



County Commission Communications

A Periodic Column Written by Ed Douglas, Presiding Commissioner

COUNTY ZONING

MAY 22, 2017

A number of people are unaware that our County has a County Zoning Ordinance, so I thought I would provide a brief history of this Ordinance and its function and purpose.

Missouri Law gives Livingston County the authority to regulate land uses and establish dimensional standards by zoning district for the purpose of governing use, density, intensity, design and standards as related to new development. Livingston County's voters first implemented this zoning ordinance in 1972, and it has been amended numerous times over the years as we strive to continuously improve our zoning regulations.

One of the goals of the zoning ordinance is to protect property values by implementing common sense regulations on how lands in the various zoning districts can be used and what can be built on the land. At the same time, the ordinance strives to remain sensitive to property owners' rights.

There are currently five zoning districts in Livingston County - agricultural/ recreation, highway commercial, rural residential, industrial, and the airport overlay zone. The zoning order also contains supplemental regulations that specifically address adult business, automotive service stations, gun ranges, junk yards, manufactured home communities, multi-family dwellings, schools, billboard signs, telecommunications facilities, utility services, and waste disposal.

Building permits are required for new construction in the unincorporated areas of Livingston County, with agricultural structures being exempt. Persons wanting to obtain a building permit should contact the office of the Zoning Administrator on the 1st Floor of the Livingston County Court House. Permit fees range from \$20 to \$150 depending on the building project. Rich Thieme is our County Zoning Administrator and works for the County Commission on a half-time basis; he also works for the County Assessor's office.

All County Zoning Regulations are the responsibility of the Livingston County Planning and Zoning Commission, which also approves any applications. This Commission is made up of 13 members - one from each of the 13 political townships in the county. The Planning and Zoning Commission also reviews applications for conditional use permits. A conditional use permit allows something to be approved that would not normally be, but may be allowed with restrictions. Many factors may be considered before approving a conditional application, such as adequate utilities and road access, traffic hazards and traffic congestion on public roads, offensive noise, odor, dust, smoke, or gas.

A variance is a change that may be applied for when the owner of a property feels that an undue hardship has been imposed upon him, if required to adhere to the provisions of the zoning order. Variances shall be normally limited to height, bulk, density, or yard requirements. Variance applications are heard by the County Board of Adjustments, which has strict criteria that must be met before the variance will be approved.

As mentioned above, Rich Thieme is our Zoning Officer. He is experienced and very knowledgeable in this area. If you have questions, feel free to stop by to see him in the Assessor's office on the first floor of the Livingston County Courthouse or call him at 660-646-8000, extension 102.



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