

**MINUTES OF THE MONONA COUNTY
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
PUBLIC HEARING April 21, 2025**

On Monday, April 21, 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: Lynda Pinnow, Mike & Patty McCall, Louis Reed and Russ & Carolyn Uhl.

The Board of Adjustment meeting was called to order by Marv Hausman at 10:30 a.m. Marv opened the public hearing for the following special use permit request made by New Harmony Life – Rest & Retreat. Sandy republished and sent landowner letters notifying of public hearing. Sandy did not receive any comments or concerns.

At the Public Hearing on March 17, 2025, this application was tabled so that there could be more discussion between the Uhl's and the neighbors. A new business plan was submitted to Sandy that had changes from the discussions with the neighbors.

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).

Russ thanked the board for letting them regroup and discuss with the neighbors what they could do to meet them on the issues that were raised during the public hearing. He discussed with the board the changes that were made to the business plan after meeting with the neighbors.

There is a recorded agreement between the Uhl's and the McCall's on the use of the pond that is shared by them. This document will be maintained by them and was not given to the board. Discussions with the Pinnow's were verbal and not put into writing. As far as hunting goes, it was agreed that the Uhl's will not have visitors during the official hunting seasons. Wray asked if there were any dates associated with this agreement, there were no dates listed, just the official hunting seasons. Fences will be replaced and or added where needed by the Uhl's. The township fencing rules will be followed by everyone. The Uhl's will put up signage on all the fences to make sure people do not trespass on the neighbor's property.

See the business plan, Discussion & Agreements listed in the business plan for further information. There is a trail app that Uhl's will be using for the property. All guests will have to download the app so that way they know where the trails are, and they are expected to stay on the trails. The Uhl's are also trying to maintain the property and not destroy the property. There will be no trails near the Pinnow's property to help maintain their privacy. The trails have been designed to be larger so that a fire truck, if needed, can access the property. They had a controlled burn with the fire department, and they had no issues. One of the domes was also moved to another location away from the Pinnow's property.

It was mentioned by Russ that last year there were about 600 guests that were on the property throughout the year and neighbors never realized that people were there. Russ stated that if they don't receive the special use permit, they would continue to have guests to the property, just not overnight. The six camper spots that will be on the property are family and a friend, they will be there permanently, so they won't be having camper traffic on the road.

The Pinnow's were concerned about the traffic on the gravel road past their house. The Uhl's have agreed that the main route to their property will be on the website and they will encourage people to use that route. The route will be State Highway 175 to 220th Street. It was mentioned that sometimes you can't make someone take a certain route, but they would do their best to make it happen.

Marv closed the public hearing at 11:20 a.m.

He asked if there were any more concerns that anyone had concerning this matter. Lynda mentioned that even though they have had discussions with the Uhl's, they do not want the project to happen. They still have concerns about the roads, privacy, construction of the different shelter areas and destruction of the environment. The other concern is if the Uhl's drill more wells, their well will dry up. The McCall's are still concerned about liability issues with their cows and bull, but want to see the Uhl's use their property the way they want to. Louis mentioned that Joyce Larson is also concerned about fencing and trespassing.

Marv asked the board for their thoughts. Marv mentioned to the neighbors that if you really didn't want this project to go forward, you wouldn't have discussed agreements. He wants to make sure what ever decision is made today, they still work together and get along as neighbors. Wray didn't want to cause conflict with the decision today but would also like to see something flourish in the hills. Lois was for the project.

Marv called for a motion. Lois made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit with conditions that were listed in the business plan – Discussions & Agreements – that was submitted to Sandy on April 11, 2025, seconded by Wray, roll call vote:

Marv – Yes
Wray – Yes
Lois - Yes

Motion carried to approve the Special Use Permit application.

The meeting was audio recorded.

Motion to approve the meeting minutes from March 17, 2025, was made by Wray, seconded by Lois, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Bubke, Administrator
Monona County Zoning

Chairman, Board of Adjustment