

**FINAL MINUTES**  
**JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

7:00 p.m.

Monday, November 24, 2025

Community Room, Jackson County Courthouse  
201 W Platt Street, Maquoketa, Iowa

**Board Members Present:** Chair Mike Nickeson, Vice Chair Daryl DeVore, Board Members A. John Arenz, Pete Fish, Dave Kendell  
**Staff Member Present:** Zoning Administrator Becca Pflughaupt

**Call to Order and Roll Call:** The meeting was called to order by Chair Nickeson at 6:00 p.m. and roll call taken. A sign-in sheet was distributed, and a Zoom meeting was launched. Those noted in attendance:

Dennis Hankemeier – Maquoketa – in person  
Samsung SM-G781U device – online

**Approval of Minutes:** Motion by Kendell, seconded by Arenz, to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2025 Board of Adjustment meeting as submitted. Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

**Public Hearing:**

**DOCKET – 25-11: Special Exception Request**

**Applicant:** Dennis Hankemeier

**Request:** Special exception to operate a primitive faith-based nonprofit campground and retreat center in the A-1 Agricultural District.

**Location:** Perry Township, along 184<sup>th</sup> Street, with newly established driveway at 26645 184<sup>th</sup> Street (two parcels under common ownership; approximately 73.08 acres total).

**Staff Report:** Zoning Administrator Pflughaupt presented the staff report. The proposal included primitive tent camping areas, portable cabins (initially four planned by April with possible expansion), portable toilets for early-phase sanitation, and use of an existing barn as a gathering/retreat space. Notices were mailed to adjacent property owners and published pursuant to Iowa Code Chapter 335. As of the meeting, no written objections or letters of support had been received. A list of potential conditions was provided for Board consideration (including a final detailed site plan, sanitation, emergency access, limits on cabins, lighting, and restrictions on commercial/event uses not tied to the retreat mission).

**Applicant Testimony:** Applicant Dennis Hankemeier described plans for a primitive Christian camp/retreat for adults, families, and children, operating primarily April 15 through October 31. The applicant stated there would be no utilities in the early phase; restrooms would be portable and serviced off-site; permanent facilities may be developed later. The applicant stated no RV/mobile campers would be allowed. The camp would be open to the public by registration/advance arrangement, with minimal vehicle traffic near cabin areas and an emphasis on quiet and hiking.

### **Board Discussion**

The Board discussed:

- How the Board could distinguish the proposal from a commercial campground and craft enforceable conditions to ensure the use remains consistent with the nonprofit, faith-based retreat concept described.
- The status of forming a nonprofit entity (e.g., 501(c) structure) and whether proof of the nonprofit/operator entity should be required prior to approval.
- Limitations on commercial activities and events (e.g., weddings, festivals, ticketed concerts, or rentals unrelated to the retreat mission).
- Sanitation, emergency access, and future permitting requirements for expansion.

### **Action**

Motion by Arenz, seconded by Kendell to table Docket 25-11 to allow the applicant time to establish the nonprofit entity and return with supporting documentation for further Board consideration. Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

The Chair closed the public hearing.

**Items from the public:** None

**Items from the Board:** None

**Items from Staff:** Staff noted the next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Kendell, seconded by Fish to adjourn the November 24, 2025 Board of Adjustment meeting. Vote: All ayes. Motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Becca Pflughaupt  
Zoning Administrator

Adopted: 2/23/2026