

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT
REDETERMINATION OF BENEFITS FOR DITCH 9
INFORMATIONAL MEETING

March 13, 2017

1. **Attendance:** Managers present were Scott Balstad, JJ Hamre, Roger Hanson and Phillip Swenson. Two staff members were present: Daniel Wilkens – Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance: Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering. Landowners in attendance were: Larry Ricard, Paul Engelstad, Charles Lewis, Bruce Hanson, Chris Cournia, Don Andringa, David Johnstad Elliot Solheim, Charles Hawkins, Robin Brekken, Troy Lindberg, and Alex Engelstad.
2. **Purpose of meeting:** Herrmann explained to the landowners about the process of redetermination of benefits. He displayed maps that showed the current benefit area and the proposed LIDAR map of what the benefit could possibly be, if the district continues the process. The attendees were also given paper copies of what was presented. Viewers would be assigned and they would prepare a viewer's report based on their findings to determine new assessments. A hearing would be held to present the viewers report. Herrmann estimates 32 acres of land will need to be acquired to establish a 16.5' (1 rod) buffer strip. The cost to establish the ROW will be assessed back to the benefitted landowners based on the new viewer's report. It is estimated that the total cost is \$70,000. Funds available in the Ditch # 9 account around \$35,000. The difference would be spread out over a reasonable amount of time.
3. **Questions/Comments:**

Don Andringa: Andringa felt it was a large cost for what the landowners will receive. Don Andringa would like to forego the viewers to avoid the cost of the viewers. Wilkens explained because of the law, the viewers cannot be removed from the process.

Robin Brekken: West of Highway # 9 water from SHRWD Project # 17 uses Polk County Ditch # 9 as an over flow for rainfall events greater than 100 years. This is fine but in the spring when the ditch is plugged with snow it all runs down ditch # 9 and causes overland flooding along with erosion. He'd like to see that overflow controlled somehow in the spring when the ditch is blocked with snow. To fill the 100 event overflow structure would be a fair amount of fill and need a large culvert and gate. Herrmann stated this is a Project # 17 issue and that can be reviewed at a regular board meeting. Herrmann said that the issue Robin is referring to requires a different process.

Don Andringa: Andringa asked what the cost per acre was and what is currently in the account. Herrmann stated it would need an additional \$25 per acre. The total cost would be \$52 per acre. This is based on the new assessed area. Andringa felt that the cost of the project at \$52 an acre is a lot of money for what they are getting.

Elliot Solheim: Solheim asked if there is a such a thing as a buffer improvement; for example, can the ROW be purchased with funds assessed on the current benefitted area? Herrmann stated that he did not know the answer to that question and would contact the Watershed District attorney for that answer. Following that idea another question is raised that if you can continue to levy on the current system what is the maximum amount you can have in the fund. Herrmann will ask our attorney that questions as well.

Elliot Solheim: Solheim asked why this ditch couldn't be just consolidated with Project # 17. Herrmann stated that may eventually be completed through the Separation and Consolidation statute. Brekken, Andringa, and Solheim suggested proceeding with the consolidation now, vs. doing them all separate. Solheim felt it was too expensive to proceed with the way it is presented currently with all the costs falling on the new assessed area. Elliot feels that private

landowners should proceed with their own buffer and then proceed with the consolidation later. A large discussion as to what is fair to those who are already in on Project # 17. The assessed group on Project # 17 pays for maintenance, not capital improvements. If a ditch system needed to do more than repairs, then the individual system would need to do an improvement. Brekken didn't have a problem implementing his own buffer strip especially because during the consolidation the buffer strip will be paid for. Wilkens explained that to do consolidation and separation he understood you must do the redetermination process on all the systems first before you do the consolidation. We will ask our attorney for answers to this question as well.

4. **Action:** Wilkens and Herrmann will discuss these questions with the watershed districts attorney to determine the feasible options. We will bring this information to the next board meeting.
5. **Adjournment:** The meeting ended at 10:50 AM.

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant

JJ Hamre, Secretary