

**MINUTES OF THE MONONA COUNTY  
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT  
PUBLIC HEARING March 17, 2025**

On Monday, March 17, 2025, the Monona County Board of Adjustment held a public hearing. Those present by roll call were Marv Hausman, Wray Wright, Lois Wilson and Sandy Bubke. Absent: Nancy McGrain and Angela Lyons. Guests: Sharon Gries, James Johnston, Lynda & David Pinnow, Mike & Patty McCall, Louis Reed.

The Board of Adjustment meeting was called to order by Marv Hausman at 10:10 a.m. Marv opened the public hearing for the following special use permit request made by New Harmony Life – Rest & Retreat. Sandy did receive two (2) letters concerning the SUP request.

A Special Use Permit Application has been submitted for New Harmony Life – Rest and Retreat Center on behalf of Russ and Carolyn Uhl. This application is to have a rest and retreat center allowing guests to enjoy a peaceful, natural space with grasslands, rolling Loess Hills on a secluded homestead. Enjoy hiking, camping and various flora/fauna native to the Loess Hills of Western Iowa. This is permitted use with a Special Use Permit according to Monona County Zoning Regulations, Chapter 100, Section 100.15 Principal Permitted Uses, Lodging: Campgrounds, RV parks in the Agricultural District (A-1).

Marv asked Russ and Carolyn to discuss their plans for the property. They bought this property with the hopes of making this their home. They also would like to share the property with the community, family and friends. We would like to put up some individual, non-permanent structure like cabins. The intent on the property is to keep it wild, quiet and peaceful. There would be trails for hiking, natural prairie grasses, flowers. A copy of the business plan was handed out to all the guests.

The main concern that the McCall's have is the pond that is shared by both properties. They are worried about the liability of the pond; cattle use it for water and are afraid someone would mess with the cows. The McCall's also have a cabin by the pond for their family use. Carolyn made a comment that they could remove the pond use from their plans if that worked.

Wray asked about access to the property in case of an emergency. There is a gravel road that could be used to access the property. Wray also asked about hunting on the property and how that would affect the use of the properties.

Marv asked if all the property was fenced. Russ said most of the property is fenced but there are some areas that are not. James was present on behalf of a neighboring property owner that he manages the farm for. He would like to see No Trespassing signs on the property. He hopes that the plan for the property succeeds but would like to see the signage. There was also a question of having an emergency plan and escape routes in case of a fire.

Patty would like to see the fences reinforced to make sure the cattle can't get out.

Sharon mentioned that there is some Forest Reserve on this property and mentioned the economic gain restrictions. Only trees can be in the forest reserve, no cabins.

The Lynda and David mentioned they are against this plan because they moved there for peace and quiet and privacy. People hiking and being near their property invades their privacy. They are also worried about more traffic on the roads and the maintenance of the road. A letter was submitted to the zoning administrator.

Mike McCall is also against the plan and has submitted a letter to the zoning administrator.

Sandy mentioned having the restrictions that everyone is talking about added to the SUP. Things like emergency plans, no fireworks, fences, signage, maintaining privacy to neighbors, liability of encroachment, training visitors to respect property and no trespassing. Russ also mentioned adding these to his terms and conditions agreement for visitors to the property. Lois asked about the Spring and Fall farming noise. Russ said that they understand that it is part of the area and is ok with it.

Marv closed the public hearing at 11:03 a.m.

The board discussed the idea of tabling the decision until another meeting so that the Uhl's and the property owners can discuss and possibly come to agreements that makes everyone happy.

Marv called for a motion. Wray made a motion to table the issuance of the Special Use Permit until another meeting with a new plan from the Uhl's, seconded by Lois, roll call vote:

Marv – Yes

Wray – Yes

Lois - Yes

Motion carried to table the Special Use Permit application.

The meeting was audio recorded.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from October 24, 2024, was made by Wray, seconded by Lois, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sandy Bubke, Administrator  
Monona County Zoning

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Chairman, Board of Adjustment