

7 DIVERSION CHANNEL - 1956 correspondence

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1505-22 SKAGIT RIVER, PUGET SOUND BASIN
DIVERSION CHANNEL - Correspondence 1956
Trf RHA when inactive, PERM

P 001246

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, the Skagit County Chapter of the Puget Sound Flood Control Council has gone on record favoring a proposal to relieve flood conditions in the Skagit River by the construction of a new channel near the mouth of the North Fork of the Skagit River, and

WHEREAS, we are of the opinion that said proposal is emergency in nature,

WE, THE DIKING COMMISSIONERS of DIKING DISTRICT NO. 12, Skagit County, Washington do favor said proposal and are willing to render financial aid to the best of our ability, if necessary, for the furtherance of such proposal.

DIKING DISTRICT NO. 12

R. D. Schroeder
Secretary

Ben Beek
Commissioner

James T. Kaper
Commissioner

Minutes of Meeting of Skagit County Chapter, Puget Sound Flood Control Council, held Dec. 16, 1955, in Skagit County Courthouse.

Those present were as follows:

NAME	ADDRESS	REPRESENTING
Harvey J. Davis	Mount Vernon	Chamber of Commerce
Harold O. Strombom	Mount Vernon	County Engr. Office
H. O. Walberg	Mount Vernon	County Engr. Office
Leo Beckley	Mount Vernon	KBRC
R. H. Schroeder	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 12
Bert Beeks	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 12
James Mapes	Burlington	Dike District No. 12
J. H. Hulbert	Mount Vernon	
Geo. C. Kimble	Mount Vernon	Conway
Norman Omdal	Mount Vernon	Soil Conservation Serv.
Daniel Sundquist	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 3
Virgil Fell	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 20
Marvin J. Porteous	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 20
Joe Niderost	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 1
J. A. McCartea	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 1
H. Tronsdal	East Stanwood	Dike District No. 16
Noble Lee	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 2
Art. Hamblin	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 1
John Rindal	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 2
Fred Hawkins	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 1
Wm. Sund	Conway	
T. N. Koffell	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 17
James Dunlap	La Conner	Dunlap Towing Co.
A. G. Spencer	Mount Vernon	Skagit River Navig. Co.
Gene Olson	Mount Vernon	
Henry Krangnes	Mount Vernon	Drainage District No. 17
Sam Mesman	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 9
Curtis Johnson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 9
Chas. Christenson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 1
Robert Reedy	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 15
Pete B. Nelson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 15
Laurence Larson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 21
Gerald Rowe	La Conner	
W. A. Hedlin	La Conner	
Magnus Johnson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 3, Sec.
John Wylie	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 18
Gunnar Ashland	La Conner	
Edgar Millward	Mount Vernon	
Lucille Axelson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 13, Sec.
N. Emmett Nelson	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 2
R. C. Koudal	La Conner	Dike District No. 9
J. H. Hulbert, Jr.	Mount Vernon	
Peter Lee	Mount Vernon	Dike District No. 3
K. Fleming	Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon Herald
Bill Hughes	Mount Vernon	
Senator Paul Luvera	Anacortes	State Senator
Bert L. Heggen	Mount Vernon	

Meeting was opened by President Earl Hanson, at 1:30 P.M.

The Secretary, Herman Hanson, being ill and unable to attend, no minutes were read. In lieu of minutes, County Commissioner Lowell Hughes gave a short report of the previous meeting. Mr. Hughes stated the problem, expressing his belief that the cut-off under consideration at the North Fork of the Skagit River would not only aid in reducing the height of flood waters in that area, but would also benefit navigation and other interests. He also stated that the purpose of this meeting was to attain unity between all those interested.

President Earl Hanson opened the discussion by displaying an aerial photograph of the North Fork area, explaining in detail the route of the proposed new channel, and showing how this would shorten the over-all length of the river by a mile or more. This would result in speeding up the flow of the river, and relieve the pressure on the dike system during high waters.

Mr. Pete Nelson was asked his opinion and stated that he thought the idea of the cut-off was the best solution to the problem.

Mr. James Hulbert stated that, in his observation, the recent high water, amounting to 110,000 cubic feet per second at Mount Vernon, caused the river to rise to just as high a stage at the North Fork as did the flood of 1951, which discharged 147,000 cubic feet per second at Mount Vernon. He commented that, in his belief, this was due almost entirely to the siltation of the mouth of the North Fork of the river. Mr. Hulbert also said that according to his calculations the proposed channel change would shorten the path of the water to the deep salt water by as much as two or three miles. He expressed the hope that the U. S. Engineers would take a serious interest in this problem of the river. He said that, although a similar job was estimated in 1937, a complete survey should be made, in order to properly make recommendations to the Congress.

Mr. Magnus Johnson suggested that the U. S. Engineers probably have a great deal of information concerning this area to establish the state of the river mouth, and possibly point out the proper solution.

Mr. Hughes reiterated his statement that whatever course of action is to be recommended, should be recommended by unanimous action of the meeting.

Mr. James Dunlap agreed that something needs to be done, and that one plan should be adopted by all concerned.

Mr. Leo Beckley, Chairman of the River Committee of the Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce, offered the assistance of that body in any unified effort to attain a project.

President Hanson suggested the formation of a Committee to contact the U. S. Engineers with regard to instigating the making of surveys, etc., with the intent of eventually performing the project.

County Engineer H. O. Walberg suggested that the matter of economic justification for such a project should be planned now, so that it could be presented to the U. S. Engineers at the time of meeting with them. He also suggested that an offer of financial participation by local interests would be evidence of good faith in the project, and might carry considerable weight with the Engineers. He further stated that the problems of obtaining the necessary financing for such local participation are many, and should be given considerable thought immediately. When asked whether there would be a decline in the amount of revetment work along the river in the future, Mr. Walberg said that there is more of such work under consideration at this time than there was in sight several years ago.

State Senator Paul Luvera was called on, and stated that he came primarily to listen and observe, and also offered his services in the matter.

A general discussion about the revetment projects along the river resulted in the general opinion that such revetment work should not be halted or slowed down in anticipation of the cut-off project.

Mr. Hulbert stated that the Diking Districts should be prepared to offer financial participation in the cost of any project, even if it means special levies to provide the necessary funds.

When asked about the comparative size of this proposed dredging job and the Swinomish Channel Dredging, Mr. James Dunlap stated that this cut-off would be probably only about 1/3 as large a project. He also mentioned that, whereas such dredging used to cost less than 10 cents per yard, the present price is about 40 cents per yard.

Mr. Hulbert then commented that any cost for such dredging or related work would be small in comparison with the costs of a major flood.

Mr. Walberg, in response to a question, said that no estimate of the cost of this project is available at this time. He also stated that it was his opinion that this project would not provide all the answers to the problems of floods on the Skagit River, but that a **considerable study would have to be made** to determine the actual amount of benefit to be derived therefrom. He further stated that a study is now being made of the relative discharges of the South and North Forks of the Skagit, and that the information will be made available after it has been checked and compiled.

Mr. Gunnar Ashland pointed out that it was his opinion that the proposal now being considered would cause silt and sand to be deposited in the channel East of Whidbey Island which would block that channel for navigation. He suggested that the new channel should be further north, in the vicinity of the channel that existed prior to 1906, when the present system of jetties was started. This would lead the heaviest silt deposits in the direction of Dugualla Bay, where more room is available for such accumulation. He further suggested the use of the material removed to form a dike to aid in confining the river outlet in one main channel, instead of allowing it to spread out as it does at present.

Further discussion between Mr. Ashland and several others revealed that Mr. Ashland's suggestion would not vary too greatly from the presently proposed channel as far as the outlet end was concerned.

Mr. Hulbert suggested that the U. S. Engineers would determine the actual nature of any channel change, and the group's job at this time was to initiate the necessary surveys, etc. leading up to the actual project.

Capt. Spencer, of the Skagit River Navigation Co., said that he believes that the river will cut through the Valentine Bend by itself in time, that there is only some rather hard clay material holding the present channel. In response to a question, Capt. Spencer said that the last high waters had deposited several feet of silt at the mouth of the North Fork, making navigation more difficult than ever. Asked what he thought the effect of the cut-off would be on the stage of the river at the North Fork Highway Bridge, he stated that he thought it would lower the river possibly as much as five feet, at low tide. He also added that he felt that the South Fork of the river would be almost non-existent in a very few years.

When asked about the legality of financial participation by the various Dike Districts in such a project, Mr. Hughes said that it would appear to be legally right, adding that such participation would certainly appear better to the Government.

General comments by several Dike Commissioners, indicated that they felt they would all benefit from this proposed cut-off.

A motion was made by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Magnus Johnson, that this organization go on record favoring formation of a Committee, to make contact with the District Office, U. S. Engineers, with the idea of furthering this project. The motion was carried unanimously.

A discussion arose concerning the possibility of a County-wide Flood Control District to simplify the levying of taxes for local participation. Mr. Hughes stated that such a levy would be a great help, and probably would be quite small. This would require a long time, however, and he felt that direct contributions from the Diking Districts would be quicker. He said also that he felt certain that the Board of County Commissioners would co-operate.

A poll was taken of the Diking Districts represented at this meeting, and the following were present.

Diking District No. 1	3 Commissioners
Diking District No. 2	3 Commissioners
Diking District No. 3	3 Commissioners
Diking District No. 9	3 Commissioners
Diking District No. 12	3 Commissioners
Diking District No. 13	2 Commissioners
Diking District No. 15	2 Commissioners
Diking District No. 16	1 Commissioner
Diking District No. 17	2 Commissioners
Diking District No. 18	1 Commissioner
Diking District No. 20	2 Commissioners

President Earl Hanson suggested that each of the Dike Districts adopt a resolution in favor of this project and forward a copy to the County Engineer's office. Dike District's Nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 20 agreed to do so, the other Districts agreeing to consult their other commissioners.

Senator Luvera offered his assistance in contacting the State Department of Conservation and Development, asking their consideration of this matter as an emergency.

After some discussion, it was decided that the County Engineer's office would send out Resolution Forms to each of the Diking Districts to facilitate their approval of the resolution.

In closing the meeting, Mr. H. O. Strombom gave a short report in regard to Rock Revetment jobs for the coming year, stating that Mr. Hastings had offered to make State money available earlier in the year, providing that the Districts would set their programs up soon enough prior to the first of the year. He also stated that all sacks which had been issued during the flood emergency, and which had been properly emptied and dried out, could be returned to the County Garage for credit.

The meeting was adjourned by President Hanson after determining that no further business was at hand.