including responses to all comments received through the public comment process; that the draft findings and order be written to affect the establishment of the Whetstone River Restoration Project; and that the board recess the hearing to the Board's regular meeting on March 10, 2015, at 1:00 p.m. at which meeting the board will consider findings and an order for the proposed Whetstone River Restoration Project. Motion seconded by Gillespie. All in favor: 3 Against: 0. Motion carried.

Motion to Approve Project by adoption of Order if managers find the project:

- a. will be conducive to public health;
- b. promote the general welfare; and
- c. Is in compliance with the watershed management plan and the provisions of chapter 103D.

Motion was made to adjourn by Toelle, Seconded by Haugen. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Approved by,

Vanessa Meyer, Administrative Assistant

Terry Gillespie, Secretary