

# Zoning Commission Report to Board of Supervisors related to size of Zoning Commission Feb 17, 2025

The Worth County Zoning Commission (with one seat vacant), met on Feb 6, 2025, pursuant to a request by the Board of Supervisors to discuss the number of members that were appointed to the Zoning Commission.

The Commission reviewed the result of a review of zoning commission sizes of all counties in Iowa with a population of less than 10,000, the largest 15 counties in Iowa, and the counties surrounding Worth county. (52 counties total.) The purpose of the review was to determine if there was a correlation of the size of Zoning Commission to the population of the county, or to the number of Supervisor in the various counties. It was determined that there was no correlation and that the sizes of Zoning Commissions appeared to be random. The Commission also noted that the sizes of Zoning Commissions, across the 52 counties reviewed, ranged from 2 members to 9 members, but that the majority were either 5 or 7 members. It should be noted that of the counties reviewed, there were 15 counties where the specified number of Zoning Commission members could not immediately be determined. Across the 37 counties reviewed where commission sizes were specified, 17 specified 5 members and 14 specified 7 members. The balance had a variety of other member counts ranging from 2 to 9.

With no specific indications of Zoning Commission size based on anything that could be correlated with Worth County details, the Commission discussed the advantages and disadvantages of various size Commissions. It was early agreed that membership above 7 would be disadvantageous. The discussion primarily centered around a 5-member commission and a 7-member commission. It was noted that a 7-member commission should have a quorum requirement for 5 members present to conduct business (vs. simple majority of 4) to preclude a tie vote of 2/2 causing failure of a motion with three members not present.

After much discussion of past challenges with persons willing to serve on the commission, and challenges where commission scheduling and business was hampered by finding meeting times that would work with all or most of the current size of 5 members, the Commission determined there not only was no advantage to be gained by changing the size to 7 members, but that it could actually exacerbate the problems encountered periodically. It was noted that 5 members provided for representation from across the geography and concerns of the county, and that all matters in discussion in the Commission are influenced and incorporate input from the entire public of the county through public comment hearings.

On the motion of Meyer and seconded by Rothove, the Commission voted unanimously that there was no need to change the Zoning Ordinance to adjust the current size of 5 members.

An adjunct discussion was held related to rules associated with what aspects of the county the Zoning Commission members should be appointed from (geography, livelihood, background, etc...), and the unanimous consensus was that the current rule of residing in the unincorporated areas of the county were sufficient, but that the Supervisors should try to maintain a goal of Zoning Commission members coming from each of the three Supervisors districts and representing a variety of demographics (i.e. ag, business, acreage owners, etc...). But the Commission did not feel these should be a rule enshrined in the Zoning Ordinance, so as to provide necessary flexibility in times when people could not be found that were willing to serve.

Jeff Gorball, Chair Worth County Zoning Commission