

Drainage Work Group Meeting Notes October 14, 2010

Attendance

Henry VanOffelen, MCEA; Mark Dittrich, MDA; LeAnn Buck, MASWCD; Ron Ringquist, MVA; Craig Austinson, Blue Earth Co.; Larry Kuseske, MAWD; John Thompson, Faribault Co., MACO; Jerry Amiot, Polk Co., MACO; Dennis Distad, Freeborn Co.; Tom Loveall, Faribault Co., BWSR Brd.; Greg Eggers, DNR; Larry Gunderson, MPCA; Chris Radatz, MFB; Alan Perish, MFU, MVA; Allan Kuseske, MADI; Greg Knopff, Senate Staff; Bill Becker, L-SOHC; Jerome Deal, MAWD; Ray Bohn, MAWD; Kurt Deter, Rinke-Noonan; Dan Wilkens, RRWMB; Wayne Anderson, MPCA; Dave Leuthe, DNR; Al Kean, BWSR

Handouts Prior to or During Meeting:

1. DWG – Meeting Agenda for 10-14-10.doc
2. DWG – Meeting Notes for 9-9-10.doc
3. DWG – Discussion Topics List 12-23-08.doc
4. Example Environmental Review sections of engineer's reports for drainage projects

Introductions and Agenda Overview

All in attendance introduced themselves. Al Kean provided copies and an overview of the agenda.

Approval of 9-9-10 Meeting Notes

Extra copies of the subject meeting notes were distributed. Comments or corrections were requested. None were offered - - approved as written.

Status of Smith Partners LCCMR Project: “MN Drainage Law Analysis and Evaluation”

The project advisory committee, which includes a number of DWG members, met at MFB on 10-14-10 before the DWG meeting. Al Kean provided a brief summary of the discussions which focused on a scenario 3 that Louis Smith and Chuck Holtman are developing for the LCCMR project as a basis for evaluating Minnesota drainage law. Scenario 3 involves a drainage ditch and tile improvement in southern Minnesota where there is a city involved, as well as a downstream impaired lake and a drainage system with inadequate capacity in its upstream reaches. Upstream storage and other “conservation drainage” practices are included in this scenario. Louis and Chuck intend to continue to meet with the advisory committee, as the project progresses.

Review and update DWG list of discussion topics

An extensive discussion was had to update the list of DWG discussion topics. This involved clarification of topics on the current list, as well as a number of new topics and removal of one or two. Based on this discussion and planned follow up on a few of the topics, Al Kean will update the list of discussion topics and provide a revised draft to the DWG for review for the next meeting to ensure that the list captures the topics, issues and priorities.

Section 103E.015 Considerations Before Drainage Work is Done

Al K. briefly overviewed the two example environmental review sections from engineer's reports that were provided with the meeting materials (one from the Red River Basin and one from southern Minnesota). These examples address the nine environmental and land use criteria in Section 103E.015. The level of detail provided by the engineers is limited for most of these considerations. Discussion addressed the intent of 103E.015, concerns about cumulative downstream effects of new or improved drainage systems, particularly on peak flows and volume of flow (e.g. Nicollet CD 29), and how to better achieve multipurpose drainage management planning and implementation (e.g. Blue Earth CD 57). Concerns were expressed about the time, cost and risks of more detailed engineering and environmental analyses. How to help fund these types of analyses for multipurpose design to reduce the cost and risk of more detailed planning? It was suggested that some design costs could be financed over multiple years like other drainage system costs. Private and public benefits of multipurpose drainage management need further clarification to help define potential funding partnerships for planning and implementation.

Because the DWG continues to clarify the objectives for its review of 103E.015, it was recommended that a subcommittee be established to help advance this discussion. This might involve development of a draft DWG discussion paper and potential consensus recommendations for this topic. Volunteers included: Henry VanOffelen, Kurt Deter, Greg Knopff, Greg Eggers, Al Kean.

Section 103D.625 Drainage Systems in Watershed District

This section of watershed district law was identified as a priority topic of discussion by several DWG members during the updating of the DWG list of discussion topics, because there have been a number of issues and concerns in this regard during the past year or so. It was recommended that a subcommittee also be established to help develop this discussion topic. Volunteers included: Kurt Deter, Ron Ringquist, Ray Bohn, Al Kean. Because Al Kean had previously become aware of some of the concerns regarding this section, he had asked Greg Knopff to research the history of this section of statute and develop a summary, which Greg had recently completed. This information will be provided to the DWG as this topic is further discussed.

Next Meeting

Because November and December are very busy months for many members, it was agreed to meet next on Thursday, January 13, 2011, 12:30 – 3:30 p.m., subject to availability of meeting space.