

Agenda Item 8

Discussion regarding Agreement with Washington County
Prohibiting the District from Building Dams in Washington County –
This item placed on the agenda at the request of Director Japp.

April 7, 2009

Papio-Missouri River NRD
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138

Honorable Directors,

Between the years of 2001 and 2003 our small Village of Washington had the highest percentage of population growth reported in Washington County. Our Village witnessed the addition of several new single family dwellings as well as improvements to existing homes during that period.

In 2004 when it was announced that two large dams may be built in southern Washington County by this NRD, which have the potential of taking most if not all of our Village, there has been no growth and very little renovations. The negative impacts to our Village, as a result of the proposed dam, have been as follows: 1.) No increase in tax base due to no growth; 2.) Decreasing valuations; 3.) Inability of homeowners to sell their property due to lack of marketability.

The Village of Washington is presently trying to create a water system for the residents by utilizing a rural water system. As such, we are exploring State and Federal funding to help facilitate the project. However, with the stigma of the dams, it will make it much tougher to obtain these funds.

Our village is like any other municipality, we would like to be able to grow, offer increased city services and attract businesses to locate in our area. With the threat of the dams behind us, we would be able to achieve these goals.

Our Village Board would like to encourage this Subcommittee to advance this motion to be considered by the Board of Directors. Our Board feels that this agreement will be beneficial to all the parties involved.

Respectfully,

Kevin Propst
Chairman, Washington Village Board of Trustees

Japp wants NRD promise in writing

New board member wants no-dam pledge put on paper

By Stephanie Ludwig
Reporter

Even though the Papillion Creek Watershed Partnership has stated that it has no intention of building dams in Washington County, some residents have their doubts.

That's why Arlington resident Scott Japp, who currently serves on the board of directors for the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District, is trying to get that promise in writing.

Japp plans to make a motion at the next NRD board meeting on Thursday for the NRD to sign a contract with Washington County stating that it has no intention of building dams in the county without the approval of the Washington County Board.

The motion must first be made at an NRD subcommittee meeting on April 7. Japp requested a member of the Washington County Board attend the meetings.

"I think it would be beneficial that the Washington County supervisors sign an agreement with the Papio NRD so that they (the NRD) abide by what they said they were going to do," Japp said.

Japp said he brought up the motion at the NRD's last meeting. So far, the feedback he has gotten from other board members has been mixed.

While he hopes the motion would pass and a contract would be signed, Japp said he thinks it only has

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—Scott Japp, NRD board member

a 50-50 chance. He views it more as a symbolic gesture to the NRD board to show how seriously Washington County opposes dams.

Japp also brought the same idea to the Burt County Board. That board voted in favor of signing a contract with the NRD to promise no dams as well.

Also discussed at the last county board meeting was an amendment to LB 160, a bill in the Nebraska Legislature that would authorize the issuance of flood protection and water quality enhancement bonds by NRDs. The new amendment makes it impossible for an NRD to build a dam larger than 20 acres without approval from a county board.

The amendment was added to the bill by the Natural Resources Committee, and is currently pending approval. The bill, introduced by Sen. Tim Gay of Papillion, was made a legislative priority bill by Sen. John Nelson of Lincoln.

In response to the amendment, the Washington County Board directed the county attorney's office to draft a working document to limit flood control projects that require eminent domain to 20 acres or less.

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