



Memo

To: Acme Township Planning Commission
From: Patrick Kilkenny, Planner and Deputy Zoning Administrator
Date: 08/12/2011
Re: Requested Zoning Ordinance Amendment OXX – Addition of “Barn functions” to “Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit” in the A-1 Agricultural zoning district to the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance

Applicant: Robert and Kathleen Garvey
6377 Deepwater Point
Williamsburg, MI 49690

Status of Applicant: Acme Township residents & property owners

Request/Project Description: Amendment to the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance of 2008 by proposing the addition of “barn functions” to the A-1 Agricultural zoning district to Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit and the addition of a definition for “barn functions.”

Attachments: 1. Packet provided by applicant (photos, correspondence, etc.).
2. Zoning Violation letter from Acme Township sent to Bob Garvey April 29, 2011

Project Description: The applicant is requesting an amendment to the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance to include “barn functions” as a Use Permitted by Special Use Permit in the A-1, Agricultural zoning district. The applicant currently owns a 40 acre parcel of property on the northern most end of Lautner Road in Acme Township. The property contains a residence, barn, horse pasture, manmade trout pond, a section of Yuba Creek, regulated wetland areas, chickens, and various other agricultural features.

The applicant’s barn has recently been used for events such as fundraisers parties, private parties, and most recently, a wedding. The aforementioned uses are currently in violation of the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance, as defined in the A-1, Agricultural zoning district.

The applicant’s barn was moved from a property originally located at the corner of M-72 and Lautner Road. The barn was constructed in the late 19th century and was scheduled to be demolished due to its location on the property currently owned by the Village at Grand Traverse. The barn was subsequently purchased by the applicant and was ultimately reconstructed on the applicant’s property at 4790 Lautner Road. The barn’s reconstruction included many structural, cosmetic and safety updates including, a new foundation, basement, siding, floor, roof, landscaping, décor, etc.

The barn's reconstruction has been well publicized throughout the community and requests to hold a multitude of events such as weddings, parties, and fundraisers have been sent to the property owner/applicant. Please see attached correspondence from the applicant.

Kurt Schindler, from the Michigan State University Extension, provided guidance via email to the applicant regarding "barn weddings" and informed the applicant that local regulation (zoning ordinance) would apply to "barn weddings" if allowable. As mentioned previously, the zoning ordinance does not currently allow "barn events" or any similar use in the A-1, Agricultural zoning district by right or with a special use permit.

- Zoning Administrator's note: Section 9.26, Wineries, 9.26.6 Additional Conditional Uses (b) allows for Special Events with a special use permit. Special events and the associated standards for review are defined in the section and could potentially be interpreted as a similar use to the applicant's amendment request.

Relevant Sections of Zoning Ordinance:

See attached Zoning Violation letter from Acme Township sent to Bob Garvey April 29, 2011

6.11 A-1: AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

9.25 WINERIES

Staff Discussion:

This is a zoning ordinance amendment request, and as such there is no site plan for you to review and consider. A zoning designation decision should be made based on whether or not it is appropriate to the community and its master land use planning for a piece of property to potentially be available to any and all uses allowed with the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. Such decisions should not be based on presentation of a particular future use concept that may or may not come to pass. It should be made based on the township's established master plan, future land use plan, potential impacts on or availability of infrastructure, potential impacts to the natural environment, and the land use needs of the community.

To assist the Planning Commission and Board in determining whether the requested zoning ordinance amendment is warranted, once a public hearing is set, staff will provide information to assist your review and deliberation. The resulting report will be provided to both Commission and applicant as far in advance of the meeting as possible for consideration.

- *Staff Note: Due to the nature of the amendment request, public notice could include; not only property owners within 300', but also direct invitations to members of the local agricultural community/zoning district and associated agriculturally focused boards and committees as the Planning Commission sees fit.*

Potential Courses of Action:

The current amendment request lacks clear definition of "barn functions" as well as supplementary information relating to "barn functions". The Planning Commission could:

Move to continue the preliminary hearing to the first regular Planning Commission meeting date following staff development of documentation satisfactory to township legal counsel including a definition for “barn functions” and all supplementary information relating to the potential inclusion of “barn functions” in the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance (compatible uses (fundraisers, parties, etc.), parking, lighting, noise, signage, fire code, building inspection, health department inspection, plumbing, number of events per year, landscaping, handicap accessibility, etc.).

Or

Motion to deny the applicant’s request for the zoning ordinance amendment, providing findings of fact from tonight’s meeting, stating the reasons for denial of amendment.

Or

Table the discussion for a later meeting.



6042 Acme Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690 Tel. 231-938-1350 Fax 231-938-1510 www.acmetownship.org

April 29, 2011

Mr. Robert Garvey
17 Cameron Place
Grosse Pointe MI 48230

*****DELIVERED VIA E-MAIL AT BOBGARVEY@AMERITECH.NET*****

Dear Mr. Garvey:

You have called the Acme Township Offices and/or sought out my determination as Acting Zoning Administrator about possible use of a barn on your property on Brackett Road for events such as weddings for individuals outside of your family, political fundraisers, and other events for non-profit entities. We have debated the question for several weeks. I must regretfully inform you, after prolonged and careful consideration of the matter, of my official determination as the Acting Zoning Administrator that at this time it is illegal under the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance of 2008 as amended for you to host special events in the barn on your property on Brackett Road. If it comes to my attention that any such events are held in your barn or on that property, I will be compelled to issue you one Civil Infractions ticket per each such event.

My determination is based on the following facts:

- The term "Special Events" is defined in Zoning Ordinance Section 9.25.3.j as follows: "Activities not directly related to agricultural or wine production and storage of a type frequently associated with wineries, included but not limited to: wine appreciation/education seminars, non-profit benefit functions, weddings, wine and catered food events, seasonal natural events (i.e. mushroom hunts), vineyard harvest festivals, and agricultural research."
- Special events may be permissible by special use permit in conjunction with a Winery in the A-1 Agricultural district, which is the zoning designation for your property. (Zoning Ordinance, Section 6.11), but not as a stand-alone land use.
- You have neither applied for nor been granted a Special Use Permit for a Winery with special events.

It is your right to appeal this determination through the Acme Township Zoning Board of Appeals. An application form for this body is attached for your convenience.

If you wish to seek an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to allow special events land uses as a stand-alone land use in the agricultural district, please address a letter to Jay Zollinger, Planning Commission Chairman, asking for the Commission's consideration in this matter.

I also considered the possibility that perhaps you could make immediate application for a special use permit according to Sections 6.11.3.1 of the Ordinance. This section states that "special open space uses" are permissible in the A-1 district if they receive a Special Use Permit. This possibility is further governed by Section 9.16 of the Zoning Ordinance, which contains special provisions specific to special open space uses. Section 9.16.1.b, however, says that "The proposed site shall have at least one property line abutting a major thoroughfare." In the past, "major thoroughfares" in Acme Township have been understood and interpreted to mean US 31 North and M-72 East, and your property does not directly abut either of these roads, so I believe that an application by you pursuant to this section might not be approvable.

I believe that your only other lawful option at this time for obtaining a special use permit for special events on your property would be for you to apply for and receive a special use permit for a Winery on your property, and to successfully establish a winery pursuant to such special use permit.

Please let me know if I may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Sharon E. Vreeland, Township Manager
svreeland@acmetownship.org

6.11. A-1: AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT:

6.11.1 INTENT AND PURPOSE: This District is intended to preserve, enhance, and stabilize areas within the Township which are presently used predominantly for farming purposes or areas which, because of their soil, drainage, or natural flora characteristics, should be preserved for low intensity land uses. It is the further purpose of this District to promote the protection of the existing natural environment, and to preserve the essential characteristics and economical value of these areas as agricultural lands. Agricultural District areas may be subject to noise, chemical spray and other hazards which might normally disrupt a residential environment. It is explicitly the purpose of this zone, therefore, to preserve a suitable working environment for farming operations without conflict with residential and other uses.

6.11.2 USES PERMITTED BY RIGHT:

- a. Single-family detached dwellings
- b. Open Space Preservation Developments containing only Single-Family Detached Dwellings: Subject to the provisions of Article XI.
- c. State licensed residential facilities
- d. Family child care homes
- e. Field crop and fruit farming, truck gardening, horticulture, aviaries, hatcheries, apiaries, greenhouses, tree nurseries, and similar agricultural enterprises.
- f. Raising and keeping of small animals, such as poultry, rabbits and goats.
- g. Raising and keeping of livestock, such as cattle, hogs, horses, ponies, sheep, and similar livestock upon a lot having an area not less than ten acres.
- h. Cemeteries: public or private.
- i. Tenant house as part of farm property for full-time farm employees associated with the principal use and subject to the same height and setback requirements as the principal dwelling.
- j. Public areas and public parks such as recreation areas, forest preserves, game refuges, and similar public uses of low-intensity character.
- k. Public and private conservation areas and structures for the conservation of water, soils, open space, forest and wildlife resources.
- l. Accessory uses: Customary accessory uses and buildings incidental to the permitted principal use of the premises.
- m. Farmer's Roadside Stands selling products grown by the owner of the property on which the stand is located, PROVIDED that contiguous space for the parking of customers' vehicles is furnished off the public right-of-way at

a ratio of one parking space for each fifteen square feet of roadside stand floor area.

- n. Home Occupations in accord with the requirements of Section 7.7.
- o. Riding Horses: keeping of horses for the use of residents of the property PROVIDED the parcel of land shall contain not less than five acres
- p. Manufactured homes, subject to the following requirements:
 1. Each home shall bear a label required by Section 3282.362(c)(2) of the Federal Mobile Home Procedural and Enforcement Regulations.
 2. Each home shall be installed pursuant to the manufacturer's setup instructions and shall be secured to the premises by an anchoring system or device complying with any applicable requirements of the Michigan Mobile Home Commission.
 3. Within ten days following installation, all towing mechanisms shall be removed from each home. No home shall have any exposed undercarriage or chassis.
 4. Each home shall have a permanent perimeter wall of conventional building materials which shall prevent the entrance of rodents, control heat loss and contribute to aesthetic compatibility with surrounding structures.
 5. Each home shall have a full concrete slab within the perimeter wall. This space may be used as a crawl space for storage purposes.
 6. All construction and all plumbing, electrical apparatus and insulation within and connected to each home shall be of a type and quality conforming to the "Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards" as promulgated by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, being 24 CFR Section 3280, as from time to time amended. Additionally, all dwellings shall meet or exceed all applicable roof snow load and strength requirements.
 7. Exterior Finish; Light Reflection: Any materials that are generally acceptable for housing built on the site may be used for exterior finish if applied in such a manner as to be similar in appearance, PROVIDED, however, that reflection from such exterior shall not be greater than from siding coated with clean, white, gloss, exterior enamel.
 8. Each home shall be aesthetically compatible in design and appearance with other residences in the adjacent area, particularly with regard to foundation treatment, siding and roofing material and perimeter wall. Compatible materials such as siding, screen wall, etc. may be added to assure aesthetic compatibility with other structures.
 9. The compatibility of design and appearance shall be determined by the Acme Township Zoning Administrator. The Acme Township

Zoning Administrator shall base his or her decision on the character, design and appearance of residential dwellings in adjacent areas of the Township.

10. To the extent that any of these provisions conflicts with any provision of the Mobile Home Commission Act or its administrative rules as applied to a mobile home in a residential neighborhood, the Mobile Home Commission Act provision will control.

6.11.3 USES PERMITTED BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT: The following uses of land and structures may be permitted in by the application for and issuance of a special use permit, subject to Section 9.1.

- a. Campgrounds: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.4
- b. Institutional Uses: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.5
- c. Greenhouses and nurseries selling at retail on the premises
- d. Riding Stables and livestock auction yards
- e. Raising of fur bearing animals for profit
- f. Game or hunting preserves operated for profit
- g. Veterinary hospitals, clinics and kennels
- h. Sawmills
- i. Public buildings
- j. Airports and Airfields
- k. Planned Agricultural Units: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.8.
- l. Special Open Space Uses: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.16.
- m. Sand or Gravel Pits, Quarries: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.17.
- n. Farmer's Roadside Market: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.18.
- o. Food Processing Plants Including Cooling Stations in A-1 Districts: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.19.
- p. Sewage Treatment and Disposal Installations: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.15.
- q. Historic Parks: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.23.
- r. Bed and Breakfast Establishments: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.24.

- s. Wineries: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.26
- t. Conversion of a Single-Family Dwelling to a Duplex: Conversion of existing single-family dwellings where such existing single-family dwelling is of sufficient size to meet minimum floor area requirements of a duplex, and such an expanded capacity is a clear necessity for satisfaction of this particular housing demand, and adequate off-street parking space can be provided.
- u. Single Family Dwelling on Less than Five Acres: A lot with a minimum size of one acre containing a single family dwelling may be created subject to the following requirements:
 1. The single family dwelling existed prior to the enactment of this Ordinance;
 2. The single family dwelling was part of an agricultural use and subsequently, through consolidation of farms or other actions, became no longer necessary as a farm-related residence;
 3. The lands that would otherwise be required to be part of the lot for the single family dwelling would be lost from production should the smaller minimum lot size not be allowed; and
 4. Continue to be actively farmed along with the balance of the farm.
- v. Conservation Development: Subject also to the requirements of Section 9.3.
- w. Structural Appurtenances: As accessory uses, the following kinds of structural appurtenances may be permitted to exceed the height limitations for the principal use: appurtenances to mechanical or structural functions, such as chimney and smoke stacks, water tanks, elevator and stairwell penthouses, ventilators, bulkheads, radio towers, aerials, fire and hose towers and cooling towers. No structural appurtenances permitted hereby shall be used for dwelling purposes.

6.11.4 RIGHT TO FARM: As to any specific property on which commercial farm products are produced within the meaning of MCL 286.472(a), if any applicable Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practice (GAAMP) approved by the Michigan Department of Agriculture conflicts with any provision below, the GAAMP shall control.

9.25. WINERIES

9.25.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT:

It is the intent of this section to promote local agriculture production by allowing construction of a winery with tasting room and retail sale of winery products in the agricultural district subject to this Ordinance. It is also the intent of this Section to encourage the growing of wine fruit and production of wine as an integral component of the rural and agricultural ambiance of Acme Township, and to maintain the viability of fruit farming through value added processing and direct sales of wine and wine related beverages made from locally grown fruit. This section is intended to allow for additional value-added agricultural business in an attempt to further the Township's goals of preserving the rural character by protecting open spaces, reducing the residential density in the agricultural district and maintaining large contiguous parcels in active agricultural use.

9.25.2 OBJECTIVES:

The following objectives shall be considered in reviewing any application for a Winery as defined in this ordinance:

- a. To implement the goals stated in the Acme Township Master Plan
- b. To encourage the continued active agricultural use of large parcels within the rural areas of the township
- c. To reduce the residential density on wineries surrounding existing active farms
- d. To increase the viability of farming by allowing additional value-added opportunities for farmers
- e. To reduce the potential negative impact such a development might have on neighboring residents and farms

9.25.3 DEFINITIONS:

- a. Winery parcel: A parcel of land within Acme Township not less than 20 acres in size on which a winery is located.
- b. Wine: The product made by the normal alcoholic fermentation of the juice of grapes or any other fruit or agricultural product with the usual cellar treatment, and containing not more than 21% of alcohol by volume, including fermented fruit juices other than grapes, honey, rhubarb etc., and mixed wine drinks in accordance with 27CFR part 4 as amended.
- c. Wine Related Beverages: Fortified wines, wine brandy, and mixed wine drinks.
- d. Mixed Wine Drink: A drink or similar product containing less than 7% alcohol by volume, consisting of wine and plain, sparkling, carbonated water, and containing any one or more of the following:
 1. Non-alcoholic beverages
 2. Flavoring

3. Coloring materials
 4. Fruit juices
 5. Fruit adjuncts
 6. Sugar
 7. Carbon dioxide
 8. Preservatives
- e. Wine-“Brandy”: An alcoholic liquor as defined in 27CFR 5.22(D) as amended.
 - f. Wine-“Fortified”: Wine with brandy or wine spirits added as permitted by law.
 - g. Wine Fruit: Any product used to make wine, including but not limited to, grapes, honey and rhubarb.
 - h. Winery: A state licensed facility where agricultural fruit production is maintained, juice and agricultural products are processed into wine, stored in bulk, packaged, and sold at retail or wholesale to the public with or without the use of a wine tasting facility. The site and buildings are used principally for the production of wine and wine related beverages.
 - i. Tasting Room: A room in conjunction with a winery where a) tasting of wine, fruit wines, agricultural wines, and nonalcoholic fruit juices takes place at a charge or no charge to the individual; and b) the retail sales of winery products, incidental retail sales of non-food items, products by the bottle for off-premise consumption, and packaged food items are allowed as provided herein.
 - j. Special Events: Activities not directly related to agricultural or wine production and storage of a type frequently associated with wineries, including but not limited to: wine appreciation/education seminars, non-profit benefit functions, weddings, wine and catered food events, seasonal natural events (i.e. mushroom hunts), vineyard harvest festivals and agricultural research.

9.25.4 LICENSING:

All Wineries shall be licensed by the U.S. Treasury Department, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, and shall be in compliance with the regulations of the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality or their successors.

9.25.5 PARCEL REQUIREMENTS:

- a. Operation of a winery requires ownership and/or recorded lease of land within Acme Township of 40 acres, whether contiguous or non-contiguous, or contiguous land comprising a quarter-quarter section containing not less

than 30 acres or a government lot containing not less than 30 acres. These minimum requirements shall be exclusive of access easements. If any portion of the winery or winery parcel is leased, the lease must:

1. Be for a term of at least five years
 2. Provide that in the event of any default that Acme Township must also receive notice of the default, and
 3. Be approved by Acme Township's attorney.
 4. In addition, if any such lease is terminated or lapses for any reason, the operation of the winery must immediately cease unless Acme Township approves a subsequent application for a winery.
- b.** The winery may include property used for growing wine fruit or other agricultural products.
 - c.** The winery parcel may contain one single family dwelling for the exclusive private residential use of the vintner and family. Such use shall not require special use permit approval. If freestanding, the private single family dwelling may utilize a private driveway in addition to and distinct from the winery entrances provided for in Section 9.26.5j below.
 - d.** The winery parcel shall maintain a minimum 10% of its acreage in planted crops, with a minimum of two acres producing wine fruit associated with the wine processing facility, maintained pursuant to generally accepted management practices.
 - e.** The total land area covered by buildings and structures used for wine processing, storage and sales shall not exceed two percent of the contiguous winery parcel area, provided no individual building shall be larger than 20,000 square feet.
 - f.** All winery buildings used for processing, tasting or other public use shall be set back at least 100 feet from any lot line. Accessory farm buildings may be located in compliance with the standards set forth in Section 6.12.1. Existing buildings that do not meet these standards may only be used if approved by the Township Board after consideration by the Planning Commission. Preservation and use of pre-existing buildings possessing historic significance shall be encouraged. Standard parking lot setback requirements must still be met.
 - g.** Tasting rooms may be located on a parcel of land other than the winery parcel. Tasting rooms are permitted in Business Zoning Districts, subject to separate special use permit/ approval under Section 9.1 and the requirements of the specific Zoning District in which the tasting room is proposed to be located.
 - h.** The winery parcel shall not qualify as land preserved in an undeveloped state for purposes of Section 9.3, Conservation Development, however, the development rights may be sold in accordance with Acme Township or Michigan regulations.

- i. Wineries shall be permitted EITHER one freestanding sign not to exceed sixteen square feet in size OR two freestanding signs not to exceed nine square feet each in size. Such signage shall not be lit. The number of signs shall be limited to one per winery entrance.
- j. Winery parcels shall be permitted no more than two winery entrances from a public right-of-way. Entrances shall be spaced at least 500 feet apart. Necessary permits shall be acquired from the County Road Commission or MDOT for all driveways.

9.25.6 ADDITIONAL CONDITIONAL USES:

The following uses may be permitted in addition to a wine processing facility or customary agricultural practices provided the conditions of Section 9.26.4 and those additional conditions below are met and the Township Board approves such uses by special use permit:

- a. Retail sales and food service are clearly accessory to production of wine. Indoor retail sales and food service areas shall occupy no more than 25% of the floor area devoted to wine processing and storage, or no more than 4,000 square feet, whichever is less.
 - 1. All food provided for sale must be prepared off site, with the exception of hors d'oeuvres, snacks, and products grown by the winery farming operation. A winery may not operate a food service restaurant, with on-site food preparation; however, a winery may sell wine by the glass as provided by the Michigan Liquor Control Commission regulations.
 - 2. The winery may only sell at retail the wines and wine related beverages it produces, snacks, hors d'oeuvres, boxed picnic meals, cheese, jellies and jams, items related to the winery operation such as t-shirts, mugs, bags and other souvenir items bearing the winery logo, provided these sales remain accessory to the winery operation.
- b. Special Events associated with the promotion of wine usage and education may be permitted on the winery parcel after receiving approval from the Township Board and shall be considered secondary to the winery function. The Township Board may impose reasonable conditions on the applicant including requiring that the applicant provide written evidence of insurance, in amounts that are deemed reasonable by the Township Board or the Township attorney, naming Acme Township as an additional insured. Special Events are subject to the following standards:
 - 1. Special Events above and beyond the retail activities as listed in Section 9.26.6a shall occupy no more than 25% of the floor area devoted to wine processing and storage, or no more than 4,000 square feet, whichever is less. Historically significant buildings larger than 25% of the wine processing and storage floor area or 4,000 square feet which were in existence on the winery parcel prior to commencement of the winery use may be permitted to house special events.

2. Only one special event may be held on the winery parcel on any given day.
3. Off-street parking areas shall meet the following additional standards:
 - a) All off-street parking areas shall be set back 40 feet from all lot lines.
 - b) All exterior lighting shall conform with the current requirements of Section 7.5.4b6, Off-Street Parking Site Development Requirements. Exterior lighting shall only be in use during the hours of operation permitted by item D below.
 - c) All light poles shall be no taller than 20 feet in height.
 - d) All exterior light and lighting fixtures shall be subject to review and approval by Acme Township.
 - e) Parking areas associated with any banquet hall or public gathering area may consist of gravel or another pervious surface, provided it meets the approval of the Township Board.
 - f) The operator must have a written statement from the County Health Department indicating the maximum number of persons that can be accommodated with existing toilet facilities. If allowed by the Township Board, additional portable toilets may be used for special occasions to accommodate guests exceeding the aforementioned number. Any temporary restroom facilities must be removed within two business days of the special event.
 - g) Wine production and agricultural activities may be performed at any hour required in accordance with the Michigan Right to Farm Act. Retail sales and tours must observe the following hours of operation:
 - i. Daylight Savings Time: 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.
 - ii. Standard Time: 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 - h) Special events may take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. Friday through Saturday.
 - i) With the exception of hors d'oeuvres, snacks, or products regularly produced on the premises, food provided for the activity must be prepared off site.

- j) Any music or entertainment provided for the activity must be for background purposes and not a featured item of the activity. Sound amplifiers may be permitted as determined by the Township Board. The Board, in its review of any special event, may require that the noise levels be monitored and limited if necessary.
- k) An “Activity Plan” for additional winery Special Events containing the following information shall be submitted and must be approved by the Township Board upon review by the Planning Commission as a part of the initial Special Use Permit:
 - i. Plan drawn to an appropriate scale for effective interpretation
 - ii. Property boundaries, onsite parking areas, and access roads
 - iii. Existing uses on adjacent properties and distance of dwellings within 500 feet of the property boundary
 - iv. Maximum number of special events to be conducted per calendar year
 - v. Existing and proposed structures with maximum capacity of each building where guests have access as established by the Fire Marshal
 - vi. Location of any temporary toilet facilities that may be required
 - vii. A written description of the planned Special Events providing type of gathering such as wine appreciation, education seminar, wine and catered food event, vineyard harvest festival, non-profit benefit, wedding, seasonal natural event and/or agricultural research and demonstration project.
 - viii. Maximum number of guests for any activity
 - ix. The Vintner will maintain a log of the Special Events occurring at the winery including dates, group identity, times, and number of guests.
 - x. The location and amount of time prior to an event for erection of temporary structures which are allowed and time for removal after the event
 - xi. The vintner shall submit an events calendar to the Planning Commission once per calendar year. The submitted calendar shall be reviewed at a public hearing only if the originally approved maximum

number of events per year has generated nuisance complaints from area residents and/or property owners.

- l) Standards for Review: The Planning Commission shall review the Activity Plan for conformance with the standards of the zoning district in which located and shall verify that the following standards have been satisfied:
- i. One accessory building may be erected for Special Events as mentioned in Section 9.26.6b. The maximum size of the building shall be as determined in Section 8.26.6b1. Additional square footage may be permitted according to item vii below.
 - ii. No outdoor Special Events shall be permitted, except as may be permitted according to item vii below.
 - iii. Any building to be used for special events shall be located at least 100 feet from any property line and at least 200 feet from any pre-existing neighboring residence.
 - iv. The number of people allowed to attend special events shall be limited to the number of people allowed to occupy the structure as regulated by the Fire Marshall, except as may be permitted according to item vii below.
 - v. Adequate parking shall be required per Section 7.5.3. Exceptions for special events, with respect to the surfacing and lighting, may be permitted by the Township Board.
 - vi. Additional conditions for vegetative screening, lighting, odor control, dust control, noise control, traffic, trespass, hours of operation or other impacts may be required by the Township Board upon recommendation by the Planning Commission to mitigate potential impacts on neighboring properties.
 - vii. Additional retail or special event building size may be allowed according to the following conditions:
 - a. For each additional and contiguous ten acres provided above the minimum parcel size, an additional 1,000 square feet of building may be allowed.
 - b. For each additional 100 feet the buildings and parking areas are set back from the property line above the minimum setback,

an additional 500 square feet of building may be allowed.

- c. If 50 percent or more of the winery property is permanently protected via a conservation easement, an additional 1,000 square feet of building may be allowed.
 - d. For each additional ten percent of the total property that is protected above the fifty in item c. above, an additional 250 square feet building may be allowed.
 - e. Allowance for outdoor events may be considered provided they will not negatively impact neighboring properties. Any and all outdoor events and special events shall be considered and may be approved as part of the Activity Plan.
- m) Any Special Events other than those included in the original approval must have additional review by the Planning Commission. The scope of the additional review will be determined by the Commission at a preliminary hearing with final approval to be granted by the Township Board in the form of a Special Use Permit (SUP) amendment
- c. Bed and Breakfast Establishments may be permitted in conjunction with a winery within the winery parcel. The standards set forth in Section 9.24 for Bed and Breakfast Establishments shall be met. Special Events structures and Bed and Breakfast structures shall be permitted to co-exist on the same winery parcel. Combined, all such structures shall share the maximum permissible area and other requirements set forth in Section 9.26.5e above.

9.16. SPECIAL OPEN SPACE USES:**9.16.1 REQUIREMENTS:**

Uses such as public beaches, bath houses, private resorts, recreational camps, and other open space uses operated for profit are authorized by special use permit in designated Zoning Districts subject to the following requirements:

- a.** The proposed site shall be at least two acres in area.
- b.** The proposed site shall have at least one property line abutting a major thoroughfare.
- c.** All structures shall be set back at least 200 feet from any property or street line.
- d.** Whenever any use permitted herein abuts property within the Residential or A-1 Zoning Districts, the landscaped buffer required by Section 7.5.6d of this Ordinance shall be 200 feet in width.
- e.** No more than 25% of the site shall be covered by buildings.

REQUEST TO AMEND ORDINANCE AND TO ALLOW SPECIAL USE PERMIT

The applicants are requesting limited use of a restored Centennial barn for barn functions and weddings. The applicants are requesting permission to use this barn on a limited basis, twelve times per year. In making this request, the applicants understand that additional restrictions, inspections, etc. would be a prerequisite to the granting of a special use permit.

This is not a request to rezone the property in question.

THE APPLICANTS

The Garveys have tried to be a positive influence in the Acme community. They have been major financial supporters of the Yuba Natural Area and to the Acme Shoreline Preservation Effort. In addition, Bob has been active on both the Farmland and Shoreline Committees.

THE AGRICULTURAL LAND IN QUESTION

The agricultural land in question is a forty-acre site that was previously owned by the Gore family. When they initially purchased the site it was vacant land and without any farm related structures. The land had not been farmed for many years. The Garveys were told by a neighbor that the last farming that occurred there was potato farming many years ago.

While the property is located within an area designated as a prime agricultural soils district, because of its topography the land is unsuitable for commercial cherry or grape production. In addition approximately twenty percent of the acreage is located east of the Yuba Creek and is comprised of wetlands.

Craig Cunningham from Cunningham Viticultural Services was hired to access the property for it's suitability for grape production. Temperature sensors revealed that even the higher ground was unsuitable for grape production. The lower ground, which comprises the vast majority of the acreage, is well beyond the temperature requirements for either grapes or cherries. A site visit will immediately confirm the fact that the neighboring cherry farm stops planting trees at an elevation higher than the Garvey property. This is primarily a temperature issue as the cold air sinks to the lower portions of the property.

Current agricultural uses include horses, chickens and lavender. Approximately fifteen hundred lavender plants were planted last spring and summer. These plants were planted in partnership with Alex and Paul Pinneau proprietors of the Evergreen Farm Market on US 31. A significant percentage of the lavender plants did not survive the winter, again presumably because of the problem with the low lying land attracting the colder air.

This spring we also planted approximately two acres of pumpkins again in partnership with the Penneau's.

Numerous structures have been constructed on the forty acre site. The first structure was a one

room log cabin which serves as a guest facility (Bob has nine brothers and sisters, Kathleen has eight brothers and sisters with a hoard of nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews). A cedar horse barn was next constructed along with a pasture for the horses. A trout pond was excavated at the east end of the property. A cedar storage facility was then constructed. Two years ago, a chicken coop was constructed. Most recently the barn in question was relocated to the property.

THE BARN

The barn in question was originally located at the corner of M72 & Lautner Road.. A photograph of the barn as it existed is attached and marked **Exhibit A**. This barn was constructed in the late 19th Century by the Lautner family. At the time that the barn was moved to the Garvey property it was owned by Mr. & Mrs. Andy Andres.

As you might know, this barn was slated for demolition as it is located on the property owned by the Village at Grand Traverse.

The original intent was to move the barn intact to the Garvey property which is less than one mile away from the barns original site. Unfortunately, the utility companies that would have to raise power lines were going to charge \$60,000.00 to move those lines to accommodate the transportation of the building down Lautner Road. The \$60,000.00 cost in addition to the cost of moving the barn made the move prohibitive.

Plan B involved the removal of the barn siding, roof sheathing and flooring with the intent of reusing as much of the old material as we could. Unfortunately as the siding , sheathing and flooring was removed it was determined that the vast majority of the materials were unsable. The barn had to be rebuilt with new siding, roof sheathing and flooring.

Exhibit B shows the structural members of the Andres Barn relocated on the Garvey property. The majority of these were hand hewen in the late 1800's with hewing axes.

Exhibit C contains two photographs of the barn as it looks after rehabilitation.

The Garvey barn was featured last year in The Michigan Barn Preservation Network Magazine. That organization exists to promote the rehabilitation and preservation of Michigan Barns which have been disappearing at an alarming rate.

WHY THE REQUEST TO USE THIS FACILITY FOR BARN WEDDINGS?

We invite planning commissioners to visit this property. No permission is required. You will see what we have created and why brides want to have weddings there.

Other than caring for the horses, all maintenance of the property is performed by Bob Garvey who is 62 years of age. The Garvey's have two daughters. While to this point they have been able to afford to create a unique farm experience on this forty acre piece of land the future is questionable in light of the taxes and maintenance costs if Mr. Garvey were not physically able to continue to

maintain the property. The income from the limited use requested would allow the family to continue to operate this land as it is currently operated as it would cover taxes and maintenance.

THE ORDINANCE

We understand that uses permitted by Right under 6.11.2 include cemeteries, public areas and public parks.

Uses permitted by Special Use Permit under 6.11.3 include campground, livestock auction yards, game or hunting preserves operated for profit, sawmills, airports, food processing plants, sewage treatment facilities, bed and breakfast establishments, and wineries.

We have learned that a Special Use Permit can be requested only for those uses listed. Additional uses must be incorporated into the ordinance before a special use permit can be requested. The nature of our request is not to rezone the property. The request is to amend the ordinance to include "barn functions". We will then ask for a Special Use Permit to allow the use, with conditions that the township deems necessary.

Obviously, the use requested is far less intrusive than any of those uses currently allowed under 6.11.3 such as hunting preserve, sawmill, sewage treatment plant or airport. Additionally, we feel that the requested use meets the goals of the 6.11.1 which defines "agricultural district intent and purpose." That section of the ordinance states the following:

This district is intended to preserve, enhance, and stabilize areas within the township which are presently used predominantly for farming purposes...it is further the purpose of this district to promote the protection of existing natural environment, and to preserve the essential characteristics and economical value of these areas as agricultural lands. Agricultural district areas may be subject to noise...which might normally disrupt a residential environment.

Section 9.8.2 states that "in promoting the general purposes of this ordinance, the specific objectives of this section are: the preservation of the maximum amount of the limited supply of unique agricultural land in the township..."

Unlike the Village at Grand Traverse, located less than a mile from the proposed site, we are not asking for agricultural land to be re-zoned. We strongly believe that the use we are requesting is reasonable and will allow this land to be kept in its current state for generations to come.

WEDDING BARNES

It is no secret that small farms are disappearing at an increasing rate. If they are not turned into sub-divisions they are being absorbed by industrial agriculture. Perhaps that is why many brides are forgoing more traditional venues and seeking out a rural experience for their most special day.

We have attached a letter from Kourtney Farro. This letter may shed some light on why brides

seek out wedding barns and why Kourtney chose our barn for her special day. **EXHIBIT D**
Her 1,500 acre family farm has three barns located on it but none of them is suitable for a wedding. The Garvey barn has new electrical service and is structurally sound and safe for the public to enjoy its ambiance.

It goes without saying that barns are located on farms. Farms are located in agricultural districts. If a community refuses to allow weddings or other "barn functions" in appropriate structures in their agricultural districts, they are effectively precluding the use.

A couple is not going to seek out a barn located in a shopping mall for their special day. That would defeat the whole purpose of the wedding barn experience.

To prove our point that the property and facility in question are unique, one has to look no further than the fact that both the Grand Traverse Resort and Dan Kelly support our project. Dan Kelly has catered two functions at the barn already and despite the fact that he has his own facility, he supports our effort presumably because he knows that brides who want a wedding barn are going to go elsewhere and he will potentially lose a catering job. He has a beautiful facility but it is not a barn.

The Grand Traverse Resort has beautiful facilities for weddings and other functions and yet they actively support our request. **(See Exhibit E) Again, they realize that brides that seek out wedding barns are looking for a non traditional venue in an agricultural setting.**

There are a number of barn facilities in Michigan that advertise on the web for weddings and other barn functions. These include the Post Family Farm in Hudsonville, Michigan; Farmview Resort in Free Soil, Michigan; the Sugar Bush Farm in Ypsilanti, Michigan; the Thumb Octagon Barn in Gage Town, Michigan; The Good Tymes Barn in Melvin, Michigan; The Blue Dress Barn in Benton Harbor, Michigan; The Ciccone Barn in Suttons Bay, Michigan; The Bailey Farm in Suttons Bay, Michigan ; Field of Flowers Barn in Lake Leelanau, Michigan and Crooked Creek Ranch in Leelanau County. Each of these facilities is located in agricultural areas.

If the proposed use is denied brides will go elsewhere for their weddings and local caterers, florists, rental companies etc. will be disadvantaged.

Attached and marked **Exhibit F** is page 6 from the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices commonly known as GAAMPs. As you can see, the list includes "on farm weddings". That was the 2010 GAAMP. In 2011 the GAAMP was again revised. They replaced the term "barn weddings" with "social events". We sent an email to Mr. Kurt Schindler who we understand is responsible for the language in the GAAMPs as to why they changed from "barn weddings" to "social events". In a May 11, 2011 email Mr. Schindler indicates "the intent was to use a more generic term that includes much more than just weddings."(see **Exhibit G**)

AGRITOURISM

In the spring of 2011 an article in the Michigan Barn Network Magazine defined agritourism as “the intersection of agriculture and tourism where the public pays for visits and products as well as experiences.” It goes on to say that “primarily this business is about creating memories and stirring emotions for a growing population of all ages who are generations away from the agricultural experience.” (see Exhibit H) **Koutney Farro’s letter is a perfect example of this sentiment.**

The Record Eagle recently ran an article entitled “Barns: Heart of Agritourism” The article begins by noting “preserving historic barns does more than maintain the beauty of the states rural landscape-it has economic benefits as well.” It goes on to note that “barn preservation adds to the economy because it often creates new businesses, agritourism destinations and jobs”. In the fourth paragraph the point is made that “since most historic barns require a lot of expensive upkeep, the network (barn preservation network) encourages entrepreneurial spirit so owners think of new uses for their buildings and ways their barn could generate revenue to cover maintenance cost.” (see Exhibit I) **This is exactly what the applicants are trying to accomplish by seeking permission for this limited use..**

More recently, Debra Wyatt Fellows, Editor of Traverse Magazine made the following point regarding the relationship of agriculture and tourism: “The largest engines of our economy, agriculture and tourism, have an obvious relationship to the land, water and landscape. But it goes beyond the obvious. Studies show that the very people most likely to keep our small businesses afloat and ultimately thriving - the people who will choose independent, entrepreneurial shopping experiences over big box shopping-are the same people attracted to scenic landscapes, open space, outdoor recreation, clean and plentiful natural resources and intact communities. Destroy those things and we have destroyed the natural, profitable market for our business community.”

We believe that our request is reasonable and totally consistent with the goals of our communities Master Plan and Farmland Preservation Ordinance. People who seek a restored barn for a barn function want a rural experience. It goes without saying that barn functions are held in barns. Barns are located on farms. Farms are located in agricultural districts. If you restrict barn functions to areas zoned “commercial” you have in a sense precluded the use.

We did not set out to build a “wedding barn.” We restored a barn that was slated for destruction and placed it in a setting that people found attractive. Last year the first function held in that barn was an Acme Farmland Preservation event attended by the majority of the farmers in our area. Since then Ryan Dobry has reserved the barn for a fundraiser for insulin dependent diabetics in the area who cannot afford their supplies. Leah Bagdon has contacted us regarding a fundraiser to support the Goodwill of Traverse City in their quest to build a veteran’s facility for homeless veterans in Northern Michigan. Other fundraising and private events have been held there bringing the community together in an agricultural setting .

We have not sought out prospects for weddings. People who have learned of the existence of the facility and have seen it have asked to use it. We believe that the proposed use will result in a preservation of the land and the setting in perpetuity. Local caterers will benefit as will the local people who work for these caterers and all of the other incidental products and services associated with weddings and barn functions.

The Acme Farmland Preservation Ordinance under “purpose of the program” states:

It is the primary purpose of the Acme Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program to implement a permanent option to protect farmland: to maintain a long term positive business environment for agriculture: to preserve the rural character and scenic attributes: enhance tourism and other important environmental benefits and to maintain the quality of life of Acme Township.

We believe that our request is not only consistent with but in fact embodies the goals of this ordinance. We respectfully request that the planning commission recommend an amendment to the ordinance to include “barn functions” so that we can apply for a special use permit for the limited use requested.

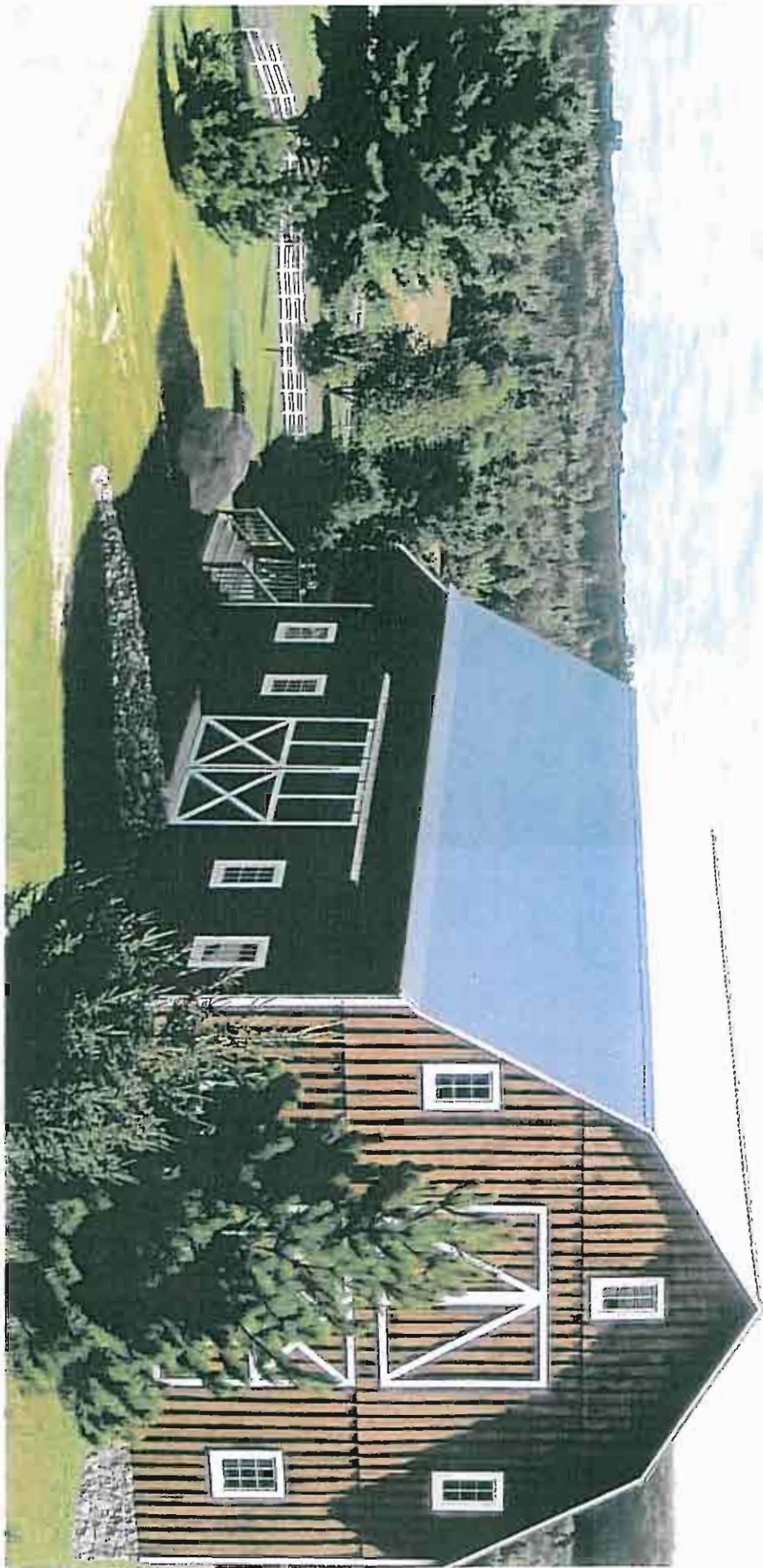
Respectfully submitted,

Bob & Kathleen Garvey

6377 Deepwater Point
Williamsburg, MI 49690









Acme Township
6042 Acme Road
Williamsburg, MI 49690

To Whom It May Concern:

On August 20th, the day that I have dreamt about while growing up will become a reality. I will marry a great man with our friends and family present, in a room filled with flowers, candles, and white linens. This very special day will take place in a barn. However, this is not just any barn. The barn is set among nature's beauty in northern Michigan. The crisp red and white lines of the barn is a stunning sight as you drive back and see it when you crest over the hill. Inside, the barn is filled with original charm and beautiful flooring. The fact that this barn is located in a serene, natural setting is one factor that separates this barn from others I have visited. I knew this was the perfect place for my wedding after I met the family who has poured their heart and soul into restoring this barn to the beautiful state it's in. Having grown up on my families farm that has been operating since 1928, I have a great appreciation for the dedication and hard work that comes with farm living. This farm background greatly influenced my desire to have my wedding in a beautiful barn. However, still being a working farm, the barns on our property are in no condition to host such an event. After months of looking and finally finding the perfect place, I approached Mr. Garvey and asked if he would consider hosting my wedding in his barn. After approval from the township, arrangements have been made and in just a few short weeks the story of how my life began as husband and wife will be written.

I'd like to thank you for allowing the Garvey family to provide me with the setting of my fairytale day.

Sincerely,

Kourtney Farro

Dear Acme Township,

As the Special Events Manager at Grand Traverse Resort and Spa in Acme, MI I have recently had numerous requests about Barn Wedding Receptions.

Barn Wedding Receptions are becoming a huge trend in the wedding business. The interest has gained quite a bit of momentum in the Northern Michigan area, as Ciccone Vineyard, Field of Flowers and Crooked Creek Ranch, all in Leelanau County, offer this type of unique setting.

Grand Traverse Resort and Spa would love the opportunity to utilize the Garvey Barn on Lautner road because of the uniqueness and beauty of a farm setting. Brides now a day are looking for a visually stunning atmosphere to host their events in. This rural barn hosts all of the appeal that any Bride would like to capture.

We at the Resort approached the Garvey's as we became aware of their barn in the winter of 2011. The close proximity to the resort makes this an ideal situation as it reduces the need to travel longer distances to reach other venues in Leelanau County.

Barn locations and Farm Settings are trending hugely in the world of weddings for 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Grand Traverse Resort and Spa would strongly encourage the Township to look favorable upon allowing this use as there is a need for this type of event facility.

I have unfortunately had to send Brides elsewhere this year due to the lack of having a barn location in close proximity.

I feel very confident that the use of the Garvey Barn would benefit Acme Township.

Thank you,

Rachelle Grockau

Special Events Manager

Grand Traverse Resort and Spa

Other activities that may be conducted at on-farm markets but regulated by other governmental bodies include:

Activity	Activity regulated by:		
	Federal	State	Local
Bakery		MDA if selling only	Health Dept. if on-site food consumption
Bonfires			Safety
Camping			Safety
Carnival Rides			Safety
Cheese Production		MDA	Health Dept. if on-site food consumption
Cider Mill (non-alcoholic)		MDA if selling only	Health Dept. if on-site food consumption
Concerts			Traffic, noise
Cooking Demos			Health Dept. if on-site food consumption
Farm Bed & Breakfasts (B & Bs)			Health Dept. for on-site food consumption and hotel (depending on size)
Festivals			Safety, Health Dept. for on-site food consumption
Food Retreats			Health Dept. for on-site food consumption
Haunted Barns/Trails			Safety
Hunting Preserves		DNR/MDA	
Meat Processing	USDA	MDA	Health Dept.
Mud Runs			Safety
On-farm Dairy		MDA	Health Dept. if on-site food consumption
On-farm Distilleries	ATTB	MDA/MLC	
On-farm Weddings			Health Dept. for on-site food consumption
Play-scapes			Safety
Processing	USDA/FDA	MDA	
Winery	ATTB	MDA/MLC	

Farmers who plan to conduct these activities are responsible for obtaining and maintaining regulatory approval from appropriate government agencies.

From: Bob Garvey (bobgarvey@ameritech.net)
To: dberube22003@yahoo.com;
Date: Wed, May 11, 2011 9:57:48 AM
Cc:
Subject: Fwd: Question re GAAMPS

Please copy and put on my desk. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Schindler, Kurt" <schindl9@anr.msu.edu>
Date: May 11, 2011 9:47:01 AM EDT
To: Robert Garvey <bobgarvey@ameritech.net>
Subject: RE: Question re GAAMPS

Dear Robert Garvey;

"Barn Weddings" would fall under "social events", as listed in the table on page 5 of the 2011 version of the Farm Market GAAMP. The purpose of the table is to indicate that local regulation would still apply to such an event. Intent was to use a more generic term that includes much more than just weddings.

-----kurt

Kurt H. Schindler, AICP
Michigan State University Extension
schindl9@anr.msu.edu

231 779 9480 x2
Schindler's Land Use Page: www.msue.msu.edu/lu

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Garvey [mailto:bobgarvey@ameritech.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2011 2:08 PM
To: Schindler, Kurt
Subject: Question re GAAMPS

Hi Kurt,
Jim Sluyter gave me your name .
I wondered why the term "barn weddings" made it's way as a mention into the GAAMPS for 2010 along with a long list of uses that the twp could consider.
[page 6]
In 2011 proposed GAAMPS the term "barn weddings" was not listed. [at least on the copy i saw]
Was this done with any particular purpose or was it an oversight ?
thank you , bob garvey

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AGRITOURISM - Your Next Cash Crop?

Jan Jantzen (Emporia, Kansas) presented a pre-conference workshop, Thursday, March 10 which brought 25 participants from 22 Michigan communities together to learn, exchange, and network with one-another. Jantzen, who has direct experience in business and guiding others, shared his wisdom and recommendations through examples, stories and wit.

Often described as value-added products and experiences, Jan made the case for agritourism being a primary focus of business and activity. "Agritourism is the intersection of agriculture and tourism where the public pays for visits and products as well as experiences," Jan notes that this can include shopping, dining, lodging and working. "Have you heard of stay-cations? I'll call agricultural tourism as a hay-cation!" Primarily this business is about creating memories and stirring emotions for a growing population of all ages who are generations away from the agricultural experience. We are increasingly seeing visitors from the city and even from other countries seeking out hands-on - even working vacations - in America's rural countryside.

Michigan Panel members described their business and future goals. Ed Carpenter, Peacock Tree Farms (Lainsburg, www.peacockroadtreefarm.com) has a Christmas tree farm with seasonal focus (apples and pumpkins) as well as school visits and a gift shop. Melissa Jaskiewicz's Mejs's Mystical Meadows Farm (North Branch, www.mejsfarm.webs.com) goal is to demonstrate that farming on a very small farm can be rewarding and fun. Visitors experience farm chores and learn about animals, soap and cheese making, and much more. Bill Miller of Papa's Pumpkin Patch (Mt. Pleasant, www.papasfamilyfarm.com) offers seasonal activities including a very popular corn maze, a toy store and lots of activities.

Attendees included individuals with current businesses, those eager to start up activity as well as representatives from communities which are doing their own planning around developing region-wide agricultural attractions for tourism. A lot of shared ideas and networking emerged. We will share an attendees contact informa-



Photo: Julie Avery

tion with one-another and are investigating other resources that could help us all bring Jan back for intensive multi-day training and further networking across this group of agri-tourism entrepreneurs. If you are interested in hearing about more activity of this group of agricultural tourism interests please email Julie Avery, identifying your work, website and contact information (averyj@msu.edu).

MBPN is interested in agri-tourism because it can trigger continuing and adaptive use of traditional Michigan barns and farmsteads. Many of our small organic and subscription or community farms have adapted the traditional farmstead to their needs.

This workshop was sponsored by MSU Extension, the Greening Michigan Institute, MSU Museum's rural life and culture activities; and MBPN. Vera Wilze, MBPN conference chair and board member attended a Kansas workshop by Jan and immediately saw the application of his principals in Michigan. MBPN organized this as its second pre-conference workshop. Pre-conference offerings will be considered for the future.

- Julie Avery, Secretary

MBPN President's Message: Notes from the Field

A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved in making the 2011 MBPN conference a great success! Thanks to the many individuals who helped in both big and small projects -all the planning, organizing and dozens of small chores that contributed to the conference experience and made the whole much more powerful than a sum of its parts. Thanks to all the presenters for sharing their wisdom and ideas. Thanks also to those who donated auction items, and purchased them in support of network activities. And, thanks to members -old and new- who attended with their enthusiasm and good cheer to make our conference interesting, educational and great fun for everyone. Please let us know of your



MBPN President Steve Stier, circa 1954

ideas and recommendations to make next year's conference even more successful.

I want to congratulate this year's awardees, each of our Barn of the Year nominees and those selected as recipients; as well as, to Bill Kimball, recipient of the President's Award for his long standing and valuable contributions to the MBPN, and barn preservation nationally.

The theme of this year's conference, "Heritage Barns for the Next Generation", focused on reaching out to a new generation of barn preservationists. It was chosen, in part, to kick off our 2011 flagship project, "Teamwork and Timbers", the goal of which is to offer young people experience in how traditional barns were built. That theme also highlights the need for our organization to reach out and engage young people, furthering the future of preservation, as well as the future of their communities. It does little good for us to preserve barns, or any traditional building, during our generation unless we can recruit and prepare the next generation of preservationists to carry on with our efforts. The network board has recognized this issue for some time, but only recently have we seen significant gains in engaging younger generations directly in this work. Our efforts to engage young folks will continue, in turn, I hope that we will continue to be successful in raising awareness and participation in the coming generations of preservation.

Steve Stier
MBPN President

PRESERVATION

Barns: Heart of agritourism

Old Mission tours among draws in state

BY LAUREN WALKER
Special to the Record-Eagle

LANSING — Preserving historic barns does more than maintain the beauty of the state's rural landscape — it has economic benefits as well, preservation experts say.

Steve Sier, president of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network, a Mount Pleasant-based advocacy group, said barn preservation adds to the economy because it often creates new businesses, agritourism destinations and jobs.

The organization promotes the rehabilitation of old farm buildings for agricultural and other uses.

Sier said that since most historic barns require a lot of expensive upkeep, the network encourages an entrepreneurial spirit so owners think of new uses for their buildings and ways their barns could generate revenue to cover maintenance

costs. "We've had barns converted to all sorts of different uses, from churches to homes to feed stores to rental buildings where people can have weddings," he said.

He said that while non-traditional uses for old barns, such as office space conversion are popular, many historic barns are still used for their original purposes on farms.

He said that with increased interest in local food sources, wineries and agricultural practices, farms no longer exist solely to produce crops or raise animals, but as an educational resource for people who don't live in rural areas.

That interest in agricultural practices has promoted a number of innovative agritourism destinations across the state, said Amy Seag, director of the Ludington Area Convention and Visitors Bureau.

For the past three years, the agricultural heritage of old barns has been showcased in the Barns & Bystays Tour in the Mason County area, which usually attracts around 400 people.

"The barn owners are very open and they're very excited and passionate about showing their property and their barn. Whenever that happens, the passion alone helps the success of the event," Seng said.

A similar passion among owners in other counties has led to the success of another type of agritourism destination that celebrates rural lifestyle and historic barns — quilt barn trails.

A quilt barn trail is a leisurely touring excursion that self-guides visitors to barns throughout a region. A quilt barn is distinguished by a large wooden block painted

to resemble a traditional quilt pattern and mounted on the side of the structure. The first quilt barn trail was created 10 years ago in Ohio, according to Cheri Van Hurk, vice president of the Alcona County Quilt Trail, the first in Michigan.

Since then, trails in the Old Mission Peninsula near Traverse City, and Osceola County have been established. Evelyn Johnson, creator of the Quilt Barn Trail of Old Mission Peninsula, and author of "Barns of Old Mission Peninsula," from Elakdyng Publications, said there's no financial incentive for owners to participate in the program. They do so out

Steve Sier, president of the Michigan Barn Preservation Network

of passion. "Sometimes it's kind of a pain when people are driving in their yards to look at their quilt, but they love it. They're all extremely glad that they've got this and are just plain proud of it," she said. Both Johnson and Van Hurk said there's no way to count how many visitors tour self-guided trails, so the only way they can measure the trails' success is by the number of maps printed. Johnson recently printed 10,000 maps for the Old Mission Peninsula Trail. Van Hurk said the Alcona County Quilt Trail ordered 3,000 brochures and they plan to order another 3,000 this year.

"In these times people want to think about things that are more simplistic and more back-to-the-earth and having the simple life. The farmsteads and barns represent that, so I think more people are inclined to give that more thought," Sier said. Lauren Walker writes for Capital News Service at Michigan State University.