



City of Dyersville
City Administrator's Office

June 30, 2026

Mayor Jeff Jacque and City Council Members
City of Dyersville
Memorial Building
340 1st Avenue East
Dyersville, IA 52040

RE: Proposed Amendment to the Fence Regulations (Section 165.09.11) and Adopting Ordinance

Dear Honorable Mayor Jacque and Council Members:

I am writing to bring forward a proposed change to the City's fence regulations, and to explain what I have done in the meantime to keep our handling of fences consistent.

Our fence rules work well for the fences they were built around. Most of the 15 to 20 fence permits we review each year are for permanent fences set on posts, such as chain-link and wood privacy fences. More residents, though, now use light, movable fences for gardens, pet areas, and snow. These sit on the surface of the ground or are held by stakes that can be pulled out by hand, and they can be picked up and moved. Section 165.09.11(E) of the Dyersville Code of Ordinances says no fence may be constructed without a permit, but it does not define a fence and does not separate a permanent fence from a temporary one. The building permit section treats construction as beginning with site work and grading. The result is that it is unclear whether a small garden, pet, or snow fence requires a permit, and the same situation can be handled differently depending on who reviews it.

To keep matters consistent while you consider a permanent fix, I have issued an interim administrative interpretation under Section 165.03.04(L), which gives the City Administrator authority to interpret the Zoning Ordinance. It reads the permit requirement to apply to permanent, ground-mounted fences, not to temporary, movable fences. It does not change any other fence rule, and it does not single out any property or owner. It is a temporary measure that will give way to whatever the Council adopts.

I am also bringing forward a text amendment to Section 165.09.11 so this standard is written directly into the Code rather than resting on an interpretation. The City may begin this on its own motion under Section 165.03.04(K). Rather than change a single subsection, the proposed ordinance repeals and restates the entire fence section, so you can read the complete regulations

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as they will read after adoption. The substantive changes are in the permit subsection: a fence permit is required for a permanent fence and is not required for a temporary, movable fence; in residential districts a movable fence may not be placed in a front yard and may not stand more than four feet high in a side or rear yard; a movable fence left in place beyond a set period is treated as a permanent fence that needs a permit; the safety rules, including the prohibition on barbed wire and electrified fencing, continue to apply to every fence; and the Code adopts the term “fence permit” the City already uses in practice. The rest of the section is carried forward as it reads today.

The process from here is set by Section 165.03.04(K). The amendment goes first to the Planning and Zoning Commission for a public hearing and a recommendation, and then returns to the Council for a public hearing and a vote on the ordinance. The Assistant City Attorney has reviewed the language. There is no cost to the City in this change.

I recommend that the Council support the amendment and adopt the ordinance when it returns to you after the Planning and Zoning Commission’s review. The change makes our requirements clear and fair, keeps permit review focused on the fences that need it, protects safety and sight lines, and matches how the City already operates.

Please let me know if you have questions before the meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mick J. Michel", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Mick J. Michel
City Administrator
