

AURORA COUNTY COMMISSIONER PROCEEDINGS

January 18, 2023

A special meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Clyde Dethlefsen, with Roger Hanten, John Paul Studeny, Randy Niles, and Travis Clark present. The purpose of the special meeting was to hold a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance. Also present was Zoning Administrator Tina Gerlach. Brian McGinnis from District III was present via phone.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Clark to approve the agenda. Motion carried all voting aye.

Zoning Administrator Tina Gerlach informed the group that the amendments made to the zoning ordinance include updated definitions and set backs for confined animal feeding operations by classes.

The classes for confinements are as follows:

Class A: 2000 + animal units with a 2.5-mile setback from a municipality or 2 miles from an occupied rural residential.

Class B: 1,000 – 1,999 animal units with a 2.25-mile setback from a municipality or 1.5 miles from an occupied rural residential.

Class C: 800 – 900 animal units with a 2-mile setback from a municipality or 1 mile from an occupied rural residential.

Jim Nielsen representing the City of Plankinton told the Commission that the Plankinton City Council was in favor of the proposed amendments after a compromise was made. He stated that the setbacks will help with growth in the communities.

Chairman Dethlefsen stated that the county does not want to be too strict so that it restricts growth within the county.

Nielsen asked if the county would ever consider lowering the setback for Class C and possibly the Class B confinements. Commissioner Studeny reported the Zoning Board had a lengthy discussion on this and it was voted 6-1 to pass it the way it is presented now, so I do not foresee that happening. It was noted that it is a far sight better with the changes than what it was before. With the proposed changes, the setbacks will keep most people happy.

There is always the option to apply for a variance if they want to go bigger. By dropping the setbacks down from the current 5 miles from municipalities and 3 miles from rural residential, there are now more acres available for confined feeding operations. Brian McGinnis stated we should keep in mind that we are talking about feedlot feeding operations where the animal units are in confinement only. This does not include cattle that are out grazing, said McGinnis.

Brian was asked where Aurora County compares to other counties close by. McGinnis stated that our setbacks are higher than other counties around us.

Commissioner Hanten stated that we are living in rural America and things have come a long way in reducing odors.

Nielsen stated that if there are problems that arise in the future, it can always be changed. But for now, the City of Plankinton is ok with the proposed changes.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Clark to close the public hearing portion of the meeting. Motion carried all voting aye.

A motion was made by Studeny, seconded by Clark to consider this the first reading of the proposed amendments to the zoning ordinance and zoning map. Motion carried all voting aye.

Meeting adjourned subject to call.

Clyde Dethlefsen, Chairman
Aurora County Commission

Attest: _____
Susan Urban, Auditor

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