

Fargo
Forum
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Officials support cemetery relocation

By Jim Neumann
STAFF WRITER

City, county and park district officials gave a warm reception Tuesday night to a \$2 million plan to relocate public facilities along the failing north Fargo banks of the Red River.

"It's inevitable we'll have to move a lot of this stuff," Fargo Mayor Jon Lindgren observed as officials from the city, Cass County and the Fargo Park District closed an informational meeting at Fargo North High School. "The sooner we all come to grips with that, the better off we'll be."

James McLaughlin, a committee chairman for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, and consultant Susan Spain unveiled the plan calling for relocation of the Edgewood Golf Course clubhouse, abandonment of a Trollwood Park access road and movement of bodies from at least one county paupers' cemetery.

The changes are necessary because soil failure and bank erosion threaten to eventually drag those facilities into the Red River, McLaughlin explained.

"We basically have 40 feet of good soil on top of mush — it's silt from an old lake bed," he said of the Trollwood area.

Previous studies have examined the possibility of stabilizing the banks or changing the river

channel, McLaughlin noted. But the Council of Governments' latest study suggests moving the structures represents the most cost-effective and permanent solution.

"We're trying to look at things that will solve the problem long-term — and they're not easy solutions," he said. "We feel retreating would solve the problem ..."

Specifically, the 18-month study, prepared by the Metro COG Committee on Water Resources, recommends:

- The Edgewood clubhouse, built in 1938 and currently valued at more than \$500,000, be declared an historic building and be moved to a new location on the current site of the Edgewood driving range.

Local movers have said the wood-framed structure could be relocated for \$200,000 to \$300,000, McLaughlin said.

- The park district's "barn" at Trollwood should be demolished and replaced with a new structure. No cost estimate on replacing the building is available, McLaughlin said.

- Trollwood Drive, the main access to Trollwood Park from the west, should be abandoned. The roadway also serves as a dike protecting

north Fargo against river flooding, but the structure has been sliding slightly toward the river — and eventual failure — because of the bank erosion problem.

The Water Resources Committee is recommending that the current dike eventually be removed and that a replacement be built further south, but that the new dike not be used as a roadway, McLaughlin said.

The committee is suggesting that Cherry Lane — and possibly Second Street North — be extended north to provide new access to the park and to allow better traffic management.

- One of three county paupers' cemeteries in the Trollwood area should be moved, while a second should be monitored for possible slippage.

The most severely affected cemetery is located north of the current Trollwood access road and east of Broadway. The committee is recommending that a \$160,000 grant be sought from the state to move the bodies, possibly to a cemetery near Hector Airport, by September, McLaughlin said.

While cost figures are not available for all the recommendations, McLaughlin said the committee's preliminary estimates set the price tag of the proposals at about \$2 million.