

4/10/21

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1368 West St  
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**Re: Written copy of public comment from 4/7/21 Schaeffer/Barn on the Flats DRB Hearing**

My husband Marc and I operate a farm on six different parcels of land in town, and one of these is a 92-acre property that directly borders the applicant. We raise sheep as well as cattle.

For the cattle side of the business, none of the animals are owned by us, but rather they come to us on short-term contracts for us to graze from May to December. We typically work with 4-5 cattle owners, last year grazing 680 head of beef stockers and dairy heifers. The value of cattle in our care can easily be \$500,000 annually. Our entire business is based on the trust that those owners have in us and relationships we have built over many years. This is what allows us to both retain clients and add new ones.

I will echo all the concerns of noise, lights, traffic and sensitive habitats that others have. However, my primary concern is the direct impact to our business that an event venue like this may have. Simply put: large crowds of people and large crowds of cattle do not mix.

I sent the DRB members a map of the property on 4/6/21. On here you will see the state-owned right of way (ROW) that passes through both the Schaeffer's and our property to the state-owned wetlands. The intent of the ROW is pedestrian traffic and use by farm vehicles/machinery. The unimproved field road is not built to handle car traffic, especially in wet conditions. It is our only access to our land and I am concerned about its condition and maintenance, as well as being hindered from accessing my own property.

My biggest concern is that partygoers will access our property on the ROW and disturb the cattle. The intent of the ROW is to grant free access for the public. I will need to lock all gates and put up 'no trespassing' signs which will be confusing for those whom this set up was designed for.

However, this will not stop a partygoer from climbing the gate. What if someone thinks it is funny to chase a cow, or they want to pet one? These ideas seem like good ones when alcohol is involved. How will the Schaeffers confine their guests to their 7-acre property especially when half of it is filled with cars?

Our business is based on our reputation and our ability to keep animals safe and secure. This adjacent proposed use is directly counter to that objective. I will conclude by saying that there is no allowance for a party venue in the LDR, where the prime objective of the zoning regulations is rural development and agricultural use. The other event venue in town is in the MDR. That property is actually in both the LDR and the MDR and the DRB decision specifically limits the events to the MDR area of the property only.

Thank you,

Cheryl Cesario