

Clay County

Zoning Board Discusses CAFO Changes

BY SHAUNA MARLETTE
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VERMILLION — Proposed changes to Clay County ordinances removing limits on the number of animals allowed in concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) were discussed at a public hearing held by the Clay County Planning and Zoning Commission Monday evening in front of a standing-room-only audience.

According to Clay County Commissioner Travis Mockler, who also serves on the zoning board, the current Clay County Ordinance was established in 2013.

"We are here tonight because the Clay County Commission voted to send the ordinance back to the zoning board," Mockler said. "They want us to take a look at it and recommend changes. We are going to align with the state DENR regulations. We are going to update provisions to eliminate the need for multiple interpretations, ensuring provisions are consistently applied. Most importantly give a balanced reflection of what is important to Clay County."

From there, Mockler identified the proposed changes to the ordinance, a few of which include:

- Changing the definition of a CAFO to align with state regulations;
- changing the classifications from small, medium and large to class A, B and C;
- eliminating the cap on the size of CAFOs allowed in Clay County;
- potentially allowing permit CAFOs of unlimited size in designated aquifer protection districts;
- and reducing setbacks from homes, private wells, roads and highways.

Mockler said the topic of revising the CAFO ordinance began when a producer came in to be permitted and the county could not figure out how to classify them under the zoning ordinance.

"Between Cindy (Aden, Clay County Planning, Zoning, Veterans and Welfare administrator) and I, we



METRO GRAPHICS

couldn't figure out what the ordinances said," Mockler said. "We were calling the state. After three weeks, we ended up giving it to our states attorney. He came back with what he thought the intent was, but his personal opinion of the document was that it was poorly written."

Following the meeting, Aden expanded on the issues she had been dealing with.

"Two years ago, we made a few changes to the regulations, as zoning administrator I was having a terrible time interpreting the regulations and figuring out how to administer it," she said. "It has been more than just the once case. Most of the time, nobody wanted to deal with the issues of getting a zoning permit once we started discussing the regulations for a CAFO. I have one person who stuck with me and we worked through it. It took us nearly six months just to begin the process and he could start building anything."

In all, more than 30 community members addressed the board, including Jim Auen, operational manager for Lewis and Clark Regional Water (LCRW), who expressed concern on behalf of LCRW that the proposed changes could affect the water supply of more than 300,000 people.

"Projects like the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System are being built to support agriculture. In that regard, we are supportive of

CAFOs as long as they follow the appropriate approval process and the public has ample opportunity to provide input," he said. "That being said, we do not know for sure whether it provides enough coverage for our wellhead protection area."

He said the LCRW is urging that the zoning board delay changing the ordinance until the time that studies, scheduled for this summer to test the well field influence, are done.

"The tests are scheduled to be completed by this August and then must be submitted to the EPA for approval," Auen said. "If action on this cannot be delayed, then Lewis and Clark Rural Water has no choice but to express our opposition. ... I want to reiterate, though, our opposition is a matter of timing with regard to identifying our well head protection area and is in no way related to the development of CAFOs."

In addition to LCRW, Clay Rural Water System manager Greg Merrigan also addressed the panel regarding the potential changes to zoning in two aquifer areas of the county and the impact the reduction in setbacks could have.

Several farmers addressed the panel expressing their hopes that the changes would be accepted.

Reed Jensen expressed that the current limits may be contributing to the reduction of family farms, as they

are not able to sustain more than one family due to input costs. He said the farmers are great stewards of the land and it is in their best interests to take care of the water, because they rely on it, as well.

While several community members spoke on both sides of the issue, at the end, the commissioners decided to table the issue to process what they had heard.

Mockler said the public hearing was much calmer than he had expected because there is usually very little common ground with issues like this.

However, he said there is more at stake than just livestock numbers and locations.

"To me, this isn't just a livestock issue; this is an economic development issue," Mockler said. "The city of Vermillion is trying to grow. We lost out on the cheese plant because we don't support what supports them. We have a 27 percent poverty level in Vermillion. We need jobs to correct that. We educate two graduating classes out of USD every year; as soon as we give them their diploma, we also tell them to leave because we have nothing here for them. I don't want that to happen to my daughters. I don't want to have to get on a plane to go see them five hours away. If I don't start now, it will be too late. It might already be too late, because this isn't going to happen overnight."

Aden said no matter what decision the planning and zoning commission reaches, it will not be a binding rule of law as they are an advisory panel. Their decision will be sent to the full Clay County Commission where they will hold hearings, as well, before coming to a final decision.

"(The Planning and Zoning Commission) will have another meeting on April 27," said Aden. "As the group just voted to table the issue, we will bring it back up on April 27. Those are open to the public, as well."

Week Celebrates Telecommunicators

PIERRE — Those voices at the other end of the call are being honored statewide this week.

This is National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week where South Dakota recognizes its emergency police, fire and medical dispatchers. The designated week is April 12-19.

"These are the people who work behind the scenes in helping keep our communities safe," said Colonel Craig Price, superintendent of the South Dakota Highway Patrol. "If you ever have to call 9-1-1 to report an emergency or call in need of general assistance, the telecommunicators will be there."

Each year, the second week of April is dedicated to men and women who serve as Public Safety telecommunicators and 9-1-1 dispatchers. In South Dakota, there is an estimated 380 telecommunicators serving at various levels.

Telecommunicators work extended shifts under constant and stressful demands. They are the ones who help bring together first responders during an emergency.

"They remain focused and dedicated to serving South Dakotans through their efforts," said Sgt. Jason Husby, division manager of services and state radio communications for South Dakota Highway Patrol. "They have saved an untold number of lives through their efforts."

For more information about the South Dakota's telecommunication efforts, visit http://dps.sd.gov/sd_911/ and http://dps.sd.gov/enforcement/state_radio_dispatch/.

'A Sand County Almanac' Discussion Set

VERMILLION — In honor of Earth Day and the community-wide celebrations occurring during the week of April 20-25, the Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library will host a discussion of "A Sand County Almanac," by Aldo Leopold, on Monday, April 20, at 4 p.m. in the Kozak Community Room. The discussion will be facilitated by Professor Dean Spader.

Admired by an ever-growing number of readers and imitated by hundreds of writers, "A Sand County Almanac" serves as one of the cornerstones for modern conservation science, policy and ethics. First published by Oxford University Press in 1949 — one year after Leopold's death — it has become a classic in the field equaled in its lasting stature only by Henry David Thoreau's "Walden."

All are welcome. The Edith B. Siegrist Vermillion Public Library is located at 18 Church Street in Vermillion. For more information, call the Library at 605-677-7060.

Yankton County To Test Storm Sirens

Yankton County will be testing the storm sirens in Yankton County on Wednesday, April 22, in conjunction Severe Weather Awareness Week. This will allow residents, and business to participate in were there safe areas are, meeting places after the event, check on their emergency supplies, etc.

The Mock Exercise will begin at 10 a.m. The National Weather Service will issue a mock tornado watch. Then at 10:15 a.m., the will issue a Mock Tornado Warning in which the sirens will be blown. They will run for the full three minutes.

Also, Todd Heitkamp of the National weather service will be presenting the Severe Weather Awareness training at 7 p.m. April 23 at Yankton Fire Station No. 2, 201 West 23rd Street Yankton. Everyone is welcome.

Art Competition Open to SD HS Students

WASHINGTON — Rep. Kristi Noem and the South Dakota Arts Council have announced the start of the 2015 Congressional Art Competition.

The selected artwork from South Dakota will have the honor of being displayed in the Cannon Tunnel of the United States Capitol for a full year. Additionally, the winning artist will be invited to a reception in the United States Capitol, where they will have the opportunity to meet other winners from across the country. The second-place winning entry will be displayed in Rep. Noem's Washington office.

Any high school student in South Dakota is welcome to enter. Artwork must be completely original — in concept, design, and execution. Artwork must also be entered in the original medium; no scanned reproductions are allowed.

All artwork submissions must be sent to the South Dakota Arts Council by April 27. Notification of winners will be April 29. If you want to learn more about this great opportunity, visit the Congressional Art Competition website.

For any further questions or additional information about this opportunity, contact Rebecca Cruse at (605)-773-3301 or rebecca.cruse@state.sd.us or Rachel Huggins at rachel.huggins@mail.house.gov.

OBITUARIES

Raymond Dolejsi

Raymond T. Dolejsi, 86, of Yankton passed away on Monday, April 13, 2015 at the Avera Yankton Care Center, Yankton.

Memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 a.m. Friday, April 17, 2015 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Yankton, SD, with Rev. Robert Wullweber officiating. Burial of his cremated remains will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery, Yankton, with Military graveside rites by the Ernest-Bowyer VFW Post #791 Honor Guard and the Ellsworth AFB Honor Guard.

Visitations will be 5 to 8 p.m. Thursday evening at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory,



Dolejsi

resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Condolences may be sent at www.opsahl-kostel-funeralhome.com.

Raymond (Ray) Dolejsi was born on September 1, 1928 to Thomas and Anna Honner Dolejsi in Lake Andes, SD. He was raised on the family farm. At the age of 18, he enlisted into the US Army Air Corp and served overseas until his honorable discharge

in 1949. Upon returning, he met the love of his life, Gertrude Walz. They were united in marriage on November 7, 1950 in Yankton, SD. To this marriage six children were born. Ray spent most of his life working in the trucking industry in some form or another. He operated All American Transport for a number of years. He also worked for Vanderhule Moving and Storage and Hirschbach Trucking most notably and then retiring in 1993. Ray was a member of the Sacred Heart Parish in Yankton, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Loyal Order of the Moose, and The Center.

Ray is survived by his sons: Ken, Daniel (Vicki), Richard (Tammy) and

Tommy, all of Yankton, SD; daughters, Patty (Eric) Jacobson of Hustisford, WI and Karen (Denny Ling) of Yankton, SD; twelve grandchildren; several great-grandchildren; sister, Eleanor (Fred) Dohmann and numerous nieces and nephews.

Ray was preceded in death by his wife, Gertie, his parents, Thomas and Anna Dolejsi, his granddaughters, Tricia Donegon and Katie Dolejsi, and numerous brothers and sisters.

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April 16, 2015

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Online condolences at:
www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

Darold Lammers

Darold L. Lammers, 60, of Coolidge, Arizona, formerly of Hartington, Nebraska, passed away at his home in Arizona April 11, 2015.

Arrangements are pending.

Helen Mischke

Helen Mischke, 89, of Yankton passed away Tuesday, April 14, 2015, at her residence at Majestic Bluffs in Yankton.

Funeral service will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 18, at First United Methodist Church in Yankton with Reverend Ron Johnson officiating. Burial will be in the Frankfort Cemetery in rural Crofton, Nebraska.

Visitation is from 5-7 p.m. Friday, April 17, at the Wintz & Ray Funeral Home in Yankton. Visitation will resume one hour prior to the funeral

on Saturday at the church. To post an online sympathy message, visit wintzray-funeralhome.com.

Blanche Medricky

Blanche Medricky, 94, of Dante died Tuesday, April 14, 2015, at her home in rural Dante.

Her funeral service will be 10:30 a.m. Saturday, April 18, at the United Methodist Church in Wagner, with burial in the ZCBJ Cemetery, rural Wagner.

Visitation will be from 2-6 p.m. Friday at the Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home in Wagner.

IN REMEMBRANCE

Helen D. Mischke

10:30 AM, Saturday

First United Methodist Church • Yankton

Sr. Corinne Oberembt, OSB

Sr. Judith Kuhn, OSB

10:00 AM, Monday

Bishop Marty Memorial Chapel • Yankton

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