

Middle River Project Team Meeting #4 Notes
6:00 PM Monday, January 31st, 2017
Newfolden Community Center
Newfolden, Minnesota

A Project Team meeting of the Middle River / Newfolden project was held at 6PM on January 31, 2017 at the Newfolden Community Center. In attendance:

Leroy Vonasek (Marshall County Commissioner), Greg Hufnagle (City of Newfolden), Matt Waterworth (NRCS), David Myhrer, Tammy Hansen (City of Newfolden), Josh Johnston (Marshall County Environmental Services Administrator), Derick Converse (landowner), David Bakke (MSTRWD Manager), Darin Jacobson (City of Newfolden), David Thompson (landowner), David Lokstad (landowner), Norman Lindemoen (landowner), Glenn Meekma (landowner), Ben Kleinwachter (MSTRWD Manager), Dillon Nelson (HDR), Nata Dalager (HDR), Brent Silvis (MSTRWD Administrator). Matt Fischer (BWSR) listened in on conference call for a portion of the meeting. Brent briefly went over the rules and expectations of the Project Team and requested that attendees sign an agreement to follow these rules.

Nate initiated introductions.

Dillon presented a slideshow which gave a background of flooding in the area and the inclusion of Newfolden on FEMA flood maps, the results of modeling showing the amount of water retained by the raised railway bed and some proposed alternatives and their benefits and the benefits they could. Dillon also cautioned that there were challenges to allowing the water retained by the railway to discharge downstream without considering the downstream effects.

Dave M. asked how it was possible to know if there were houses included on the flood map if the 100-year frequency flood stage had not yet been decided. Nate replied that the DNR had, at one time, provided the elevation of the flood stage, but it had changed since then. He pointed out that this issue at hand is that parts of Newfolden will undoubtedly be included on the flood map. He also mentioned that the MSTRWD had committed to decrease peak flows to the Red River, which could also be potentially addressed in this project.

Dave L. suggested that the inadequacies of Judicial Ditch 21 and its outlet contributed to flooding in the area. Water comes into town from the North and used to travel where East 3rd Street currently is but now travels east in front of Westaker Free Lutheran Church to the city limits and then crosses under the highway and goes south to the river. He also mentioned that County Road 28 bridge had been lowered at some time.

Dave M. said that the railroad needs to take some responsibility for the conditions which placed Newfolden on the flood map. He also mentioned that the railroad had traveled over a bridge, but the bridge had been removed and culverts put in.

At this time, Tammy, Nate and Brent pointed out that the focus of this meeting should be the development of a Purpose and Need Statement for the project.

Matt pointed out that, to be eligible for DNR and NRCS funding, the project will need to include natural resource enhancements.

Derrick suggested that the protection of the city park should be included in the need statement.

Dave L. asked how the 100-year event was calculated. Matt said that it used historical data to calculate frequencies. Ben also pointed out that it is getting wetter (we are getting more precipitation) and that, even with protecting Newfolden as the purpose of the project, there are additional benefits that can be obtained with the project.

A discussion debating whether there was a flood problem in Newfolden occurred. Dave M. pointed out that, in MSTRWD Board of Managers meeting minutes, it is mentioned that there is "chronic" flooding in Newfolden and this is not accurate. Brent acknowledged that it was a poor choice of words.

Dave M. asked that, if a levee alternative is pursued, and the railway bed is part of that levee system, would the railway need certified as a levee. Nate acknowledged that it possibly would, or at least would have to tie in to higher ground. Dave M. also asked if this project would need to be completed in two years, since MNDOT is planning to replace the state highway 59 bridge.

Nate outlined the list of potential partners for the project.

Nate showed a potential timeline for the project, detailed the next steps of the project. He also mentioned that it would be the decision of the MSTRWD Board whether to proceed with the project.

Dave M. asked where the proposed impoundment locations are. Nate and Brent explained that, if a specific impoundment alternative was identified as being the optimal alternative, the landowners at that site would be approached by MSTRWD and HDR before the location was publicly released.

Glenn questioned whether the purpose of the project could be met with a cheaper and simpler alternative than an impoundment. Brent explained that cost would be a consideration as we examine alternatives and Glenn would be invited to participate in the discussions of alternatives.

Dave L. suggested that impoundments fill with sediment. Nate and Brent replied that sedimentation could be a problem with impoundments, but should not be a problem in well-designed and managed impoundments and MSTRWD has not observed this problem in its existing impoundments.

Ben explained that, when examining alternatives, we should try to accomplish as much as possible with the funds we expend. State and federal funding may be available for larger projects, but not smaller projects. If this project does not pursue that available funding, the funding will go towards projects in other areas.

Dave M. asked if landowners neighboring potential impoundment sites would have input into whether the project would be built, since they could be impacted by birds and subsurface drainage from the impoundment.

Dave T. questioned whether consideration had been given to the effect of taking lands for project development off the tax rolls. He said that the alternatives of increasing the capacity of culverts through the railroad bed should be looked at. The railroad should be contacted.

Another short discussion regarding the need to identify downstream impacts of increased flow through or around the city occurred. It was suggested that the need to protect downstream areas should be included in the Purpose and Need Statement. Tammy also said that the need to address the deteriorating culverts under the railway should be included in the needs.

Brent asked if it could be said that we'd reached a consensus on the purpose and needs, as stated in the slides, with the addition of the needs that were discussed at the meeting. There were no objections.

Purpose: Remove Newfolden from 1% Annual (100 year) Floodplain

Need

- railroad dam/embankment is a hazard, failure of the embankment would cause a flash flood
- culverts are failing and hazardous materials travel on this railway
- ~43 Residences, multiple elevator & seed structures, a church, city park and apartment building in floodplain
- 10/14 properties surveyed are within ½ foot of the Preliminary BFE of 1098.1'
- Structures within floodplain with federally secured mortgage require flood insurance
- City of Newfolden required to adopt a floodplain ordinance
- Economic, recreational & residential expansion will be difficult
- Structures in the floodplain will have less value
- New structures must be built 1.5' above BFE
- Home additions may not exceed 50% of home value
- solutions must not adversely impact downstream properties

Tammy added that we should try to quantify the reduction in elevation of stage due to the 100-year event. We must be certain that the stage reduction from any combination of projects will be acceptable to FEMA in order to be removed from the 100 year floodplain.

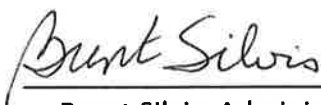
Nate asked if there was a consensus on the proposed next steps, and there were no objections.

Next Steps:

- Finalize Scope of Work going forward, present to MSTRWD Board for approval
- Analyze & screen alternatives
- Begin landowner discussions
- Reach out to potential project partners

Nate also mentioned that there should be a meeting with landowners to go over alternatives and other design ideas they may have.

Adjourned.



Brent Silvis, Administrator, MSTRWD