

**COUNTY OF ALBEMARLE
STAFF REPORT SUMMARY**

Project Name: SP201100027 Panorama Events	Staff: Scott Clark, Senior Planner
Planning Commission Public Hearing: May 8, 2012	Board of Supervisors Public Hearing: TBA
Owner/s: Panorama Farms, Inc.	Applicant: Margaret Murray
Acreage: 706.51 acres	Special Use Permit: 10.2.2.50, which allows for Special events (reference 5.1.43)
TMP: 04500-00-00-00100 Location: Reas Ford Lane (Route 661), approximately 0.5 miles south of its intersection with Reas Ford Road (Route 660)	Existing Zoning and By-right use: RA, Rural Areas- agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots)
Magisterial District: Rio	Conditions or Proffers: Yes
RA (Rural Areas)	Requested # of Dwelling Units: n/a
Proposal: Special events in existing barn	Comprehensive Plan Designation: Rural Areas
Character of Property: The property is a large working farm.	Use of Surrounding Properties: The majority of the surrounding properties are residential lots. The south end of the parcel is adjacent to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir.
Factors Favorable: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The events would be located 1,500 feet or more from any nearby dwelling, and would not involve outdoor amplified sound. 2. Income from this use would help to support agricultural land uses and land preservation in the Rural Areas, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan. 	Factors Unfavorable: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to the site is via a narrow, unpaved rural road. However, the one-way nature of arriving and departing traffic for this kind of use would help to prevent opposing-traffic conflicts.
RECOMMENDATION: Included is a modifications for Sections 5.1.43(e)(1). Based on findings presented in the staff report, staff recommends approval of SP201100027 (with conditions) and the modification request (with a condition).	

Proposal

PROPOSED: Special events in existing barn

ZONING CATEGORY/GENERAL USAGE: RA, Rural Areas- agricultural, forestal, and fishery uses; residential density (0.5 unit/acre in development lots)

SECTION: 10.2.2.50, which allows for Special events (reference 5.1.43)

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN LAND USE/DENSITY: Rural Areas in Rural Area 1 - Preserve and protect agricultural, forestal, open space, and natural, historic and scenic resources/ density (.5 unit/acre in development lots)

ENTRANCE CORRIDOR: No

LOCATION: Reas Ford Lane (Route 661), approximately 0.5 miles south of its intersection with Reas Ford Road (Route 660)

TAX MAP/PARCEL: 04500-00-00-00100

MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT: Rio

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

The Comprehensive Plan designates the property as Rural Area in Rural Area 1.

CHARACTER OF THE AREA:

This property is zoned Rural Areas, as are the surrounding properties. The property is a 706-acre farm surrounded by portion of the Rural Areas that has largely been converted to suburban and exurban residential development. The property is adjacent to the South Fork Rivanna Reservoir, the largest source of public water for the County and for the City of Charlottesville.

PROPOSAL:

The applicant is requesting to hold up to 24 events per calendar year, with up to 200 attendees per event. The events will be held in an existing barn, with some wedding ceremonies to be held outdoors. However, there will be no outdoor amplified sound. See Attachment C for the proposed conceptual plan.

PLANNING AND ZONING HISTORY:

- SP 81-30 was a request for an additional development right, to permit a dwelling on a 14-acre parcel that had no existing right. The special use permit request was approved on July 15, 1981. The resulting lot is located at the end of Reas Ford Lane, beyond the entrance to this proposed use.
- SP 97-11 was a request for an athletic facility that would have provided mountain-bike trails for club use. The special use permit request was withdrawn.
- SP 97-27 was a request to permit the operation of an environmental-education day camp on the farm, with two 2-week summer sessions of no more than 30 campers each. The special use permit request was approved on August 20, 1997. As a result of a condition of approval of this permit, a "Road Narrows" sign was placed on Reas Ford Lane.
- SP 00-54 was a request for a special use permit to allow a cross-country running course, including competitions with other teams, in accordance with Section 10.2.2.4 of the Zoning Ordinance which allows for swim, golf, tennis or similar athletic facilities. The request was approved on April 18, 2001. Access for this use is via Panorama Road, on the opposite side of the farm from the site of the current proposal, and not via Reas Ford

Lane.

- SP 00-73 was a request for a special use permit to allow a commercial mountain bike trail, including competitions, in accordance with Section 10.2.2.4 of the Zoning Ordinance which allows for swim, golf, tennis or similar athletic facilities. The request was approved on April 18, 2001. Access for this use is via Panorama Road, on the opposite side of the farm from the site of the current proposal, and not via Reas Ford Lane.
- SDP 11-16 Panorama Farms/ Verizon Wireless- Final Site Plan: On September 23, 2011, the County approved a site plan for a personal wireless service facility. This facility is located on the opposite (east) side of the farm from the current proposal.

ANALYSIS OF THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST:

Section 31.6.1 of the Zoning Ordinance below requires that special use permits be reviewed as follows:

Will the use be of substantial detriment to adjacent property?

The barn is located at least 1,500 feet from any dwelling on an adjacent parcel. Also, the applicant has specified that no outdoor amplified sound will be permitted on the site. Therefore the impacts of the events use on adjacent dwellings would not be significant.

Traffic impacts would have the most significant impact on nearby properties. Access to the site is over Reas Ford Lane, a narrow, unpaved, dead-end rural road (approximately 120 trips per day). Approximately 16 residential lots use Reas Ford Lane to get to Reas Ford Road, the main state road for the area. Twelve of those lots are located closer to Reas Ford Road than the proposed use's entrance (which is closer to the dead end). Four dwellings are located at the end of Reas Ford Lane beyond the proposed entrance.

A typical 200-person event would involve approximately 80 vehicles, which would arrive before the event and typically leave late in the event or after the event ends. With this use, this traffic impact would occur on Reas Ford Lane no more than 24 times per year. The length of Reas Ford Lane between Reas Ford Road and the proposed entrance is approximately one half mile, which (according to staff's discussions with the Police Department) is enough room to prevent significant backups on Reas Ford Lane, especially since attendees will not stop at the Panorama Farm gate, but will proceed directly into the farm to the parking area. Therefore staff believes that while there will be some noticeable traffic impacts from this use, those impacts would not be considered a substantial detriment.

Will the character of the zoning district change with this use?

This proposed activity would use an existing structure on a large farm in the Rural Areas. The character of the use would not change the character of the Rural Areas district, and the use could be removed without any harm to productive agricultural land.

Will the use be in harmony with the purpose and intent of the zoning ordinance?

Two of the purposes of the RA district are the “[p]reservation of agricultural and forestal lands and activities” and “[c]onservation of natural, scenic, and historic resources.” This use would provide income to a working farm that would help it remain as a farm, which directly protects agricultural and forestal lands and activities, and would protect the farm from more intense impacts on its scenic character and natural resources.

Will the use be in harmony with the uses permitted by right in the district?

Special events are in harmony with agricultural, open-space, and historic-preservation land uses in the Rural Areas, in that they provide alternative sources of income that help to make those uses more viable than residential development, which is contrary to the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Will the use be in harmony with additional regulations provided in section 5?

The propose use would meet the requirements of section 5.1.43, “Special Events,” (see Attachment D for the complete section) except for section 5.1.43(e)(1), which requires that the maximum number of attendees be 150. The applicant has requested to hold events for up to 200 people, and so will need a waiver of this section from the Board of Supervisors. Note that the number of events per year (24) would still be limited by the ordinance.

The parking and barn are located sufficiently far into the site, and available space is large enough, that the increase from 150 to 200 attendees will not significantly increase impacts on the site or the immediate surroundings. The number of guest vehicles would increase from approximately 60 to approximately 80, meaning that the additional traffic impact would be limited. Also, farm-winery events are by right up to 200 attendees and are commonly held without significant problems. This proposal is substantially the same as the type of events held at farm wineries (weddings, meetings, reunions, etc.). Therefore staff recommends approval of this waiver request.

Will the public health, safety and general welfare of the community be protected if the use is approved?

Staff has discussed the site and the proposed use with the Police Department, and an officer experienced in traffic safety inspected Reas Ford Lane and the entrance to the site. The Police Department acknowledged that Reas Ford Lane is narrow, but felt that access to the site was sufficient to prevent backups and to allow emergency vehicle access.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) stated that the narrowness of Reas Ford Lane just before the events entrance is of concern because drivers of opposing vehicle could find it difficult to pass each other. However, since the traffic generated by this use will be essentially one-way (nearly all going in at the beginning and out at the end), these impacts will be limited to those times when arriving or departing attendees

meet residents (mostly those from the four dwellings at the end of Reas Ford Lane) going in the opposite direction. Events of this type, unlike fairs and festivals, would not generate day-long two-way traffic.

VDOT also stated that sight distance at the entrance was obscured by vegetation. Therefore staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring that VDOT approve sight distance at the entrance before the use commences. Requiring a general approval rather than a specific method of gaining that approval allows the applicant to use whatever methods are available to secure sight distance, including using a second farm entrance for arriving or departing traffic.

SUMMARY:

Staff has identified factors which are favorable and unfavorable to this proposal:

Factors favorable to this request include:

1. The events would be located 1,500 feet or more from any nearby dwelling, and would not involve outdoor amplified sound.
2. Income from this use would help to support agricultural land uses and land preservation in the Rural Areas, as recommended in the Comprehensive Plan.

Factors unfavorable to this request include:

1. Access to the site is via a narrow, unpaved rural road. However, the one-way nature of arriving and departing traffic for this kind of use would help to prevent opposing-traffic conflicts.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of SP2011-00027 based upon the analysis provided herein, with the following conditions:

1. Development of the use shall be in general accord with the conceptual plan entitled "Concept Plan" and labeled "Attachment A: Aerial View," prepared by the applicant, and dated 10/17/2011 by staff.

To be in general accord with the plan, development shall reflect the following central features essential to the design of the development:

- the structure used for the events
- the location of the parking areas

Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

2. The maximum number of events per calendar year shall not exceed 24.
3. The maximum number of event guests shall not exceed 200 persons.
4. Hours of operation for the events shall be no earlier than 11:30 a.m. and no later than

10:30 p.m.

5. No new permanent outdoor lighting shall be installed for this use.
6. There shall be no outdoor amplified sound permitted for this use.
7. The use shall not commence without approval from the Virginia Department of Transportation of sight distance from the entrance to the property.

PLANNING COMMISSION MOTION—Special Use Permit:

A. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend approval** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend approval of SP 2011-00027 Panorama Events Ivy Forum with the following conditions:

1. Development of the use shall be in conformity with the conceptual plan entitled “Concept Plan” and labeled “Attachment A: Aerial View.”, prepared by the applicant,

To be in general accord with the plan, development shall reflect the following central features essential to the design of the development:

- the structure used for the events
- location of the entrance and parking areas

Minor modifications to the plan which do not conflict with the elements above may be made to ensure compliance with the Zoning Ordinance.

2. The maximum number of events per calendar year shall not exceed 24.
3. The maximum number of event guests shall not exceed 200 persons.
4. Hours of operation for the events shall be no earlier than 11:30 a.m. and no later than 10:30 p.m.
5. No new permanent outdoor lighting shall be installed for this use.
6. There shall be no outdoor amplified sound permitted for this use.
7. The use shall not commence without approval from the Virginia Department of Transportation of sight distance from the entrance to the property.

B. Should a Planning Commissioner **choose to recommend denial** of this special use permit:

Move to recommend denial of SP 2011-27 Panorama Events. *Should a commissioner motion to recommend denial, he or she should state the reason(s) for recommending denial.*

Zoning Ordinance Modifications:

The proposed modification, as discussed above, is to permit 200 attendees rather than the maximum of 150 as required under 5.1.43(e)(1). Again, this is the same as the by-right maximum for farm-winery events, which are substantially similar to this proposed use. Therefore staff recommends approval of this modification.

If the Planning Commission recommends approval of this application, Staff recommends the following condition:

1. The maximum number of event guests shall not exceed 200 persons.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – [Vicinity Map](#)

Attachment B – [Site Map](#)

Attachment C – [Conceptual Plan](#)

Attachment D – [Supplement Regulations for Special Events \(Section 5.1.43\)](#)