



Staff Report

Subject: 2nd Reading Amendment to Section 3.15 Home Occupation Ordinance
Author: Jennifer Rose, Planner I
Department: Development Services
Meeting Date: March 17, 2026
Applicant: Effingham County Board of Commissioners
Location: County-wide

Request

The Effingham County Board of Commissioners is considering the Second Reading and final adoption of an amendment to Section 3.15 – Home Occupations of the Effingham County Development Code.

The proposed amendment removes zoning compliance barriers that previously affected residents with nonconforming properties seeking to operate home-based businesses.

Background

The Board of Commissioners conducted the First Reading of the proposed amendment on March 3, 2026.

Following discussion, the Board approved the ordinance amendment on First Reading and directed staff to return the item for Second Reading and final consideration.

This amendment applies county-wide.

Proposed Amendment

The amendment revises Section 3.15 – Home Occupations to remove the requirement that properties classified as legal nonconforming uses, structures, or lots must first be brought into full zoning compliance before a home occupation may be considered.

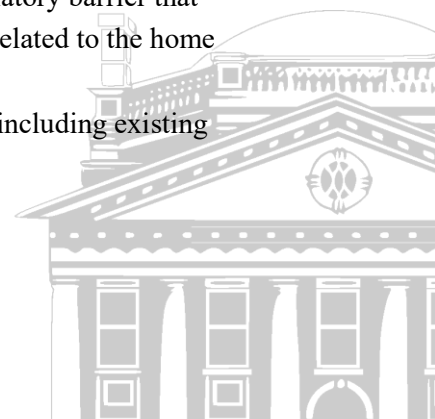
Under the previous ordinance language, residents with nonconforming properties could be required to pursue rezoning or zoning compliance actions unrelated to the home occupation itself before being eligible for consideration.

The amendment removes this requirement and allows home occupations to be evaluated based on operational compatibility and compliance with existing performance standards.

Staff Analysis

Staff reviewed the amendment and determined that the proposed revision removes a regulatory barrier that previously required residents with nonconforming properties to pursue zoning actions unrelated to the home occupation activity itself.

The amendment does not modify the operational standards governing home occupations, including existing limitations related to scale, intensity, and compatibility with surrounding residential uses.



By removing zoning compliance as a prerequisite, the ordinance shifts toward a performance-based evaluation approach, focusing on the operational impacts of the home occupation rather than the zoning conformity status of the property.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the amendment to Section 3.15 – Home Occupations on Second Reading.

Board Action

The Board of Commissioners may:

- Approve the amendment on Second Reading
- Deny the amendment
- Table the item for further consideration

Planning and Zoning Services

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