



## PLANNING AND ZONING

### Cerro Gordo County Courthouse

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November 20, 2019

TO:                    Cerro Gordo County Planning and Zoning Commission

FROM:                John Robbins

SUBJECT:            Next Meeting – *Thursday, December 5, 2019; 4:00 p.m.; Boardroom*

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The next meeting of the Cerro Gordo County Planning and Zoning Commission is scheduled for **Thursday, December 5, 2019 at 4:00 p.m., in the Boardroom at the Courthouse**. You will be considering one rezoning request, and I will be seeking further input on a potential update to the Zoning Ordinance regarding commercial wind farms based on our conversation last month.

#### REZONING

1.      Craig Woodward      12368 Ulmus Avenue

This 2.47-acre parcel, located in the NE¼ of the SE¼, Section 5, Owen Township, is being separated from the surrounding cropland. Since the property will be less than 10 acres, a rezoning from A-1 to A-2 is requested by the applicant. A minimum area of 2 acres is required in the A-2 District.

The property contains a house, a detached garage, barn, corn crib, silo, 2 sheds, and 2 grain bins (See Figure 1). The northeast grain bin is 36.8' from the front lot line. A 50' front yard setback is required in the A-1 District (See Figure 2). The west grain bin is 8'-10" from the barn. A 10' minimum separation distance is required between detached structures (See Figure 3).

The parcel is surrounded by fields in agricultural production. The fields around the acreage are accessible to the south of the acreage via Ulmus Avenue.

The rezoning request is in general compliance with the comprehensive plan: it is an existing building site, there are no access issues, and no land will be taken out of agricultural production. I recommend the request be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for approval.

## ITEMS FROM THE ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

### 2. Review of commercial wind farm regulation for a potential Zoning Ordinance revision

During last month's meeting, I asked for your input regarding potential revisions to the Zoning Ordinance regulating commercial wind farms as their own special use category under Article 20.2. After a productive discussion, you decided you would like to have time for further consideration.

As we discussed, commercial wind farms are currently categorized under Article 20.2(J) as "public utility structures and accessory equipment," which is under the same category as substations, communication towers, and utility scale solar energy installations. The intention is to create separate categories for each use due to their inherent differences.

We discussed many commonly regulated aspects of wind turbines, including decommissioning, noise, shadow flicker, setbacks, and the process for review. In summary, you favored to maintain regulating noise and shadow flicker as we have been doing by condition in recent Special Use Permits. You also favored specifying setback requirements from dwellings (1,400'), public use areas and wildlife areas (1,250'), and public roads, non-participating property lines, overhead utility lines, and unoccupied buildings (1.1 times the height of a turbine).

In particular, you wanted more time to think about the public input part of the process. We discussed possible options. At a minimum, we would require a public hearing before the Board of Adjustment, as we do for all special uses. Additionally, we could require a public hearing before the Planning and Zoning Commission, which would make a recommendation to the Board of Adjustment, or alternatively require the applicant hold a public informational meeting. You also favored a larger distance for notifications of nearby property owners by mail.

Please consider whether you would like to discuss any of these topics further. Also, is there anything we did not discuss that we should consider? What other aspects would be appropriate to regulate?

Please reuse the materials provided at last month's meeting. If you need a new copy of any of the materials provided from last month, please let us know, and we can provide new copies to you.