



**Planning & Zoning
Commission**

**Meeting Minutes
Monday, October 20, 2025**

The Linn County Planning and Zoning Commission meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair, Tina DuBois. The meeting was held in the Jean Oxley Public Service Center Formal Board Room, 935 2nd Street SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

QUORUM DETERMINED:

PRESENT:	Tina DuBois, Chair	2025
	Brock Grenis, Vice-Chair	2028
	Diane Brecht	2025
	Griffin Kuntz	2026
	Mike Sadler II	2029
	Samuel Kratz	2029

ABSENT:

STAFF: Charlie Nichols, Planning & Development Director
Stephanie Lientz, Planning & Zoning Division Manager
Mike Tertinger, Senior Planner
Brad Wylam, Planner II
Sue Bennett, Recording Secretary

See attendance sheet for community sign in

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The minutes of September 15, 2025, Planning & Zoning Commission meeting were approved as submitted.

CONSENT AGENDA: No agenda items

REGULAR AGENDA:

PA25-0007

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

Charlie Nichols presented the staff report.

Staff is proposing several text amendments to the Unified Development Code (UDC), including adding language regarding the EU-2 Nuclear Energy Generating Facility and Nuclear Waste Storage District in the use table, and exempting rezoning land to Exclusive Use zoning districts from the Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA) scoring system. LESA is a point-based evaluation tool the County uses to help guide where and when conventional development

should occur. A higher LESA score indicates a site is more suitable for development, considering factors such as: effects on surrounding agricultural uses, compatibility with adjacent land uses and zoning, soil quality and prior agricultural use, environmental conditions and constraints (including sensitive resources and species habitat), and historic/cultural resources. Minimum passing scores vary by land-use designation, and the criteria are designed to implement the intent of each designation. In short, LESA is built to direct typical development to locations with adequate natural and human-made capacity, and away from areas prioritized for resource protection.

Because of the unique nature of Exclusive Use zoning districts, the LESA system is not suitable as a tool for evaluating proposed development locations. This aligns with historical precedent in Linn County - the LESA scoring system was not applied when the Landfill property was rezoned to Exclusive Use One, Sanitary Landfill District (case R-06-05). This also aligns with the 2013 Linn County Comprehensive Plan's treatment of Exclusive Uses and the County's broader development guidance framework. Exclusive Use zoning districts follow development regulations within the UDC that are specific to the exclusive use and not applicable to the majority of other uses.

The report will reference the Article, Section and paragraph of the UDC proposed to be changed. In some instances, not all of the section or paragraph is included, just those parts where changes are proposed; in these instances, there should be enough detail to understand the context of the proposed amendment. Text that is being deleted is shown as strikethrough; new or replacement language will be displayed as underlined text.

Staff recommends approval subject to the conditions of the staff report.

Motion by Grenis to recommend approval of case PA25-0007, subject to the conditions of the staff report. Second by Sadler.

DuBois	Aye
Kuntz	Aye
Grenis	Aye
Sadler	Aye
Brecht	Aye
Kratz	Aye

OTHER BUSINESS:

Discuss Data Center Ordinance.

Nichols gave a presentation explaining artificial intelligence, and the role of a data center. Data centers require electricity or some form of power, and some way to cool the building, which is usually a combination of air conditioning and water-power cooling systems. Chips are upgraded regularly, which requires additional power. Pattern recognition, which is the heart of artificial intelligence, happens inside the data center. Data centers can now encompass hundreds of acres of property, with many large buildings.

Nichols explained that, while in the process of crafting a data center ordinance, there are many things to consider, including: land use impact, where they are allowed, phasing, noise, setbacks, power availability, water usage, construction management, back/up temporary power, and possible community benefits.

DuBois asked if Nichols knew of any interested parties. Nichols stated he had had a meeting with Google. DuBois expressed concern about the amount of water used and asked if the Ordinance could recommend solar panels on the roofs of buildings. DuBois also stated she wanted to make sure the noise section of the new ordinance encompassed both actual sound, and vibrations strong enough to be interpreted as sound. She wants sound defined well enough to make sure the resulting regulations are unambiguous.

Brecht noted the sound issues and stated that these centers will be taking up prime farm ground. She also commented that the builders of these complexes seldom use local workers, instead, work crews from other states are often used.

Kuntz stated that he believes we need an ordinance, but asked that it not be so restrictive that it discourages possible applicants.

COMMISSION COMMENTS:

STAFF COMMENTS:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Michael Schmidt, Cedar Rapids, spoke in opposition to the project. He stated that these data centers don't bring in jobs to local workers. H said he believes that the data centers should supply their own power, and wonders what benefits they will provide for the community.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Tina DuBois, Chair


Sue Bennett, Recording Secretary