

## Re: Agritourism Advisory Group- Meeting 2

Emily Fergestrom <emily@fortuitycellars.com>

Tue 5/4/2021 7:15 PM

To: Olivia Story <olivia.story@co.yakima.wa.us>

Cc: Noelle Madera <Noelle.Madera@co.yakima.wa.us>; Amanda McKinney <amanda.mckinney@co.yakima.wa.us>

**CAUTION :** This email originated from outside of this organization. Please exercise caution with links and attachments.

Olivia,

Thank you so much for sending this table, as well as the existing code and updates in the previous email. Unfortunately I have had something come up during tomorrow's meeting and I'm unsure I'll be able to get on the call. I'd like to share a few of my thoughts below for your consideration.

- As previously shared, it's important to determine if the problem statement and current complaints on non-compliant businesses (those without ATOs) would be better addressed through existing enforcement measures rather than more policy/code. From what I understand there are some complaints for non-compliant businesses, specifically for traffic management and parking. Those of us who have gone through the proper channels to be in compliant with the land use have had to submit traffic management and parking plans to be approved. I believe the existing ATO process and code would likely address the current complaints. New code may not be needed.
- Event definition. I continue to be concerned about how we are defining an "event." In order for me to open up my business and get my construction permit, I had to ensure that my business operations were in alignment with the use of my property. I am allowed to make and sell wine. I believe events associated with the making or selling of wine should be allowed regardless of size. Of course, the infrastructure on my property needs to be able to accommodate winery business traffic (well, septic, parking, ingress/egress, etc). If someone does not have the proper infrastructure to handle larger crowds, then that seems to be an enforcement issue, not a policy issue.
- An ATO does allow me to have large scale events like weddings. However, I still must have the proper infrastructure to support these large scale events. When we, and the previous owners of our property, went through the Hearing Examiner, we received approval to host these larger events, as long as certain conditions were met. Again, if someone is not in compliance, or did not take the steps to get an ATO and conditional use permit, then that appears to be an enforcement issue. Or, if someone did get a conditional use permit and they are not adhering, then that seems to be an enforcement issue. If people go to the effort to get their ATO and fulfil the conditional use conditions, then I'm not sure why an additional permit is necessary. The ATO should cover them to have events.

I am not in favor of Levels 1-3, as I believe the number of attendees is way too low. A winery or brewery could most certainly have 99 people in a day, and even upwards of 100+ on beautiful days or days when they have a particular food truck or band playing. To me, these seems to be covered in their existing land use - making/selling beer or wine, and shouldn't even require an ATO. I would like to see us focus more on infrastructure requirements (temp or permanent) when talking about large-scale events (500-1000+ events), rather than defining and restricting smaller-scale events, less than 300 people.

After reviewing the table you sent, there may be an opportunity to further tighten our code around specific infrastructure, like parking spots (one car per four people like Benton seems reasonable), ingress/egress. I also think tightening it for very large scale events, like 1,000 people may make sense, as that seems to be outside the regular course of business for wineries/breweries. But, I do not think we should regulate anything under 300 people (either all at once or over a course of a day). It seems reasonable (from a public safety standpoint) for Fire Marshall approval for events more than 500. Having the BoCC approve events does not seem like the best use of their time, as it is not a policy issue at that point, more of a compliance, which county staff should be authorized to handle. Timing of the event seems reasonable, although I would make sure that is for the publicized event, and

not for any cleanup/teardown. I believe the county already has a sound ordinance; so I'm inclined to keep with the current code instead of new code on this, unless there is a major problem in the county for non-compliance.

For applications, unless there is a problem with the existing 45 days in advance, I wouldn't change it. 90 days in advance seems a bit onerous. Events are still being developed 90 days out. 30-45 days seems reasonable, especially if we are going to increase attendance to 500 or 1000. Seems like there will be less applications needed to be reviewed/approved.

Thanks for allowing me to share my thoughts.

Good luck tomorrow and I'll watch for any followup communications, including the recording and next meeting.

Thanks,  
Emily

On Tue, May 4, 2021 at 4:33 PM Olivia Story <[olivia.story@co.yakima.wa.us](mailto:olivia.story@co.yakima.wa.us)> wrote:

Good afternoon Advisory Group,

Our next meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, May 5th at 2:00. Please join from your computer, tablet, or smartphone from this link:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/199435445>

You can also dial in using your phone.

(646) 749-3122, Access Code: 199-435-445

We will be joined by Commissioner McKinney and a new advisory group member, so the first few minutes will be a quick introduction.

In the meantime, for your review is an attached table outlining Walla Walla and Benton Counties regulations for a Winery, Brewery, Distillery, and events. These were requested in the past meeting.

I will go over them in more detail during the meeting, but I wanted to make sure you had the table, as it may be difficult to see on the presentation.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions. See you all tomorrow at 2:00.

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