

JO DAVIESS COUNTY
AD-HOC ZONING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

I. Call to Order

Committee Chairperson Cassens called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 in the Jo Daviess County Board Room, Jo Daviess County Administrative Offices in Galena, Illinois.

II. Roll Call

Roll Call was answered as follows: Present – Michael Dittmar, LaDon Trost, Diane Gallagher, John Creighton, Beth Baranski, Brian Engle, Cory Cassens, Dan Caswell, LaVonne Deininger, Tony Jones, William Meeker. Present: 11. Present electronically – Steve McIntyre. Present electronically: 1. Absent – Joel Holland. Absent: 1.

III. Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of August 19, 2025 Ad-Hoc Zoning Committee meeting was made by LaVonne Deininger and seconded by Tony Jones. The motion carried by voice vote.

IV. Citizens' Comments

John Lang, East Dubuque, expressed his concerns regarding the current Guest Accommodations ordinance; encouraged noticing to nearby property owners and suggested that the County enforce private covenants of homeowners' associations.

V. Unfinished Business

Chair Cory Cassens requested that each Committee member review the work they've completed since the last meeting.

Mike Dittmar noted that he had spoken to members of the Jo Daviess County Beef Association; they expressed some concern regarding the proposal to allow one-acre lots in Agricultural districts, particularly given restrictions on residential development in proximity to livestock facilities and potential impacts upon farmers who aerial spray their fields if residences are allowed on smaller lots. They also suggested looking into property line fence laws.

Dianne Gallagher indicated that she had spoken to a surveyor; he thought that the 40-acre requirement in the Agricultural district is unusual and suggested reviewing regulations in Stephenson County. He felt a two-acre minimum is more appropriate as it would also provide enough area for placement of wells and septic systems that may not be possible on a smaller parcel. He also noted that delays in permitting are problematic; a 30-45 day turnaround for permitting was suggested.

Tony Jones stated that he had reached out to Surveyor Lyle Eaton, requesting that he attend the Committee meeting; he was unavailable.

Chair Cory Cassens noted that Committee members should continue to engage in conversations with interested parties as the opportunities arise; and report back at a future meeting.

Nikki Frank's comments from the prior meeting regarding her experience with the permitting process for her property. Bill Meeker indicated that many of the delays that she noted were self-imposed since she stated that the process overwhelmed her, and she would step back periodically. He noted that once a complete application with all fees and back-up material are received, the Planning & Development moves quite quickly to process requests. Delays are typically the result of the property owner failing to respond in a timely manner that keeps the process from moving forward in a timely manner.

VI. New Business

Brian Engle reviewed a draft of the Zoning Ordinance's Land-Use Table, including an alternate version that he created using artificial intelligence. The alternate version appeared to be much easier to understand. A discussion ensued regarding definitions for certain uses and types of uses that should be considered similar in the table. Bill Meeker noted that he would attempt to use this alternative when reviewing inquiries in order to see if it is a better, more understandable version of the table. The group also briefly discussed making the Planning & Development Department's webpage more user-friendly; McHenry County was held out as having a site that is easier to navigate.

Mike Dittmar reviewed the latest draft of modifications to the Guest Accommodations regulations that he, Dan Caswell, and Bill Meeker worked on.

Steve McIntyre indicated that he is still reviewing the LESA scoring procedures using information from prior projects provided by Bill Meeker.

Motion by Dianne Gallagher to recommend adoption of the Guest Accommodations modifications as reviewed by Mike Dittmar; seconded by John Creighton. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

Motion by Lavonne Deininger to ensure that the future version of the Zoning Ordinance has actual page numbers printed in it so that it is easier to find information in the document; seconded by Beth Baranski. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VII. Citizens' Comments

John Schultz noted that if a property is located in a Planned Residential district, then one-acre parcels may make sense, otherwise two-acres is likely more appropriate. He also commented on fencing regulations that apply to adjacent property owners in Agricultural districts.

VIII. Committee Member Concerns

None.

IX. Adjourn

Motion by Bill Meeker to adjourn to the next regular meeting of October 21, 2025; seconded by Dan Caswell. Motion carried on a unanimous voice vote.

Next committee meeting: Tuesday, October 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM