

DRAINAGE MEETING
JOINT DISTRICT POLK-STORY #1
JUNE 29, 2023

The Drainage District Trustees of Polk and Story Counties met in the Public Meeting Room of the Story County Administration Building in Nevada, IA via Zoom to consider potential repairs/improvements to the facilities in Joint Drainage District Polk-Story #1, Story County controlling. Members present were Latifah Faisal, chair, Linda Murken, and Lisa Heddens of Story County and Matt McCoy, Tom Hockensmith, and Steve Van Oort of Polk County with Robert Brownell of Polk County joining the meeting in progress at 1:50 p.m. Also present were Story County Engineer Darren Moon, Social Media Intern Bryce Garman, and Drainage Clerk Scott Wall, Polk County Planning and Development Manager Bret Vandelune, Assistant County Attorney Dominic Anania, County Administrator John Norris, Water Resources Supervisor John Swanson, and Deputy Auditor Rebecca Dewey, Drainage Engineer Tyler Conley, and six members of the public in person and several virtually.

Faisal called the meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. and a roll call was held for trustee attendance.

Murken moved, seconded by Hockensmith, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously (MCU).

Conley talked about the Engineer's Report (on file in the Polk and Story County Auditor's Offices) and how we got to where we are today. There was a petition submitted by district landowners to review the district facilities under an abandoned railroad right-of-way (ROW), through a section of CRP land in Polk County, and under County Road 340th Street/NE 166th Avenue along the county line. He briefly explained what drainage districts are and how they are governed. They are owned by the people in the district and administered by the County Supervisors acting as Drainage District Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for keeping districts operating at their original design capacity. This is done through repairs to damaged district facilities. Districts can also be improved by increasing their capacity.

Polk-Story #1 was established in 1905 and the design life of drainage tile is 100 years. The review of the district did not find any evidence of tree roots in the tile but under the road along the county line the tiles were severely misaligned, reducing the flow of water under the road on Tile Branch B.

The capacity of the district was calculated and found to be between 1/4" and 3/8" per day meaning it can drain that much water in a 24-hour period. The modern standard is a half inch per day. The capacity of the district as calculated is the design capacity, not the capacity at which the district is actually functioning.

If a repair is desired the report recommends replacing the Branch B tile under the county line road along with any other tile found to be in a failing condition. The failed tile would be replaced with either the same size or the next larger commercially available size. The Trustees are required by law to perform needed repairs to the district.

The report recommends that the district consider an improvement. Improvements increase the capacity of the district and are subject to remonstrance – 51% of the landowners controlling 70% of the lands within a district can block any improvement. They also require a determination of farmed wetlands in the district and potential mitigation of any wetlands that are converted by an improvement. Reclassification is required as part of any improvement.

For Polk-Story #1 a preliminary reclassification was performed to give landowners an idea of their share of the costs if the improvements to the district as recommended by the Engineer's Report are approved. The preliminary reclassification is not for adoption by the trustees. It is for discussion purposes at this meeting only. The cost estimates for a complete improvement of the district, assessable to landowners,

are: Main Tile - \$1,125,000, Branch A - \$525,000, and Branch B - \$765,000. Ultimately any decisions on what to do in the district lie with the trustees based on what they believe is an economically viable solution. Conley said that objections to proposed improvements must be submitted, in writing, before or during this meeting. He asked if any objections to proposed district improvements had been received to date.

Wall stated that he had not received any objections.

Faisal asked for clarification. The numbers in the preliminary reclassification were for the improvement, not for a repair? There are estimates for a repair also, correct?

Conley replied that was correct. There is a separate estimate for a repair project that would replace all of the district facilities with the same size tile. That estimate is only there for a cost comparison with a district-wide improvement. If a repair project is approved Conley does not recommend repairing the entire district, only what is broken.

Hockensmith asked if there was a repair option for just the tile under the road at the county line?

Conley said the estimate for repairing Branch B where it crosses the county line is \$22,500. While that cost would be borne by the county or counties there will likely be some area outside the ROW that also needs repair and will be assessible to the district landowners.

Wall pointed out that while the report recommends an improvement the petition the trustees received simply requested an investigation of the tile under the road at the county line, the trees over the tile across an abandoned RR ROW in Story County, and trees over the tile in a CRP area in Polk County. It would not be advisable to consider an improvement without a written request for an improvement from landowners in the district. Additionally, the trustees can choose to move forward with any part of the recommendations in the report, or none of them, at their discretion.

Mike Helland said he was one of the original three petitioners. They just wanted the functionality of the district restored to what it should be.

Murken said it appears that little has been done in this district since it was established.

Conley said there was a relief tile laid parallel Branch A in 1960 and that was the only major work he found in the district records.

Heddens noted that it is hard to know what condition the district tile is in since it is all buried.

Hockensmith asked if the trustees can just repair the tile under the road and see what impact that has on drainage.

Conley said yes but if that is the trustee's preference he recommends that the new tile be appropriately sized for an improvement. Then, if an improvement is desired in the future, the road will not have to be cut a second time to upsize the repair. Because the capacity of the district depends on the tile downstream from the road a larger tile at the road would not be considered and improvement.

Hockensmith said he felt that would be the best option.

Murken asked if the trustees are obligated to repair the open ditch?

Conley said the open ditch was only included in the Engineer's Report because it serves as the outlet for this district. It is actually a Polk-Story #2 facility. It was primarily reviewed to determine its suitability if Polk-Story #1 were to be improved. If Polk-Story #1 is repaired the ditch has adequate capacity to handle that. There are issues with the open ditch – beaver dams, siltation, trees – but those can be considered at a later date.

Murken asked if the open ditch repair were to be considered at a later date would we need to notify the landowners in both districts?

Conley said yes, in his opinion. Since Polk-Story #1 uses that facility as its outlet it benefits just as much as Polk-Story #2 from the lower half of the open ditch.

Murken said her feeling was that the trustees should repair the tile under the road at the county line and see what effect that has on the rest of the district before doing more.

Hockensmith moved, seconded by Murken, to repair only the Polk-Story #1 Branch B tile under 340th/NE 166th, replacing the existing tile with a new tile sized to accommodate an improvement of the entire district. MCU.

Heddens moved, seconded by McCoy, to direct the engineer to prepare final plans and specifications for the repair of the tile approved in the previous motion. MCU.

Heddens moved, Hockensmith seconded, to adjourn. MCU. Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott T. Wall

