

**Minutes of the AARC February 10, 2021
Regular Special Public Meeting
Via ZOOM**

Present

AARC Members: Skip Phillips, Lori Garkovich, Floyd Raglin (Absent- Robert Richardson)

Staff: Pattie Wilson, Joshua Stevens, and Kim O'Reel

(Note: Mr. Phillips was present via phone only due to technical difficulties)

Others: Rob Maclin, Joey Svec, Andrew Hoepwell, Jayne Cohen, Brad Boaz, Donald Westphal, Warren Taylor, Al Cross

Oath of Office: Floyd Raglin was administered the Oath of Office by Mrs. Wilson.

Election of Officers: **Chair-** Skip Phillips **Vice Chair-** Floyd Raglin **Secretary-** Lori Garkovich

Roll Call

Members present- Skip Phillips, Lori Garkovich, Floyd Raglin.

Approval of Minutes of October 14, 2020 AARC meeting – Motion to approve by Lori Garkovich with second by Floyd Raglin. All approved.

New Business:

Application #02-001-2021 – Rocking M, LLC (Merefield Farm) – 301 Lansing Lane – A-1 District – Article VII, Section 701.4(I) and 701.8(A&B) – Owners are seeking a review and recommendation to the Board of Adjustment to amend their Conditional Use Permit (#07-016-2018) to expand an agricultural enterprise involving horse farm and farm tours and events in an additional horse barn (Lily Silo Barn).

Others Present: Rob Maclin, owner

Request

The owners of Rocking M, LLC (Merefield Farm) are seeking approval to add a second horse barn (the Lily Barn) with horse farm and grain farm viewsheds to their existing Conditional Use Permit (#07-016-2018).

The Lily Barn at Merefield Farm, as preserved and planned to be preserved with its two preserved and maintained poured concrete silos, will be used for a maximum of 40 events throughout the year with the number of guests limited to 100 or fewer per event.

The Lily Barn will show case the agriculture/farming heritage of Woodford County which is a different perspective showcased by the Vintage Barn at Merefield Farm.

Site Visit Reflections

On February 3, 2021, AARC members Lori Garkovich and Robert Richardson with Pattie Wilson and Josh Stevens (Building Inspector) met Rob Maclin, owner, at the Lily Silo Barn on Merefield Barn for a Site Visit. Mr. Maclin reviewed the proposed business plan for this area.

This barn is located deep within this 330 acre horse and general agriculture farm. At one end are two poured concrete silos that are estimated to have been built in the 1920s and have been cleaned out and had new caps placed on them. The barn itself is from the same time period or older and is being repaired so as to match the original barn wood. Other than creating a catering preparation room in one corner, the 8 bent barn itself will remain open with the existing tobacco rails.

Restrooms will be two porta-johns designed to look like typical storage outbuildings and will be located to the side of the barn. These will be connected to an approved septic system being installed in a paddock on the east side of the barn. An existing dumpster in the vicinity of an old tobacco barn on the southwest side of the property will be used for waste.

Access to the Lily Silo Barn for visitors will be at the second entrance to Merefield Farm, at an existing fire gate/entrance. Visitors would then follow a lane through fields of corn and soybeans and cross an existing culvert to arrive at the Lily Silo Barn.

Parking for visitors will be in an open area adjacent to the Lily Barn that is currently being used as simple green space. Parking will be managed in this area to minimize compaction.

While both the Vintage Barn and the Lily Silo Barn are on the same farm lane, they will have separate entrances and barriers will prevent visitors at one barn from accessing any event at the other.

Outdoor lighting will be used for safety purposes only and there will be no outside music allowed. The intent of the owners is to keep all event activities within the confines of the Lily Silo Barn itself.

The owners of the two adjacent farms are aware of this proposal and given the location of the Lily Silo Barn on Merefield Farm have not expressed any concerns to the applicants.

There is already signage on Lansing Lane indicating the entrance to the Vintage Barn and the applicants will be placing additional signage for the second entrance to Lily Silo Barn.

Discussion

Rob Maclin summarized the application to convert the Lily Silo Barn for inside events. This venue would have a separate entrance from the Vintage Event Barn. He indicated that the goal was to preserve the barn which is believed to be 120 years old.

Mrs. Wilson noted that since the owners began hosting events at the Vintage Barn there have been no complaints concerning the operation.

The AARC Committee members then noted their individual scores on Decision Tree which ranged from a low of 705 to a high of 755. These scores exceed the minimum points needed to achieve a recommendation of approval to the Board of Adjustment.

Recommendation

A Motion by Mr. Raglin, with a second by Ms. Garkovich for the AARC to recommend to the Board of Adjustment approval of application 02-001-2021 – Rocking M, LLC (Merefield Farm) – 301 Lansing Lane – A-1 District – Article VII, Section 701.4(l) and 701.8(A&B) wherein the owners are seeking a review and recommendation to the Board of Adjustment to amend their Conditional Use Permit (#07-016-2018) to expand an agricultural enterprise involving horse farm and farm tours and events in an additional horse barn known as the Lily Silo Barn. All voted in favor of the motion with noted conditions.

This recommendation includes the following conditions:

- Site Plan attached to application shall be complied with in conjunction with the business plan
- No outside music and music to cease at 10:00 p.m.
- Outside lighting will be only for safety purposes
- Events to occur between April 1 and October 31 of the calendar year.
- Maximum of 40 events per year.
- A maximum of 100 guests per event at the Lily Silo Barn.
- A sign at the second entrance on Lansing Lane to Merefield Farm indicating this is the entrance to Lily Silo Barn
- The addition of a sign on Lansing Lane PRIOR to Merefield Farm indicating that Entrance 1 is for the Vintage Barn and Entrance 2 is for the Lily Silo Barn
- A dumpster for refuse will be maintained at the tobacco barn at the rear of the farm
- Rest room facilities will be two porta-johns designed to look like typical storage outbuildings and will be located to the side of the barn. These will be connected

to an approved septic system being installed in a paddock on the east side of the barn.

Application 02-002-2021 – Kentucky Bluegrass Experience Resort – Elkwood Farm – 485 Georgetown Rd – Midway – A-1/CO-1 Districts – Article VII, Section 701.4 (M) Tourist Destination (Expanded) and ~~Section 701.4 (I) Agricultural Enterprise~~— Owners are seeking a review and recommendation to the Board of Adjustment for a tourist destination (expanded) to incorporate an RV/Resort and associated uses.

Others present on behalf of the application: Andrew Hopewell, Joey Svec, Don Westphal, Jayne Cohen, and Brad Boaz.

Request

The applicant (Kentucky Bluegrass Experience Resort LLC (c/o Andrew Hopewell) is seeking a conditional use permit to operate an RV and camping resort on the 240 acres of the Elkwood Farm. That portion under review in Woodford County consists of 97.5 acres. The resort would capitalize on the iconic central Bluegrass landscape of rolling hills, woodlands, agricultural fields and a major creek as well as the history of Elkwood Farm to create a unique experience for the visitors.

The proposal for the Woodford portion of the Resort includes:

- 465 paved RV sites surrounded by green space.
- 10 sites for both primitive camping and “glamping” rental units.
- Nearly 10 miles of total site walking/biking trails with signage highlighting examples of natural features and local history.
- New buildings designed to reflect the character and history of the farm, including:
 - A Welcome Center
 - An Educational Center overlooking South Elkhorn Creek
 - Other buildings (pavilions for picnics, comfort stations, food services, camper general store).
- Camper amenities including:
 - An aquatic park
 - Open play areas
 - Court sports
 - Playground
 - Amphitheater
 - Dog parks
 - Low challenge course
- The public will have access to:
 - A public parking lot at the front entrance that will be made with pervious materials.

- An area with a farmers market and other retail amenities
- 2 public launch areas for canoe and kayak access to South Elkhorn Creek.
- An oak tree lined boulevard that will tell the story of the roll of oak in the bourbon industry.
- Multiple interactive/educational heritage gardens highlighting native vegetation and agricultural crops.

Site visit reflections

On February 3, 2021, AARC members Lori Garkovich and Robert Richardson with Pattie Wilson and Josh Stevens (Building Inspector) conducted a site visit at the proposed Bluegrass Experience Resort Park. Mr. Svec and Mr. Hopewell were present to go over the business plan. Mr. Westphal and Ms. Cohen were virtually present.

The main entrance to the property is at the intersection of Georgetown Rd (KY 341) and McKinney Ave., an entrance to Midway Station Industrial Park. The entrance is @ .35 miles from I-64 and 1.06 miles from downtown Midway. The proposed entrance inside the property will be 2 lanes with a grassy median and the entry side is a double lane to provide an area for entering vehicles to be on the property and not blocking traffic on Georgetown Road.

The property is currently used for agricultural crops with intermittent woodlands along steep slopes. The farm is partly in Woodford County and partly in Scott County and is divided by South Elkhorn Creek which provides nearly 2 miles of creek throughout the property. In addition, this site is contiguous to the recently approved Bluegrass Distilleries tourist destination and could provide a place for wedding parties/guests to stay overnight for a wedding weekend.

During the visit, the applicant noted that the national average is 8.5 to 10 RV parking sites per acre while this Resort will have 4.7 RV parking sites per acre, in order to minimize storm water runoff with large swaths of grass mixed with trees between parking areas.

The applicant has begun a discussion with the Mayor and City Council of Midway seeking to have the site annexed. If successful, this would mean that each RV parking area will have electricity, public water and a sewer hook-up. In addition, the Resort will provide Internet access. Moreover, each parking site will have a picnic area on gravel or another type of pervious material.

In preparing the site plan, landscape architects evaluated the topography, geology, watershed characteristics in order to create a facility that is in concert with not imposed on the landscape. The proposed project grows out of the land as it is to provide visitors an opportunity to encounter the “ghosts of place.”

While there is an area that would serve as a natural amphitheater, the intention is to use this for small events for those staying at the resort, and not be general public events.

The Educational Center is adjacent to South Elkhorn Creek will provide meeting/class room space as well as informational displays related to the history of the Bluegrass, its geological and watershed characteristics, the economics of agriculture and other industries, and cultural characteristics.

It is the contention of the applicant that this site warrants consideration under the Tourism Destination (expanded) definition *“a unique, regionally recognized landmark or historic structure as of January 1, 2012, that is primarily known for its existing architectural significance and/or uniqueness, which promote tourism and the overall economy”* for the following reasons:

- South Elkhorn Creek is a popular tourist destination.
- The unique topographic characteristics of the central Bluegrass region.
- The discovered spring fed stream that meanders to a sink on the property is another unique environmental feature of the site.
- Elkwood farm itself is an historical farm in the central Bluegrass area, even though there are no original structures on this site.

The applicant also notes the following potential economic impacts from the proposed project:

- National studies show that RV campers tend to visit and spend primarily within a 30-mile radius of where they are parked.
- There will be a significant number of full and part-time employees as well as contract service providers required for the operation of the Resort. Employee taxes will be earned by the county and Midway (if annexed).
- The project will be utilized year-round, providing continuous employment and income for the area.

Presentation by Applicant

Mr. Joey Svec introduced Andrew Hopewell majority owner of the proposed project, as well as Donald Westphal a landscape architect who developed the Master Land Use Plan and Brad Boaz a landscape architect from CMW the engineering firm and Jayne Cohen who is an RV consultant.

Applicant presented a Power Point Presentation (attached to minutes) that illustrated the proposed project where 97.5 acres of the total project are in Woodford County where nearly all of the acreage is zoned A-1 with a small number of acres zoned CO-1 along South Elkhorn Creek and other areas susceptible to flooding.

Applicant is requesting approval of Tourism Destination Expanded request for the event uses of acreage in Woodford County.

The Master Land Use Plan reflects the topography and natural elements of the land. Most RV sites in the nation average 8.5 -10 parking sites per acre while this proposal is for 4.7 sites per acre.

The specific Landmarks on this property that support the application for a Tourism Destination Expanded permit are:

- South Elkhorn Creek with walking trails and 4 access points as well as an Education Center.
- The spring, the stream and the sink hole which is illustrative of the geographical uniqueness of Central Bluegrass area.
- Rolling hills which are the signature feature of the Central Bluegrass region.

Proposed special events and amenities are designed to encourage guests to stay an extended time and spend more time in local businesses. Moreover, all amenities are for the resort guests who check-in and check-out to maximize guest safety. The amenities include:

- Walking and jogging trails to allow people to interact with the environment
- Main retail area which will have opportunities for guests and public to shop in pop-up shops and/or semi-permanent buildings.
- Playgrounds, space for court-based sports
- Pool with splash pad
- Dog parks (main and secondary) and dog waste stations throughout the resort
- Low challenge course
- Bike paths
- Educational Center for those who are home-schooling, for small group meetings, field trips for local schools and universities
- Amphitheater

When guests check in they will receive maps of the property and there will be considerable wayfinding signage throughout the resort, especially on the boundaries of the property.

Applicants will fence the perimeter boundary using a standard horse plank fencing combined with a landscape buffer and then a walking trail followed by the campsite to emphasize the boundaries of the resort and minimize human impact on the landscape.

In some areas, the plan is to have a small fence along the walking trail, again emphasize the preferred/permitted areas for movement within the boundaries of the Resort.

To minimize noise and sound pollution spillover impact on neighbors, there will be strictly enforced hours of operation for key amenities (e.g., pool, game fields, sports courts, and amphitheater).

To assure water quality in any runoff or land use from the land will have:

- Grass land swales
- Main Parking lots for guest will be pervious materials
- Installed rain gardens
- Stabilization of South Elkhorn Creek stream banks

The architecture of new buildings (comfort stations, stores) as well as the glamping sites will be a nod to the architecture commonly found on Central Bluegrass region farms and distilleries.

All the RV sites will have public water and public sewers as well as electricity and the park itself will have Internet access to facilitate home schooling and small group use of the educational center.

A natural amphitheater will host periodic events for guests of the resort to walk to for evening entertainment or outdoor educational space. The location of the amphitheater is south of the main resort building.

There is a public parking space at the front of the property where public visitors can come onto the property. This parking area will be screened from Georgetown Rd. with natural landscaping.

The design of the property emphasizes easy access throughout the resort by walking, biking or using a golf cart.

There will be 24 hour management on site with 24 hour security.

This is NOT a long-term RV parking area. Rather, it is based on the RV industry's vacation leisure park model not an RV living model.

The members of the AARC then discussed their scores on the Decision Tree which ranged from a low of 565 to a high of 570 which indicates the application requires further review by the Board of Adjustment.

Recommendation

Motion was made by Floyd Raglin with a second by Lori Garkovich to recommend to the Board of Adjustment for further review, based on Site Visit and presentation, Application

02-002-2021 – Kentucky Bluegrass Experience Resort – Elkwood Farm – 485 Georgetown Rd – Midway – A-1/CO-1 Districts – Article VII, Section 701.4 (M) Tourist Destination (Expanded) and ~~Section 701.4 (I) Agricultural Enterprise~~ – Owners are seeking a review and recommendation to the Board of Adjustment for a tourist destination (expanded) to incorporate an RV/Resort and associated uses with the following conditions:

- Site Plan and business plan attached to application will be followed.
- A perimeter fence with a landscaped buffer to minimize potential trespass onto adjacent properties.
- Provide trail maps and property boundary maps to all campers.
- Have wayfinding signage along all trails.
- Wayfinding signage as close as possible to the I-64 and Georgetown Rd intersection to provide visitors adequate time to prepare for the left-hand turn.

Motion was approved by all.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the AARC meeting was made by Lori Garkovich with a second by Floyd Raglin with all in agreement.