

Buchanan County
Zoning Department

Buchanan County adopted zoning in 1974 to allow for the orderly growth of the rural, unincorporated areas of the county for the general good of the citizens of the county, while maintaining the natural resources and coordinating residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses throughout the county.

In 1974 the Board of Supervisors adopted a Zoning Ordinance and a Comprehensive Plan for the unincorporated areas of Buchanan County. The original Zoning Administrator was Mr. David Hamilton. In June of 1979, Mr. Hamilton retired from the position and those who have served the Buchanan County residents as Zoning Administrator have included Mr. Robert Hummel from 1979 to 1980, Mr. Ed Fitzgerald from January 1980 to June 2011, and Mr. Chad Beatty from June 2011 to the present.

Current Zoning districts include “A-1” Agricultural, “A-2” Agricultural, “R-1” Residential, “R-2” Residential, “R-3” Residential, “C” Commercial, “C-M” Commercial-Manufacturing, and “I” Industrial. If a resident of Buchanan County wants to change the land use of their property they can apply within the department and have the application be reviewed by the nine-member zoning commission. The zoning commission meets as needed on the first Tuesday of each month.

In 1989, the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors elected to participate in the national flood insurance program. In order to do that, the county was compelled to adopt a flood plain ordinance that limited future development in the federally designated flood plains of rural Buchanan County. Any construction within the flood plain requires a permit from both Buchanan County and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

Currently the department regulates zoning, manages the floodplain, addresses properties and installs 911 signs within the unincorporated parts of the county. To accomplish daily demands, the zoning administrator works in conjunction with the Auditor’s office, Assessor’s office, GIS Department, secondary roads, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, FEMA along with local appraisers, attorneys, engineers, insurance companies, lenders, and surveyors.

The Zoning Administrator reports to the Board of Supervisors monthly and meets with the Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment on an as needed basis. The current members of the Zoning Commission include: Dave Pech, Chairman; John Slattery, Vice-Chairman; Marlene Brown, Karen Connell, Tom Doyle, Jim Frye, John Ryherd, Jan Short, and Kris Wilgenbusch. The current members of the Board of Adjustment include: Jim Price, Chairman; Alan Wulfekuhle, Vice-Chairman; Deb Ehlers, Karen Stephenson, and Louis Wendling.

The department currently employs two full-time staff members: Chad Beatty, 4 years; Kris Holle 13 years and one part-time staff member: Gary White, 1 year.

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