

**MEETING NOTES**  
**NORTH CENTER NORTH LINDSTROM CHANNEL**  
**RESTORATION FEASIBILITY TASK FORCE**  
**Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

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

The North Center North Lindstrom Channel Restoration Feasibility Task Force met at 1:00 p.m. Tuesday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in Room 131 of the Chisago County Government Center with the following Task Force Members present: AnnMarie Brink (Lindstrom Parks), Chris DuBose (Chisago Lakes Township), George McMahon (Chisago County Board of Commissioners), Mike Mergens (Center Lakes Association), John Olinger (City of Lindstrom), Kurt Schneider (Chisago County Zoning/Environmental Services), 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), Craig Mell (Chisago Soil and Water Conservation District), Dan Seemon (Army Corps of Engineers), and Craig Wills (Minnesota 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), Bruce Messelt (Chisago County Administrator).

Schneider welcomed the group and discussed the purpose and direction that the meetings will take. The group will be presented with information and will ultimately make a recommendation to the LID Board. The LID Board will consider the recommendation and then make a recommendation to the County Board. By consensus, the task force agreed that Spetzman would be facilitator for the group, laying out a preliminary agenda which members may add to as needed. The need to clarify or call for vote on issues as discussion proceeds will be done by consensus. DuBose stated that there needs to be consensus among the task force members as well as the advisory committee, since they will ultimately be the permitting authority. Once the process is defined, the group will seek public opinion before the task force comes to a decision.

Fuge inquired about what format the final documentation would take. Ultimately the task force would recommend a channel design, which would be reviewed by way of a voluntary Environmental Assessment Worksheet, (EAW).

Seemon recommended determining the "LEDPA" – Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative, which would be the preferred alternative.

(Brainstorming notes from white board) Schneider facilitated a general discussion on the organization, process, goals and expectations of the group. The following discussion points were noted:

<b><u>Organization:</u></b>	<b><u>Process:</u></b>	<b><u>Goals/Expectations:</u></b>	<b><u>Public Input:</u></b>
Physically possible (Can We?) vs. Should We?	Staff created agenda	Civil/listen	Pros vs. cons
Impacts to the City of Lindstrom	Public engagement process early	A strong recommendation (consensus) from the group	Do you want it?
Staff will create agenda	Develop roadmap	Pros and cons of each option	Evening/Saturday
Decisions made by consensus	Benefits/costs	No yelling	Economic, recreation
Possibly vote – include advisors	Public meeting Open house	6 month limit	Who benefits?
	1 meeting per month/4 meetings total	Clean Water act criteria (sequencing)	Who pays for it?
	Permitting/purpose /need	Pros vs. Cons	
	Environmental Assessment Worksheet	Financial feasibility	
	Floristic Diversity Assessment (subjective)		
	Protect Sunrise River		

McMahon feels very strongly that public input needs to be gathered very early on. There is a presumption that the public wants this. If the public wants to continue, the task force should then discuss the technical aspects of it. McMahon suggested two public meetings, one during the day and one in the evening or on a Saturday. Provide the public with 5 alternatives and have people vote, including a cost estimate. Themes should then emerge from the public input. Since the outcome would be more of a public benefit than environmental benefit, the task force should get public input before proceeding. Questions to consider: Who benefits from opening the lakes? How does the public think it should be funded? Will property values be affected? Some background needs to be provided for the public to make an informed decision. Each option will be presented with known facts about changes in water quality and water levels.

Graske gave a summary of the background on the channel restoration project, and the group proceeded to familiarize themselves with the project background for the remainder of the meeting.

Mell suggested that the task force keep in mind the possibility of declining ground water levels when considering future lake level elevations.

Wills stated that some of the options may not be permissible by DNR. Prior to changing the level of a lake (higher or lower) it is necessary to receive consent of riparian land owners. The Chisago Chain of Lakes is a small watershed and water inflow to these lakes is slow. Minimal rainfall and snowfall will impact lake levels. DNR considers all the lakes in the Chisago Chain of Lakes individual lakes, not the one large lake that was historically recognized. Wills will send a letter to the county attorney regarding water levels and permitting.

The next step will be to outline the civic engagement process. Staff will put together a draft civic engagement process for the next agenda and get feedback from task force members at that time.

The next task force meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1:30 p.m. It will focus on formulating a public engagement strategy for the following (third) meeting. Discussions on the channel design options will continue. The task force requests that Triplett present several bridge options for the Hwy 20 bridge replacement including costs at the next meeting. It is possible that viable options could be narrowed down before the public (third) meeting is held.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.