

Final
JACKSON COUNTY ZONING COMMISSION

7:00 p.m.
Monday, October 20, 2025
Community Room, Jackson County Courthouse
201 W Platt Street, Maquoketa, Iowa

Commissioners Present: Chair Mike Burke, Vice Chair Tom Stewart, Commissioners Sandra Gerlach, Emerita Kies, Kristine Pfab, Monica McHugh, and Brian Venema
Staff Member Present: Becca Pflughaupt, Zoning Administrator

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL: The meeting was called to order by Chair Burke at 7:00 pm and roll call taken. A sign-in sheet was distributed. The Zoom meeting was launched. There was one person attending the meeting via Zoom.

Laura Carstens – ECIA

Randy Rowan – via Zoom

MINUTES: Motion by McHugh, seconded by Kies, to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2025 Zoning Commission meeting as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

AGENDA: Motion by Gerlach, seconded by Pfab to approve the October 20, 2025 meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FROM PUBLIC: Chair Burke called for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. No public comments were received.

PUBLIC HEARING:

CASE: ZC25-04 Text Amendment – Proposed Update of Jackson County Zoning Ordinance
Motion by McHugh, seconded by Kies to open the public hearing on the proposed comprehensive update to the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance. Motion carried unanimously.
ECIA Planning Consultant Laura Carstens presented an overview of the proposed comprehensive update to the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance, prepared in collaboration with the Zoning Administrator and the Zoning Commission. Key elements of the update include:

- Purpose & Alignment
 - Modernizes and reorganizes the ordinance as a full text amendment.
 - Ensures consistency with:
 - Jackson County Land Use Policy (2022).
 - Jackson County Comprehensive Plan (2024).
 - Iowa Code and applicable Iowa Administrative Code provisions.
 - Reflects input from County staff, Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, residents, and other stakeholders.
- Reorganization

- Expands the ordinance from three (3) chapters to six (6), separating:
 - General provisions
 - Zoning district regulations
 - Administration and enforcement
 - Board of Adjustment
 - Zoning Commission
 - Definitions
- Improves usability through clearer structure, graphics, tables, and cross-references.
- Zoning Districts, Uses & Procedures
 - Provides step-by-step guidance in Chapter 2 for staff, applicants, and agents.
 - Introduces broader land use categories to accommodate evolving and comparable uses without constant text amendments.
 - Renames “Special Exceptions” as “Conditional Uses” to better reflect conditional approval and align with common practice.
 - Establishes consolidated use matrices by zoning district and associated parking regulations.
 - Moves scattered development standards (including certain lot and access standards) into unified, consistent sections.
- Key Regulatory Updates
 - Reinforces agricultural land preservation while directing growth to appropriate areas, consistent with adopted policies.
 - Updates and clarifies development regulations (setbacks and standards for principal, accessory, conditional, and temporary uses).
 - Consolidates and updates sign regulations, including:
 - Increasing maximum sign area from 100 sq. ft. to 200 sq. ft. in commercial and industrial districts.
 - Adding illustrations for sign height and area calculations.
 - Provides alternative development provisions for older subdivisions in A-1 and R-1 to address legacy issues.
- Burial Sites / Burial Mound Protection Process
 - Establishes a formal screening and notification process for specified applications (including subdivisions, certain permits, conditional uses, rezonings, and floodplain-related development) within areas identified on the official burial mound potential map.
 - Based on:
 - Applicable Iowa burial site laws (as cited in the ordinance).
 - Jackson County’s 1999 resolution regarding burial site protection.

- Coordination with the Office of the State Archaeologist.
- Role of Zoning Administrator:
 - Review applicable applications against the mound potential map.
 - Notify applicants when a project area is within a potential mound area and advise of their obligations under state law.
 - Refer applicants to the Office of the State Archaeologist and notify other applicable county entities, including the Historic Preservation Commission, as appropriate.
 - Document notice and coordination.
- Clarified that:
 - Specific locations of burial sites are confidential under state law and not released publicly.
 - The County facilitates compliance but does not act as the archaeological authority.
 - The process is intended to help applicants avoid potential criminal penalties associated with unlawful disturbance of burial sites.
- Additional Updates
 - Incorporation of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and home-based business provisions consistent with Iowa Code.
 - Expanded and clarified fence regulations for practical guidance.
 - Enhanced interdepartmental and State agency coordination, with emphasis on pre-application conferences to identify issues early and prevent costly delays.
 - Creation of an administrative waiver process for minor setback adjustments with neighbor consent, to reduce unnecessary Board of Adjustment cases.
 - Codification of Board of Adjustment and Zoning Commission roles, including:
 - Board of Adjustment authority over appeals, conditional uses, and variances (including new dimensional variance provisions).
 - A defined process for conditional use permit extensions, distinguishing routine time extensions from substantial changes requiring a new public hearing.
 - Addition of 200+ definitions, with cross-references to Iowa Code and administrative rules to maintain clarity and currency.

Discussion followed regarding burial mound confidentiality, landowner notification, real estate disclosures, and applicant obligations. Confidentiality of potential sites was emphasized by both ZA Pflughaupt and Carstens, the reliance on the Office of the State Archaeologist for determinations, and also the County's role in screening.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Chair Burke called for public comment. Randy Rowan was called upon and stated they were listening only and had no comments. No additional written, in-person, or Zoom comments were received.

MOTION TO CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING: Motion by Stewart, seconded by McHugh to close the public hearing. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMISSION ACTION: Recommendation to the Board of Supervisors
Motion by Stewart, seconded by McHugh to approve the comprehensive update to the Jackson County Zoning Ordinance as presented and to forward the draft ordinance to the Jackson County Board of Supervisors for consideration and adoption.

Roll call vote:

Venema – yes

Pfab – yes

McHugh – yes

Kies – yes

Gerlach – yes

Stewart – yes

Burke – yes

Motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FROM COMMISSION: No additional items were presented by Commission members.

ITEMS FROM STAFF: ZA Pflughaupt thanked the Commission and Carstens for their work on the ordinance update. ZA Pflughaupt noted that the next regular Zoning Commission meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2025 at 6:00 pm. Anticipated items include a rezoning case and a work session on the draft Data Processing Center ordinance.

ADJOURNMENT: Motion by Kies, seconded by Gerlach to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Becca Pflughaupt
Zoning Administrator

Adopted: 11/17/2025