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— M A Q U O K E T A —

SENTINEL-PRESS

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Supervisors seek input on rezoning

**By DOUGLAS MELVOLD**

The Jackson County Board of Supervisors next week will take up a Maquoketa couple’s request to rezone property to allow continued production of biodiesel fuel.

The supervisors will hold a public hearing at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 12, on the request from Gary and Marilyn Drew to rezone 4.1 acres from the present classification of A-1, agricultural, to M-1, limited industrial.

The acreage is located near the northwest corner of the junction of 233rd Avenue and 92nd Street approximately three miles northeast of Maquoketa.

The zoning change, if approved, would allow the Drews to expand their company, Energy Tech, which has been producing approximately 50,000 gallons of biodiesel fuel per year.

The Jackson County Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the zoning change in December. The vote was 5-0 with one member absent and one member abstaining due to a possible conflict of interest.

Despite the favorable action by the commission, Zoning Administrator David Manning said the Drews have scaled back the size and scope of the business in response to concerns of neighbors.

Manning outlined a series of conditions that he has proposed be added to the zoning change if approved by the supervisors. He said the Drews have agreed to the conditions.

They include:

- Limiting vehicle access to a driveway from 233rd Avenue.
- Limiting the use of the property to the production of biodiesel fuel or any portion of that process. Manning said that stipulation would set a precedent. The county has never limited prop-

erty being rezoned to only one use.

- Requiring that all if any additional structures are erected on the property, all storage and loading-unloading facilities must be enclosed.
- Setting a maximum area of enclosed space at 15,000 square feet.
- Setting a maximum of 2 million gallons of fuel that could be produced each year, or its equivalent in volume.

The Drews also agreed that if biodiesel production ceases for at least a year, they would not object if the county reclassifies the land back to A-1.

Manning noted that the property wouldn’t automatically be rezoned back to A-1 if production stops for a year; the county would have to take action to do so.

The proposed zoning change also requires that the operation comply with all federal, state and local regulations.

Manning noted that the Drews have downsized the potential scope of their operations. When the request came before the Planning and Zoning Commission, they were seeking to rezone 8.26 acres, which is twice the area that is currently sought.

The 2-million-gallon limit also represents a downsizing from the 8 to 10 million gallons a year that Gary Drew told the Planning and Zoning he could foresee producing in the future if the venture continued to grow.

The business collects used restaurant cooking oil and processes it into diesel fuel. Drew also has experimented with byproducts, such as a material that can be spread on gravel roads as a deterrent from dust.

The county experimented with the material last year on a a trial basis, but received many complaints from motorists who said the material

coated their vehicles and was difficult to wash off and carried an odor they said was similar to French fries.

Drew told the Planning and Zoning Commission in December that he was selling fuel to the Andrew and DeWitt Central school districts for their buses and planned to be selling to other school districts.

He addressed concerns of neighbors, saying that the manufacturing process is quiet and doesn’t create odors, dust or excessive traffic.

He said the plant would consume less water than plants that convert corn into ethanol and would consume less water than many livestock farming operations.

He said he is heavily regulated by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Internal Revenue Service and other agencies.

Neighbors objecting or expressing concerns about the project cited concerns about fire safety, traffic and possible other, more objectionable uses that could be made of the M-1 property in the future.

Some neighbors also said the plant should be located on industrial property in Maquoketa, rather than taking up rural farmland for manufacturing.

Although the commission placed no conditions on its recommendation, they expressed concern about fire safety and security.

The supervisors on Tuesday asked that anyone wishing to comment on the application come to the hearing or send a written statement to the supervisors.

Supervisors noted that an Iowa Supreme Court

■ REZONING,  
Please turn to page 2



New exhibit displayed at Hurstville

**Jess Wagner, naturalist** for the Jackson County Conservation Board, with an albinos exhibit at the Hurstville Interpretive Center, Maquoketa. The display explores the genetic rarity of albinism in nature. This display features albino deer, mink, even a river otter as well as an albino red fox. The exhibit is on loan from the Buchanan County Conservation Board. Wagner says the exhibit is part of a larger collection now under construction that opened April 2, and will run through May 25. In addition to albino animals the center will be home to a black bear recently donated to the JCCB. The exhibit parallels the theme “A Country so Full of Game,” the story of wildlife in Iowa written by author James J. Dinsmore.

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