

Protect Goodhue County: Conditional Use Permit for Kohlnhofer Factory Farm Must Be Denied

The Kohlnhofer proposal of 4,700 hogs and a 3.5-million-gallon liquid manure pit in Zumbrota Township would harm our rural community. This proposal does not meet the standards outlined in the Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance and must be rejected.

Below are the key standards outlined in the Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance for issuing Conditional Use Permits and how this proposal does not meet the standards.

1. In Article 4, Section 2, entitled “Application for Conditional/ Interim Use Permit,” the Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance states: **“No Conditional/Interim Use Permit shall be recommended by the County Planning Commission unless ... the conditional/interim use will not ... substantially diminish and impair property values within the immediate vicinity.”**

Proposal must be denied: Peer reviewed scientific studies have shown that factory hog farms substantially decrease property values. See the attached 2015 study from *The Appraisal Journal*.

Recent studies that prove factory farms decrease nearby property values:

- “Animal Operations and Residential Property Values,” *The Appraisal Journal*, 2015. “Properties immediately abutting an AO [Animal Operation] can be diminished as much as 88%.”
- “An Analysis of the Impact of Swine CAFOs on the Value of Nearby Houses,” University of Northern Iowa, 2008. “Large adverse impacts suffered by houses that are within 3 miles and directly downwind from a CAFO are found.”
- “Evaluating the Effect of Proximity to Hog Farms on Residential Property Values: A GIS-Based Hedonic Price Model Approach,” *URISA Journal*, 2005. “Results indicate a negative and significant impact on property values from hog operations.”
- “Living with Hogs in Iowa: The Impact of Livestock Facilities on Rural Residential Property Values,” *Iowa State University, Center for Agricultural and Rural Development*, 2003. “Predicted negative effects are largest for properties that are downwind and close to livestock operations.”

2. In Article 13, Section 6, entitled “Information Required for a Conditional Use Permit,” the ordinance states: **“The permit application shall include the following items ... Land spreading agreements shall be provided if the applicant does not own the minimum acreage.”**

Proposal must be denied: The Kohlnhofers have submitted no agreements. None are posted on the official county website for the hearing. In addition, on Feb. 9, a township resident travelled to the Goodhue County Government Center to obtain a copy of the Kohlnhofers’ complete file. The file did not contain land spreading agreements. County officials refused to provide a copy of the file.

3. In Article 13, Section 7, entitled “Requirement Setbacks for New Facilities,” the ordinance states: **“New feedlots shall not be located within 1000 feet of 94% odor annoyance free rating, as determined by the OFFSET odor evaluation model.”**

Proposal must be denied: The odor model was run incorrectly and the Kohlhofer proposal cannot meet the required setbacks. The University of Minnesota has confirmed, in email and phone conversations with a Zumbrota Township resident, that the model was run incorrectly. When the model is run correctly, the results show that the proposal violates the county setback standards.

4. In Article 13, Section 4, entitled “General Requirement,” the ordinance states: **“No animal feedlot or manure storage area shall be constructed, located, or operated so as to create or maintain a pollution hazard” (Article 13, Section 4).**

Proposal must be denied: The Kohlhofers are proposing to build a 3.5-million-gallon liquid manure pit in a karst region rated as “highly susceptible to groundwater pollution.” Sink holes are common in the area and can form at any time. In fact, in 1992, the wastewater treatment lagoon in nearby Bellechester collapsed due to six newly-formed sink holes, and near-by wells were polluted. This proposal creates a clear pollution hazard.

5. In Article 4, Section 2, entitled “Application for Conditional/Interim Use Permit,” the ordinance states, **“No Conditional/Interim Use Permit use shall be recommended by the County Planning Commission unless ... the conditional/interim use will not be injurious to the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted.”**

Proposal must be denied: Evidence shows that factory hog farms have serious negative impacts on the surrounding community. In addition to adversely impacting property values, threatening ground water, and producing inescapable odors, these operations emit high levels of hydrogen sulfide, a poisonous gas. According to studies by the Yale Environmental Protection Clinic and the *Water Engineering & Management* journal, exposure to hydrogen sulfide in parts per billion concentrations can cause symptoms such as nausea, headaches, loss of appetite and irritability. More extreme symptoms include vomiting and severe diarrhea. Extremely high concentrations are life-threatening.

The Conditional Use Permit (C.U.P.) Application for the Kohlhofers Factory Farm is incomplete and violates our Goodhue County Zoning Ordinance. This C.U.P. must be denied.