

**MEETING NOTES**  
**NORTH CENTER NORTH LINDSTROM CHANNEL**  
**RESTORATION FEASIBILITY TASK FORCE**  
**Thursday, August 22nd, 2013**

*The purpose of the task force is to review the feasibility of potential channel design options and make a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners.*

*The purpose of this meeting, as outlined in the agenda, is:*

- 1) To review survey results*
- 2) Explore funding options*
- 3) Begin formulation of recommendations*

The North Center North Lindstrom Channel Restoration Feasibility Task Force met at 1:30 p.m. Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013 in the County Board Room of the Chisago County Government Center with the following Task Force Members present: Chris DuBose (Chisago Lakes Township), John Olinger (City of Lindstrom), George McMahon (Chisago County Board of Commissioners), Mike Mergens (Center Lakes Association), Peter J. Grundhoefer (Chisago Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce), Kurt Schneider (Chisago County Environmental Services/Zoning), Gary Schumacher (Chisago Lindstrom Lakes Association), Joe Triplett (Chisago County Highway), and Al Wahlgren (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District).

Advisors to the Task Force present: Jeff Fertig (Chisago County Wetlands), Kristine Fuge (Chisago County Attorney's Office), and Craig Wills (Department of Natural Resources). Facilitators present: Greg Graske (Emmons & Olivier Resources), Monica Kinny (Chisago Lakes Lake Improvement District), Jay Michels (Emmons & Olivier Resources), and Jerry Spetzman (Chisago County Water Resources). Joe Tromberg from the Chisago Lakes Restoration Association was also in attendance.

The Task Force approved the meeting agenda and the July 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting notes as presented.

The North Center North Lindstrom Channel Restoration Survey was distributed via booths at Karl Oskar Days, Ki Chi Saga Days, a Code Red announcement, and via email from Task Force members to their contact groups. Over 500 responses had been received as of the meeting date, and results were consistent from event to event and online. The group reviewed the results, including all written responses received. Al Wahlgren noted that many people supported the highest bridge design due to the difficulty of taking down a pontoon top when on the water. Mike Mergens summarized that lake levels and tax dollars seem to bring about the biggest opposition concerns. Kristine Fuge inquired if any of the survey questions mentioned water quality. No questions discuss water quality, but it is addressed in the EOR memos available on the project website. Al Wahlgren stated that the current County Highway 20 Bridge used the 897 foot Ordinary High Water, (OHW), benchmark, and was constructed 3 feet above that level. The OHW has since been adjusted to 900.20. Chris Dubose stated that since many of those opposed are concerned about lake levels, if a channel option is chosen that does not affect lake levels, some opponents may move to the support side of the project. The Task Force recognizes that the survey is not scientific, nor perfect, but seems to offer a general sense of the public's opinion. Peter Grundhoefer stated he was not surprised at the results, and he felt overall there has always

been a fair amount of support for the project. Mike Mergens stated that after discussion with people while hosting the Ki Chi Saga Days booth, their biggest concern is lake level change. People are also wondering what percent of the time boats will be able to get through, and what type of boats.

George McMahon asked Kristine Fuge if the LID is within its power to pursue this project. She stated that yes; the LID exists because of the County Board, and is considered an arm of the County. County Board statute 103B.55 gives the LID power to enter into financial agreements and acquire property under the County Board. The LID has the power to pursue this project with proper permitting, but it will ultimately become a County project, with the County Board setting the final project budget.

Joe Tromberg from the Chisago Lakes Restoration Association (CLRA) summarized survey results that they compiled in both 1998 and again, to a lesser extent, in 2009. They received the same basic results as the Task Force survey. Objections included people not wanting to share the lakes and uncertainty about who would pay for the project.

Spetzman asked for the Task Force members to give their personal opinion on questions #5, #8, and #9 to get a sense of where members are at.

All Task Force members present, excluding Commissioner McMahon, who abstained from the vote, strongly or moderately supported the project. All members chose either the highest or second highest bridge height option, (pontoon boats with canopies up or down), and strongly or moderately supported use of tax dollars for the project.

The Task Force was reminded that the LID has budgeted funds for a feasibility study. The study needs to address permitting, land surveys, soil borings, wetland impacts, modeling, percentage of time boat traffic is passible, and additional work needed. The study would also need to specify at what level the weir gets opened/closed. It will take close collaboration between DNR and EOR to complete the feasibility study, which would provide details that are not fleshed out in a standard EAW.

Chris DuBose inquired if it would be possible for EOR to do a feasibility study on both the "do nothing" and removable weir options. Graske felt it would be possible to do both within the current budgeted funds.

DuBose made a recommendation for the LID to proceed with the feasibility study on the removable weir option for restoring navigation between North Center and North Lindstrom Lakes. The Task Force agreed by consensus.

On behalf of the Task Force Jerry Spetzman will make the recommendation to proceed with the feasibility study for the channel project at the September 9<sup>th</sup> LID meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30.