



Monona County Zoning

MINUTES OF THE ZONING & PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING February 10, 2025

On Monday, February 10, 2025 at 9:15 a.m., Chairperson Alexander opened the Monona County Zoning & Planning Commission public hearing.

Commission members present – James Alexander, Linda Friis and Sandy Bubke.

Commission members on Zoom – Jaclyn Wessel and Randy Lamprecht

Commission members absent – Patty McCall

Guests present – Stephanie Wiese – WIPCO, Mike Friis, Jeff Miller, Jenn Collison, Charlie Persinger, Charles Bentley, Joyce Bentley, Jesse, James Gardner, Rachel Wright, Wray Wright, Carla Bentley. Zoom – Tosha Kensett, April Aseniero, JP Baric and Charlie White – Aurum Capital Ventures

The public hearing was scheduled for the Drainage boardroom but due to the size of those in attendance, meeting was moved to the BOS boardroom. Notification of the move was noted on the posted agenda. Meeting was recorded on Zoom and saved on the Zoning Network Drive. Sandy stated that there were no comments or concerns in writing or verbally concerning these updates to the Zoning Ordinance.

Sandy started with the changes to Section 100.05 – Definitions. There were no definitions added to the ordinance for Commercial Wind Farms or Solar back when they were adopted. Added a new definition for digital currency – data center.

There were questions brought up from the Bentley's concerning wind farms on the bottom ground. Sandy stated that the zoning commission was asked by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) to address the ordinance and make the setbacks bigger. Sandy explained where the commercial wind farm could go in Monona County and assured everyone that there has been no request to put in a wind farm. After discussion, no changes were made to the Commercial Wind Farm draft..

The big discussion was on the data currency and processing centers. Sandy read the draft ordinance aloud and made comment that the April from Aurum sent back a comment that on #3 of the ordinance, there is no way to do a report on noise prior to the facility starting up. We agreed that we needed to change that. Other comments were made and discussion on the following:

- A list of engineers should be approved by the county and only accept a report from them. Right now the ordinance reads that the company can hire their own engineer.
- Do these have to be located in the AG districts – they are not AG. James Alexander explained how the zoning districts work and this would be the best fit. Sandy also stated that if we only made them in the Industrial Zones, that would mean that the substations would have to be rezoned and that would be spot zoning.
- Questions on power usage and peak times – what happens with the irrigators and shutting down during peak times. Stephanie from WIPCO explained how all that worked.
- Penalties from non-compliance to the ordinance – how would that be addressed? Sandy stated what the ordinance has for penalties and that the County Attorney would be consulted on how long an issue will take to be resolved. There were concerns that the fines will not be a big factor for some of these companies and they money they make.
- Discussion on concerns of capacity to run during peak times.
- Tosha with Aurum discussed the business side of the facilities and that there would be 2-3 employees hired to run the facility, county and state revenue, etc.
- JP with Aurum was concerned that the title of the section for the ordinance was not correct and would not include their type of business. Sandy stated that this was a title she came up with and would be willing to change it to include the production of mining. Carla Bentley was concerned that changing the title to include mining would change more than just the title. There was concerned that the company was trying to write the ordinance. Sandy stated that since this is so new, we need some help to make sure we have the ordinance correct. Sandy said the commission will look into the title and a couple other things that may have been missed.

- Sandy stated more than once that this public hearing was to send a recommendation to the BOS to adopt these changes. There is no permit application sitting on her desk for this company to come in and start a facility. However, there is a contract between WIPCO and Aurum and we all want to work together to get an ordinance that is administered properly and has the best interest of the county residents. We also don't want to make it so difficult that a company can't come into Monona County.
- James mentioned that maybe the zoning commission should step back for a moment and take a look at digital mining and see how we can make it fit in the ordinance.

James thanked everyone for coming to the public hearing and closed the hearing at 10:15 am. Once everyone left, the zoning commission discussed making changes and then sending them by email to get input. Charlie White with Aurum stayed on Zoom and explained a little bit more of what the company does and how they operate.

Jaclyn made a motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors to accept the Zoning Regulations Chapter 100 changes. Seconded by Linda, motion carried.

Motion was made by Randy to approve the January 23, 2025 meeting minutes. Seconded by Linda, motion carried.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Bubke, Administrator
Monona County Zoning