

Development Review Board
Town of Cornwall
April 11, 2021

To Members of the DRB:

I write to express my concern about the recent application of Kayla and Cameron Schaefer to open an event venue in the barn on their property on West Street. As this is a low density residential zoning district a prime aim of which is to protect agricultural uses, I am deeply concerned about its proximity to the Cesarios' cattle grazing operation as well as to concerns expressed by neighbors on West Street about probable noise, traffic, and environmental damage from such a large-scale venture. Applications for event venues are becoming more frequent, and are inevitably accompanied by legitimate worries from neighbors about changes in their quality of life arising from such proposals--mainly noise and traffic. Indeed, such concerns led the Robarts to withdraw their application for a similar venue in 2019. I feel strongly that the DRB should be sensitive to such concerns, prioritizing the peace of the neighborhood over one family's desire to launch a venture of this kind, however well-intentioned such a project might be. The testimony from a resident of Ridge Road verifies that even a small-scale event venue such as the Franklins' causes disruption to peaceful living in the area. I would hope that, in accordance with the DRB's stipulation that the Franklins' event venue be restricted to the medium density part of their property, it could clarify by its decision in the Schaefer's application that event venues are not an allowed conditional use in LDR. It stretches the definition of a home-based business in any case. Perhaps it would make sense to write this particular use specifically into the zoning regulations for all districts in some future iteration or clarify in some way that approval is contingent upon respect for the peace and quiet of the area (which I think the Town Plan makes clear anyway). It isn't a use that fits neatly into any particular zoning district; rather, its appropriateness has everything to do with its surroundings (proximity to neighbors, presence of children, proximity to wildlife and to farm animals, etc.)

Thank you.

Elizabeth Napier