

Agenda Item

Date:**To:** Douglas County Board of County Commissioners**Through:** Douglas J. DeBord, County Manager**From:** Kati Carter, AICP, Director of Community Development**CC:** Steven E. Koster, AICP, Deputy Director of Community Development
Michael Cairy, Zoning Compliance Manager
Mike Dawson, Zoning Compliance Official**Subject:** **Training Lessons and Exercising Sessions of Non-owned Animals – Proposed Regulations**

BACKGROUND

At a Board of County Commissioners (Board) work session on December 15, 2025, staff reviewed a situation where a property owner was allowing non-owned dogs to be brought to the property to be exercised by non-residents. This use was determined to be similar to dog and horse training lessons which is an allowed use of the property. The Board directed staff to draft regulations that would allow this use for the benefit of all landowners.

The attached draft amendment to Section 6, Estate Residential District (ER) of the DCZR would allow a property owner to let non-residents exercise their dogs on the property. The use would be within a broadened use category of “training lessons and exercising sessions of non-owned animals.” If this approach is acceptable to the Board, the Rural Residential (RR), Large Rural Residential (LRR), and Agricultural One (A-1) sections would also be amended to reflect this change.

DISCUSSION

The DCZR currently allows a property owner in the ER, RR, LRR, and A-1 zone districts to provide “Training of non-owned horses, or riders not related to the landowner or lessee, limited to 14 lessons per week.”

In 2016, the Director of Community Development interpreted the DCZR to allow the training of non-owned dogs, or of dog handlers, as reasonably similar to "Training of non-owned horses, or riders not related to the landowner or lessee, limited to 14 lessons per week" and include the use in the same zone districts with the same limitations, pursuant to Section 207, Inclusion of a Use Not Listed, of the DCZR.

In assessing the new use of allowing a property owner to let non-owned dogs be brought to the property to be exercised by non-residents, it seems reasonable to consider such use as similar to a training lesson. Based on that, it would be reasonable to allow such use without extra zoning approvals and treat the use the same as the training of non-owned horses and dogs, horse riders, or dog handlers.

The attached draft amendment to Section 6 of the DCZR allows “Training lessons and exercising session of non-owned animals” in the ER zone district as follows:

- The landowner or lessee may conduct training of a non-owned animal (1 lesson), an animal rider or handler (1 lesson), or a non-owned animal and the animal’s rider or handler (1 lesson).
- The landowner or lessee may allow non-residents to use a property for exercising sessions of their personally owned animals while the animal owner is present. Each animal owner exercising their personally owned animals is 1 exercising session.
- Training lessons and exercising sessions, in any combination, are limited to no more than 14 total per week.

This allows a property owner the flexibility of multiple similar uses without increasing the intensity of uses on the property. The draft amendment incorporates the new use, and codifies the Director’s interpretation of dog training, into the DCZR.

The draft amendment also proposes changes to the Use Permitted by Special Review (USR) subsection within the ER District to clarify that horse boarding and animal training and exercising are distinct uses. Further, the amendment specifies that either of these uses beyond the number allowed by right are a USR. Section 21, Use By Special Review, of the DCZR, will also require amending for further clarification of the distinct uses.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is prepared, if directed by the Board, to initiate the Zoning Resolution amendment process to revise the Residential and Agricultural Zone District sections to allow training lessons and exercising sessions of non-owned animals as described above.

ATTACHMENTS

Draft Revisions to Zoning Resolution Section 6