



# Town of Centerville

Manitowoc County

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## Moving to County Zoning

The Centerville Town Board has been discussing the issue of moving to County Zoning since last year. The issue was sent to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review and recommendation to the Town Board. The Planning & Zoning Commission recommended to move to County Zoning.

### History

The Town of Centerville currently controls land uses in Centerville through town zoning. The town employs a Zoning Administrator, a 7 person Planning & Zoning Commission and a 5 person Board of Appeals.

- The Zoning Administrator handles all planning and zoning issues, issues building & demolition permits and coordinates all Commission and Board of Appeals meetings.
- The Planning & Zoning Commission meets about 6 times per year to review & update ordinances and to hear zone change and conditional use requests.
- The Board of Appeals meets as needed to approve variances or appeals to actions of the Zoning Administrator and Planning & Zoning Commission.

Over 45 years ago, the town decided to administer our own town zoning rather than be under county zoning. At that time county zoning was not very stringent and the county did not really factor in the town's opinion on zone changes and conditional uses.

### Current Manitowoc County Zoning

A lot has changed over the years and towns under county zoning now have a lot more input into county zoning decisions. The county planning commission now gives very much credit to the towns input when it comes to zone changes and conditional use permits.

There are 18 towns in Manitowoc County, 15 are under county zoning. The only towns that have their own zoning are: Franklin, Newton & Centerville. After discussion with other town's officers the consensus is that they are happy being under county zoning.

All towns have Comprehensive Land Use Plans as required by the state. Most towns under County zoning have an Advisory Planning Board or a Land Use Board that review zoning change and conditional use requests to make sure they comply with the towns Comprehensive Land Use Plan. When the county receives a zoning request, they seek an opinion from the town. The town would send a town recommendation on the proposed zone change or conditional use. In most cases the county follows the recommendation of the town.

Following is a list of advantages of Town vs County Zoning.

### **Advantages of Town Zoning**

- ◆ Local Control - The Town of Centerville would have complete control over their zoning ordinance. *(Town's still have input when they are in County Zoning)*
- ◆ Centerville Citizens on Boards - Citizens from Centerville sit on the Planning & Zoning and Board of Appeals to make decisions on Centerville.

### **Advantages of County Zoning**

- ◆ Duplication of Services - Centerville already helps pay for the operation of the County Planning & Zoning Department. Under county zoning there would be no additional town cost to belong to County Zoning.
- ◆ Consultant Expenses - The town does occasionally incur additional expenses when major updates are needed. In the past we have had to hire consultants a number of times to help update some of our ordinances. Manitowoc County has a full staff that can handle major updates.
- ◆ Zoning Complexity - Over the years the process of keeping town zoning current has become more complex due to ever changing state requirements. This also includes zone change hearings and conditional use hearings which are more critical than ever because of the ever-increasing legal ramifications. Manitowoc County Planning and Park Department has staff that works with zoning issues every day.
- ◆ Legal Challenges - If there were legal challenges to a decision there would be additional expense. Centerville did have a challenge last year on a conditional use permit. Our legal expenses in 2023 were \$3,400 more than 2022-most of this due to the lawsuit. If under county zoning, these expenses would be bore by the county, not the town.
- ◆ Experienced Committees for Hearings in Manitowoc County. Manitowoc County has experienced committees and boards that are used to dealing with hearings, appeals and conditional uses. Under Centerville Zoning our citizens are sometimes making the decisions on close neighbors. Sometimes neighbors may not want to vote against neighbors even if it is not the right decision or vice versa. Furthermore, local decisions can and have caused hard feelings between neighbors.
- ◆ Regular Committees Hearings in Manitowoc County. Manitowoc County's committees meet on a regular basis and hear a lot of cases. They are used to dealing with these issues. Centerville has historically not had very many zone changes and conditional hearings in the town. Maybe 1 – 2 zone changes per year, conditional uses have happened on average every 2 years or so. Hearing and making decisions on these issues can be a hard job for local residents when they don't have hearings very often.
- ◆ Finding & Training a New Administrator - The town will need to find a replacement for our current Zoning Administrator, who after many years of service will be retiring next year. It may be difficult to find someone with the time, skills and dedication necessary to fill this position.

- ◆ Finding Board Members - Each year it seems more difficult to find Centerville Residents who want to serve on the Planning Commission or Board of Appeals.
- ◆ Reduction of Expenses for the Town – Centerville spends between \$5,000 - \$7,000 annually to administer our zoning program. With County Zoning we should save at least half of that amount.

**Note:**

Once a town joins county zoning they cannot go back to town zoning unless the county does a comprehensive review of their zoning ordinance. This process does not happen very often, it could be a while before we would have the opportunity to go back to town zoning if we wanted to.