

DRAINAGE MEETING
JOINT DISTRICT POLK-STORY #1
JULY 19, 2022

The Polk and Story County Drainage District Trustees met virtually via Zoom to hear a synopsis of an Engineer's Report and acknowledge the receipt of said report on conditions in Joint Drainage District Polk-Story #1, Story County controlling. Members present were Latifah Faisal, chair, Lisa Heddens, and Linda Murken of Story County and Angela Connolly, Steve Van Oort, Matt McCoy, Tom Hockensmith, and Robert Brownell of Polk County. Also present were Story County Engineer Darren Moon, Social Media Intern Bryce Garman, and Drainage Clerk Scott Wall, Polk County Deputy Auditor Rebecca Dewey, Assistant County Attorney Ralph Marasco, County Administrator John Norris, and Planning & Development Manager Bret VandeLune, and Drainage Engineer Tyler Conley of Bolton & Menk, Inc.

Faisal called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Heddens moved, seconded by Connolly, to approve the agenda. Motion carried unanimously (MCU).

Conley summarized the Engineer's Report (on file in the Polk and Story County Auditor's Offices). Polk-Story #1 was established in 1905 and the last significant work was completed in May 1961 when a 10" relief tile was laid next to Branch A. A petition was filed in August 2018 requesting that the Main Tile and Branch Tiles A and B be investigated. The Main tile outlets into the Polk-Story #2 Main Open Ditch which eventually reaches Four-mile Creek in Polk County. There are trees growing over the main tile in an abandoned railroad right-of-way and downstream from 340th Street which is the Story/Polk County line. There were no issues with tree roots at this time but the tile is significantly misaligned near and under the 340th Street. The Polk-Story #2 open ditch has siltation, trees, and beaver dams reducing flow. A capacity analysis indicates that Polk-Story #1 has a coefficient of drainage of between 1/8" and 1/4" per day. The current standard is 1/2" per day and that is the standard used in this report's proposal.

At a minimum the misaligned tiles must be repaired, harmful trees must be removed, and blockages in the Polk-Story #2 Main Open Ditch must be removed. These actions would all fall under the definition of repairs which are required by the Code of Iowa. The engineer's recommendation is that the capacity of the district be improved to meet the modern design standard coefficient of drainage. If the trustees wish to do an improvement there are several considerations. Farmed wetlands upstream of any improvement will be assumed to be converted by the improvement and that impact would have to be mitigated. District landowners should have wetlands determinations done on their property prior to any improvement being approved. Landowners can stop an improvement through remonstrance if 50% of the landowners controlling 70% of the land object. Reclassification of the district is mandatory following an improvement.

When districts are established a right-of-way (ROW) is also established for access to district facilities but, in most cases, that ROW is not defined. Conley recommends that the trustees define a ROW extending 50' to either side of the centerline of the Polk-Story #2 Main Open Ditch.

Because the cost estimates in the report are from early 2020, before the pandemic and current supply issue, they are likely 25-50% low and Conley will revise them prior to any meeting with district landowners.

Faisal asked how soon landowners would have to provide wetlands determinations.

Conley said at the public hearing we can get a sense of landowner interest in an improvement. If the landowners do not want an improvement no wetlands determinations will be needed.

Murken said there are nine landowners along the part of the open ditch serving Polk-Story #1. We want to minimize the impact of this project on Polk-Story #2. How many landowners are there in Polk-Story #1?

Conley did not have the number of landowners available. *(Note: There are 53 tax parcels on the Story County side).* He does want to burden Polk-Story #2 as little as necessary.

Faisal asked if notice of a public hearing should include landowners in Polk-Story #2?

Conley said it should since this project will involve cleaning at least a part of their open ditch. They will not have any say on a repair versus an improvement in Polk-Story #1 and the work done on their open ditch would only be a repair, regardless of whether Polk-Story #1 is repaired or improved.

Moon said the lead petitioner has died so it may be necessary to give more background to attendees on why this project is being proposed when the public hearing is held.

Hockensmith asked if a copy of the engineer's report had been made available to Polk County. He had not seen the report.

Wall noted that he had sent VandeLune, Dewey, and a few other Polk County staff a copy of the report in 2020 and resent it prior to this meeting being scheduled.

Polk County confirmed that VandeLune had a copy of the report, the trustees had not all seen it yet.

Conley said a public hearing can be held no later than 40 days from today and landowners must receive notice at least 20 days prior to the hearing. He will have updated cost estimates before the notice must be sent to the landowners.

Murken said the hearing should take place in the evening so more people can attend. With the estimated costs of this project she anticipates a lot of landowner interest. It looks like 40 days will put us around Labor Day so we are probably looking at September.

Murken moved, seconded by Hockensmith, to acknowledge receipt of the Engineer's Report on Joint Drainage District Polk-Story #1. MCU.

Heddens suggested Monday, September 19 at 6:30 p.m. as a possible hearing date.

Hockensmith asked if the hearing would be a hybrid combination of virtual and live attendance.

Wall said Story County has done this with other joint districts and it has worked well.

Faisal wondered if the proposed date would conflict with the beginning of the harvest.

Conley thought it would be just early enough to not be an issue.

Murken said Monday, September 12 might be a better date as it is less likely farmers will be in the field that early.

Hockensmith said he was pleased to see the Engineer's Report addressing water quality. Polk County has made extensive investments in improving the Four-Mile Creek watershed, into which Polk-Story #1 and #2 drain, and they support any water quality initiatives.

Murken pointed out that our new Watershed Coordinator, Sarah Carmichael, is already working on some projects with Polk County.

Conley said when he gives the report for the hearing he takes time to address water quality issues and talks about what individuals can do to improve runoff.

Hockensmith moved, seconded by Heddens, to hold a public hearing to present the Engineer's Report to landowners in Joint Drainage Districts Polk-Story #1 and #2 at 6:30 p.m. on September 12 with Story County hosting the meeting both in person and on Zoom.

Murken moved, seconded by Hockensmith, to adjourn. MCU. Meeting adjourned at 9:06 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Scott T. Wall