

MINUTES

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Council Chambers

515 Clark Ave

January 14, 2026

Call to Order

The Ames Zoning Board of Adjustment met, pursuant to law, in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m. on January 14, 2026 in the Council Chambers of City Hall. The following members were present: Matthew Koehler, Julie Kruse, remotely: Leah Patton, Marshall McDaniel; Absent Caleb Whitehouse. Also, present were Assistant City Attorney Jane Chang, City Planner Parker Walsh.

Approval of Minutes

Moved by Koehler second by Kruse to approve the minutes of October 22, 2025, Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting.

Vote on Motion: (4 - 0). Motion carried.

CASE NO. 26-01

Public Hearing on a request for a Special Use Permit to allow a Social Service Provider use in the Highway Oriented Commercial Zone at 320 SE 2nd Street, 405 & 413 SE 3rd Street. (Parcel Numbers 09-11-205-065, 09-11-205-085, 09-11-205-075.)

Planner Parker Walsh presented that this property is zoned for Highway Oriented Commercial Zone (HOC). This use is allowed if approved by the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Food at First is currently operating out of First Christian Church. They are looking to expand to their own building. The applicant is looking to construct a 14,000 square foot building which would use Lots 2, 3 and 4. They would end operation at the church if this item were approved.

Currently, Food at First provides a daily meal for 70-145 people, as well as access to the food pantry on select days, which serves 100 -176 people during the access hours. In 2024 58,000 people accessed the food pantry and 34,000 meals were served. The peak hours would be similar to the other businesses in the new neighborhood, primarily being lunch and dinner hours.

The applicant would like to expand their services by making showers and laundry accessible. Outside of the designated meal hours the building would be accessible for showers and laundry as well as to rest and work. Another new program that they would like to provide is temporary shelter in times of extreme heat and cold. All residents using

this service would be required to leave the premises by 8:00 AM. It would not be a daily offering.

There would be a lot of activity at the site there would be 25 cameras at all times for monitoring. There will be areas that will be lockable and not always accessible inside the building. If this is approved the applicant will bring a lighting plan. There would be four to six lights to illuminate the parking area. The site has two driveways for truck delivery and traffic.

SE 3rd Street will be extended to Lot 3. There will be an access easement over the parking area towards Lot 4. Lot 1 is intended to remain a commercial use. The Special Use Permit request is only for Lots 2, 3 and 4. There is no parking requirement. Staff determined that this would be like a community building. Thus, it would require 70 parking spaces. The applicant proposed 76 parking spaces. A Final Plat would be required to combine the three lots. Staff recommend a condition that the owner provide a Final Plat approval prior to the issuance of a building permit. This is not a commercial use, but the Land Use and Growth Element is the most pertinent section related to the proposal. Growth Goal 6, Planning for Equity, emphasis considering the needs of a diverse population expanding transportation choices, providing accessible institutions and services, and maintaining a variety of amenities. Food at First will be a service that furthers the goals of the comprehensive plan by providing a safe location to relax, work, and care for hygiene, provide meals and pantry access to those in need, and will provide temporary access when the weather is harsh.

There is bike parking planned on the east of the sidewalk as well as vehicle parking, and Cy-Ride serves the area around Target. Food at First has asked CyRide to evaluate future growth to have a stop closer to the site. Based on these findings Staff recommends Alternative 1.

Alternative 1:

The Zoning Board of Adjustment may approve the Special Use Permit for a Social Service Provider use that include principal functions of a food pantry, meal service, daytime respite services, and temporary shelter, described herein, with related site improvements within the Highway Oriented Commercial zone, located at 320 SE 2nd Street, 405 and 413 SE 3rd Street, based on the findings of fact and conclusions stated herein, as detailed on the submitted Site Plan, with the following conditions and stipulations:

- a) The Owner receives approval of a Final Plat prior to issuance of a building permit.
- b) The final design of the cross access to Lot 1 will be determined with Final Plat approval and the Site Plan updated for paving as needed.
- c) Site lighting plan and mechanical equipment screening approval by the Planning Division is required prior to issuance of a building permit.
- d) The property owner shall maintain 24/7 high resolution security camera coverage of the building interior and exterior and retain footage for a minimum of 48 hours.

Employees and volunteers are to cooperate with police when needed for criminal investigations related to incidents that occur on or adjacent to the site.

- e) No residential use of the property as short-term lodging or household use is permitted. Additionally, no camping or housing of individuals outside of the building overnight is permitted.
- f) The temporary shelter use is limited to extreme weather-related events.
- g) Outdoor storage is not identified with the proposed Special Use Permit. Accessory outdoor storage may only be permitted as a minor amendment to the plan by approval of a zoning permit by the Planning Division and is limited to designated areas on the site that area determined to be compatible with a commercial environment and appropriately secured to as approved by a zoning permit. Outside storage may be referred to the ZBA as for approval as a major amendment at the discretion of the Planning Division.
- h) If the use is discontinued for more than 12 months or not initiated within 12 months of receiving a Certificate of Occupancy from the City of Ames Inspections Division, the approval shall be considered null and void. The facility would be used for a conforming HOC use. Any request to reestablish the use after 12 months or at any time to change social service provider principal uses, shall require approval of a Special Use Permit by the ZBA.

Questions for Staff:

Matt Koehler asked if there was access to 2nd Street. Mr. Walsh stated there is not and would not be access due to the slope of the land. Ms. Kruse expressed her concern about CyRide. She feels that the current situation is unsafe for riders. Mr. Walsh said CyRide would entertain growth but not until the structure is built. They would evaluate at that time based on service to the building. Ms. Kruse stated that CyRide has numbers on their current numbers served. Mr. Walsh stated that they wanted to wait to see what the needs would be after the expansion. Ms. Kruse asked for clarification of condition h. Mr. Walsh stated CO that the use would be determined by Certificate of Occupancy. Ms. Kruse feels the safety of the existing CyRide stop is questionable.

Applicant:

Patty Yoder, 611 Clark Food at First Director was sworn in. She has been the Director for 11 years. Food at First has been in existence for 21 years and been located at First Christian for 10 years. They have outgrown the space and have a need to expand due to the increase in clientele. They found this land and would be more sustainable in the future. The showers and laundry have been identified as a specific need for this community. The food service and pantry will be the first step but have things in place for showers and laundry. They feel they have been located across from the Police Department, and they try to keep things in order and have been good neighbors. They keep litter under control so they can keep good relations.

Questions for the Applicant:

None

Discussion by the Board:

Mr. Koehler stated that the Staff did an excellent job outlining the needs.

Koehler moved to approve Alternative 1; Patton second.

Roll call: Koehler aye; Kruse, aye; Patton, aye; McDaniel aye

Vote on Motion: (4 - 0) Motion carried.

Ms. Kruse stated that this decision can be appealed through the District Court within 30 days after the filing of the Decision and Order.

Board Discussion: None

Adjournment

Moved by Koehler second by Kruse to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 PM.

Vote on Motion: (4-0). Motion carried.

Natalie Rekemeyer, Recording Secretary

Julie Kruse, Acting Chair