



PLANNING AND ZONING
Cerro Gordo County Courthouse

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SPECIAL EXCEPTION STAFF REPORT

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

Case No.: 22-25

Hearing Date: November 25, 2022

Staff Contact: John Robbins, Planning and Zoning Administrator

Applicant

Justin Spratling
24064 250th Street
Nora Spring, IA 50458

Owner

Same

Property Address: 24064 250th Street

Brief Legal Description: SW¼ of the SW¼, Section 13, Portland Township

Zoning: A-2 Agricultural Residence District

Special Use Requested: 20.2(E) Special events venue

Special Use Description

The Rustic Barn Venue is an existing wedding and special events venue that began operation in 2017. Justin Spratling (Spratling) recently purchased the business and property from Tyler and Ashley Cooper. The Special Use Permit was not transferrable to a new party, so this request is to put a new permit in place. Spratling proposes to continue the operation of the Rustic Barn Venue in line with how it conducted business since it opened. Typical events have approximately 175-250 people in attendance.

STAFF COMMENTS

CG Public Health noted that new septic systems were recently installed for the reception building (northeast machine shed) and the repurposed corn crib in September 2022. They note the best practice is to pump the septic tanks every 3-5 years.

Further, the well was most recently tested on August 16, 2022 and tested safe for coliform bacteria, E. coli, nitrates, arsenic, and manganese. Annual tests are recommended. The well does not currently qualify as a public water supply according to Iowa DNR requirements. It may qualify as a public water supply in the future if the frequency of events onsite increases, in which approval through the Iowa DNR would be required at that time.

It is Spratling's responsibility to ensure proper solid waste disposal. He must supply adequate trash facilities that are adequately vermin-proof and weatherproof.

There is no food prepared onsite. It is unclear if Spratling must have a food service license for beverage service. Spratling should contact CG Public Health for details.

The County Engineer's Office has noted that parking on Yarrow Avenue or 250th Street is prohibited and that Spratling may be responsible for dust control along roads in front of properties used to events.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Justin W. Spratling is the owner of the subject property and applicant for the proposed special event venue.
2. The property is zoned A-2 Agricultural Residence.
3. A special event venue is a special permitted use in the A-2 District, subject to the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and conditions as granted by the Board of Adjustment.
4. The application was filed on November 1, 2022 with the Planning and Zoning Office.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Purpose of Special Use Request

Spratling recently purchased the Rustic Barn Venue property and business from Tyler and Ashley Cooper. The Cooper's Special Use Permit (SUP) was not transferrable to a new owner of the property. As a result, Spratling proposes to continue the operation of the business in line with how it has been conducted business since it opened in 2017.

Spratling is requesting a SUP for the purpose of offering an outdoor, special event venue primarily for weddings, receptions, graduation parties, and reunions are also possibilities. The business will use the existing buildings and infrastructure already in place. Weddings are intended to take place outdoors on the eastern half of the property for groups of up to 250 people (See Figure 1). The machine shed is intended to be used for receptions, including serving food and music performances for wedding receptions (See Figure 2). The deck and concrete patio will be used as an outdoor extension of the reception area (See Figure 3). There is a repurposed grain bin used for serving drinks and play area for children. No kitchen facilities will be onsite, so all food will be catered. There is also a converted corn crib on the south side of the property, used as a changing and lounge area for wedding parties or applicable clients, and a machine shed on the north part of the property (See Figure 4 & 5).

The property will be used for events primarily on weekends during the months of May through October, with requested hours between 4 p.m. and 11 p.m. Typical events have approximately 175-250 people in attendance.

Existing Land Use and Zoning Classification of Property

The 3.34 acre parcel is zoned A-2 Agricultural and is on an existing acreage and has been used as a special events venue since 2017. The property currently contains the house, corn crib, reception building, machine shed, shed, well house, and repurposed grain bin as summarized above.

Land Use and Zoning Classification of Surrounding Property

All surrounding property is zoned A-1 Agricultural, all of which are in agricultural production. The closest residence is approximately 1/3-mile to the south at the end of Yarrow Avenue adjacent to the Avenue of the Saints (US Highway 18). The next closest residence is approximately 2/3-mile to the east on 250th Street. Another residence is located ¾-mile north. There are two other residences approximately 1 mile north of the proposed special use.

A large, confined animal feeding operation, owned by Engels Farm, Inc., is located ¼-mile to the west.

GENERAL FINDINGS

Harmony and Accord with General Principles and Proposals of the Zoning Ordinance

The intent of the A-2 Agricultural District is to serve the agricultural community and guide urban land use in rural areas. The minimum parcel size in the A-2 district is 2 acres, which this parcel meets. The proposed special use, which will continue to be a venue for special events, is allowed in the A-2 District. No agricultural land will be taken out of production to accommodate the special use.

Compatibility of Use with the Appearance and Essential Character of Area

The use will function around the existing building site. While wedding venues are not an agricultural use, the theme of the venue is rural in character. The proposed facility will continue to use the repurposed farm buildings and keep country-like aesthetics for the operation.

While the special use will have a rural aesthetic, it will be obvious to passing motorists. The applicants state they plan to accommodate up to 250 guests for a single event. In addition to an existing sign, the number of cars and events will be apparent due to the proximity to the road, size, and openness of the site. Vegetative screening buffers are already established along 250th Street and Yarrow Avenue and will continue to grow and better screen the use (See Figures 7-9). The narrative states that additional vegetation is planned to be planted to improve the natural barrier. Vegetative screening is a condition in the original SUP for the Rustic Barn Venue and should remain a condition of the permit.

Impact on Existing and Futures Uses, Vicinity, and Community as a Whole

The site is a relatively small parcel compared to other properties with a similar use. The site sits close to the road with existing vegetative buffers along 250th Street and Yarrow Avenue. There are no nearby residents—the closest being almost ½-mile to the south. Visually, the use will not be apparent for nearby property owners, nor has there been any complaints as a result of the venue. Until the vegetative buffers establishes further, it will be obvious for passing motorists, though this is not a major concern.

Parking takes up a large section of the central and western portions of the property (See Figures 10-13). Requiring a minimum number of parking space accommodations, vegetative screening of the property, and prohibiting parking on the 250th Street and Yarrow Avenue are all current conditions in the original SUP. These should remain as conditions for approval.

Noise is a likely impact from music occurring during wedding receptions. It can carry far in wide open areas. All residences within 1 mile of the site happen to have significant vegetative buffers in the direction of the special use, and the existing trees in place on site will help as well. The operator's statement accompanying the application proposes hours as late as 11 p.m. I have recommended that the Board keep the requirement that all reception music and any non-wedding ceremony music be located in the reception building on the northeast portion of the property (See Figure 3).

Adequacy of Public Services

(i.e., highways, streets, police, fire protection, drainage structure, refuse disposal, water and sewage facilities, or schools)

The existing driveway into the property will be used to access the special use. 250th Street is a gravel-surfaced with an average annual daily traffic count of 35 vehicles per day past this site. Yarrow Avenue is also gravel-surfaced and carries 30 vehicles per day. Both routes are possible for event attendees to travel on their way to the property—either from Zinnia Avenue from US Highway 18 or from Mason City via Iowa Highway 122 to Yarrow Avenue. The County Engineer's Office has noted that parking on Yarrow Avenue or 250th Street is prohibited and that Spratling may be responsible for dust control along roads in front of properties used to events.

Law enforcement protection will be provided by the Cerro Gordo County Sheriff's Department. Fire protection will be provided by the Nora Springs Fire Department and the Mason City Fire Department. There should not be a substantial increase in demand for either service.

There are no floodplains located on the property. The property is not located in a drainage district. Spratling will need to arrange for refuse disposal. The use should have no impact on schools.

According to CG Public Health, new septic systems were installed in September 2022 for the reception building and the repurposed corn crib (See Figure 14). There is a well that serves the whole property that tested safe on August 16, 2022. The property does not currently qualify as a public water supply as required by the Iowa DNR but could in the future if the number of events increase in the future. A condition requiring that all requirements of CG Public Health and the Iowa DNR be met should remain a condition of the permit, if approved.

Public Cost for Additional Public Facilities and Services

There should be no cost to the public as a result of the proposed use.

Potential Detriments to Persons, Property, or General Welfare

(i.e., excessive traffic, noise, smoke, glare, or odors)

According to the narrative, gatherings of up to 250 could be accommodated on the site. For the sake of argument, if each vehicle has an average of 2.5 people in it, one event could generate as many as 200 trips, or 100 vehicles, to the site. This is over 5 times the average daily traffic on either 250th Street or Yarrow Avenue (most recent traffic count in 2017). A typical figure cited for wedding venues puts 195 guests as the average Iowa wedding attendance. Using the same number of average persons per vehicle, 156 trips would be generated for an event with 195 guests. The requested special use is a continuance of the existing special events venue, so no

noticeable increase in traffic is anticipated unless the number of events increases significantly. The County Engineer's Office has noted that parking on Yarrow Avenue or 250th Street is prohibited and that Spratling may be responsible for dust control along roads in front of properties used to events.

Requiring Spratling to pay for dust control for residences on the route to the site is a reasonable condition and was included as a condition in the original SUP. The most likely routes to be used will continue to be via 250th Street from Zinnia Avenue from US Highway 18 or from Iowa Highway 122 along Yarrow Avenue. Both routes continue to very likely be used, and dust control should be provided if desired for the residence east of the site on 250th Street and the residences north of the site on Yarrow Avenue. The latter route is the default route Google Maps gives from Mason City. Spratling states he plans to provide dust control for impacted properties in the narrative. This should continue to be a condition in the SUP.

The location for the special use on the property is a significant distance from other inhabited dwellings that already have significant vegetation in place on these properties, mitigating potential noise impacts. However, loud music can carry long distances in wide open areas. The Board may consider requiring vegetative buffers installed along the north and east edge of the property to limit some of the potential noise impacts of the special use. However, I have recommended that all music, except for wedding ceremony music, must be located inside the machine shed reception area as previously required in the original SUP. Events are proposed to go as late as 11 p.m., which meets the requirements for Fridays and Saturday, but not on Sundays through Thursday. However, the Board has some discretion in granting later time periods for live music.

Even if there are recreational fires as part of events, the smoke should dissipate before reaching property lines. The use should not generate any glare, fumes, or odors, and there should not be any outside storage of items.

Alcoholic beverage sales are not addressed in the narrative. A liquor license must be obtained from Cerro Gordo County for any alcoholic sales for events—either by Spratling if selling directly or a temporary license if provided by a caterer or his clients themselves. Food will not be prepared on the premises, as there are no public kitchen facilities onsite, so clients of the facility will have to consider catering options on or offsite separately.

Compatibility and Consistency with the Intent and Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance

The proposed use is generally compatible and consistent with the intent and purpose of the zoning district. No farmland will be taken out of production as a result of granting the special use.

Compatibility with County Comprehensive Plan

There are a couple of statements in the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update that relate to this proposed special use. Policy 2.1.5 recommends the incorporation of "performance standards, where appropriate, into land development regulations and criteria; particularly to encourage compatible development projects." Such standards "are related to the effects of the development on adjacent properties and uses." The minimum requirements in the Zoning Ordinance and conditions recommended by staff, if the SUP is approved, can be construed to be performance standards.

Objective 2.4 discourages non-farm uses “from locating in active agricultural areas or on productive agricultural soils.” No land will be taken out of production for this proposed special use. Aerial photos dating back to the 1930s show that the land on which the special use will be conducted has never been in agricultural production.

In general, it appears that if appropriate conditions are attached to the SUP, the proposed use will be in substantial conformance with the 2004 Comprehensive Plan Update.

COMPLIANCE WITH ADDITIONAL ARTICLE 20 REQUIREMENTS

Staff comments are in bold below. Additional requirements for the special use requested are as follows:

EE. Special events venue or temporary special event facilities. A-1 and A-2 Districts. **The property is zoned A-2 Agricultural Residence.**

Minimum Requirements:

1. Sufficient off-street vehicular parking shall be provided, as required by Article 19.2 of this Ordinance for a special events venue or as determined by the County Engineer for temporary special event facilities. **According to the narrative, there is enough parking for about 100 vehicles, with the possibility of up to 250 guests and assuming about 2.5 guests per vehicle. This has appeared to accommodate events at the venue over the past several years, and no complaints have been received regarding such events. The original permit made maintaining at least 100 parking spaces a condition. It also prohibited any parking on Yarrow Avenue or 250th Street. This should remain a condition in the permit, if approved.**
2. The applicant shall be responsible for the timely removal of all solid waste following an event. The applicant shall provide adequate trash receptacles and prevent solid waste from blowing offsite. **This is also a requirement of CG Public Health. This should remain a condition in the permit.**
3. For any special events venue or temporary event facilities in which there is live music performances taking place outdoors, in a tent, or in a temporary structure, said live music performance shall cease by 10 p.m., Sunday-Thursday; or by 11 p.m., Friday and Saturday, or on a Sunday that is followed by a federally recognized holiday. However, the applicant may request to be permitted to have the special event take place later than the time here stated. The Board, at its discretion, may take into consideration the surroundings of the location to establish said later time by condition. **The application narrative states that receptions will typically take place between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m., though it is not specific regarding the days of the week, though generally such receptions will likely be on Fridays or Saturdays. The application narrative also states wedding ceremonies typically take place between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. This is generally in line with the original permit. The condition limited music, not including music for the wedding ceremony, to no later than 11 p.m. on Fridays and Saturday and no later than 10 p.m. on Sundays-Thursdays. Wedding ceremony music was limited from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. A condition should remain in line with this requirement, though I have eliminated any recommendation specifically regarding music for the wedding ceremony. The Board may adjust these hours within reason at its discretion.**

4. The applicant shall provide proof of adequate liability insurance in writing to the Zoning Administrator, under such further conditions and in such amounts as the Board of Adjustment or Zoning Administrator may direct, but in no event shall such proof be required more often than annually. Additionally, the applicant shall be responsible for any necessary security as required by condition or as desired by the applicant. **Proof of insurance will need to be provided to meet this requirement and should be made a condition of the permit, if approved. The Board may specify an adequate amount if it finds it necessary. No security is proposed as a part of the operator's statement. Spratling would have the option to provide security if desired.**

ZONING DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

Requirements of the zoning district for which the proposed special use is to be located are as follows:

The property is zoned A-2 Agricultural.

Minimum parcel size is 2 acres. **The parcel on which the special use is proposed is 3.34 acres in size.**

7.5 Height Regulations. No building hereafter erected or structurally altered shall exceed two and one-half (2 1/2) stories or thirty-five (35) feet. Tents may be used for certain events. **As proposed, all structures proposed will not exceed height requirements. No additional buildings or structures are being proposed at this time**

7.6 Yard Requirements. Each lot shall have front, side and rear yards not less than the depths or widths following:

- A. Front yard depth, fifty (50) feet.
- B. Each side yard width, twenty-five (25) feet.
- C. Rear yard depth, thirty (30) feet.

All existing buildings and structures either meet setback requirements or are considered legally non-conforming.

6.9 Accessory Structures, minimum separation distance, ten (10) feet.

All existing buildings and structures either meet setback requirements or are considered legally non-conforming.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Additional requirements under Iowa Code or local rules that pertain to the Special Use applied for:

- CG Public Health – Well Permit, if any new facilities desired in the future
- CG Public Health – Septic Permit, if any new facilities desired in the future
- CG Public Health – Food Service License, may be applicable if Spratling sells beverages onsite.
- Cerro Gordo County – Liquor license, will be required of Spratling if the venue directly sells alcoholic beverages. This will be required of the venue's clients or caterers if alcoholic beverages are indirectly sold to the public by an applicable party.
- Iowa DNR – Public water supply permit, may be applicable if the number of events increases in the future. It is the responsibility of Spratling to ensure that the requirements of the Iowa DNR are met.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

Spratling is proposing to continue an already existing special events venue, which has been operating since 2017 without complaint. The conditions put in place in the original SUP have been effective as performance standards. The recommended conditions are in line with the previous one, but have been adjusted to the current request and amended standards for special event venues. Any potential impacts will be similar to what they have been since the venue opened and should be addressed by the recommended conditions. No significant changes to the operation are anticipated from the previous owners of the business. As a result, the Board would be justified in approving the request subject to the below conditions.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS TO BE MET IF POSITIVE VOTE BY BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT

Note: In granting a Special Use Permit, the Board of Adjustment may attach conditions which it finds are necessary to carry out the purpose of the Zoning Ordinance, in conformance with what is provided in Article 20 of the Zoning Ordinance, and where reasonable and necessary may increase the required lot or yard, control the location and number of vehicular access points to the property, limit the number of signs, limit coverage or height of buildings because of obstruction to view and reduction of light and air to adjacent property, and require screening and landscaping to reduce noise and glare and maintain the property in character in keeping with the surrounding area. Special uses shall ordinarily comply with the standards of the district concerned for principal uses which are permitted therein, except as modified by the Board of Adjustment in granting a Special Use Permit.

1. This Special Use Permit may be reviewed at any time in the future upon the request of the applicants or a majority of the Board of Adjustment members.
2. The provisions and/or regulations as stated shall be minimum requirements and wherever the requirements of any other lawfully adopted rules, regulations, or ordinances are at a variance, the most restrictive shall govern.
3. It is contemplated that from time to time during the operation of the special events venue that conditions may arise which are not covered by the terms of this permit and which cannot be anticipated. In the event such conditions do arise, the Board of Adjustment of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, may impose additional regulations to meet any new conditions. In addition, if said facility should, at any time, be operated in any manner which violates the rules and regulations of any federal or state regulatory agency, then the Board of Adjustment may impose such other conditions so as to ensure compliance with such rules and regulations.
4. This permit will be subject to revocation for operator's failure to comply with the provisions as herein set forth or such other provisions as may, from time to time, be imposed by the Board of Adjustment of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, under the terms of this permit.
5. County representatives shall have the right to enter the premises at any time upon notification to the permit holder for the purposes of enforcing the provisions of this Special Use Permit.
6. Any other necessary permits or licenses required by federal, state, and local agencies shall be obtained by the applicant and current copies placed on file with the county Planning and Zoning Office.

7. This Special Use Permit is granted solely to Justin Spratling, d/b/a The Rustic Barn Venue, and any successors and assigns, and is not transferable to any other party or parties. The site plan and operator's statement is hereby adopted as presented and the applicant shall adhere to said site plan. The Board of Adjustment shall have the right to review any proposed change in or expansion in area of the special use.
8. All construction shall strictly comply with the site plan submitted with the application. A Zoning Permit Application shall be completed and a Zoning Permit issued prior to any new construction on the site related to the special use.
9. All requirements of CG Public Health shall be met, including but not limited to well, wastewater, solid waste, and food vendor license requirements.
10. One sign, not exceeding 32 square feet in size, identifying the use, may be placed onsite without a permit. The sign shall not be placed within or in any way overhang the right-of-way of 250th Street.
11. All live music for the purposes of the special use shall take place within the reception building (northeast machine shed). Hours for all music shall cease by 10 P.M. on Sunday-Thursdays and 11 P.M. on Friday or Saturday, or on a Sunday that is followed by a federally recognized holiday.
12. All exterior lighting shall shine into the interior of the site and away from adjoining properties.
13. The applicant shall be responsible for the removal of trash and recycling from the premises.
14. Temporary structures, such as tents, may be used for event operations without a Zoning Permit. Removal of said structures shall occur after completion of events for which they were used.
15. A minimum of 100 off-street parking spaces at least 300 square feet in size must be available for event attendees and employees. Parking within the rights-of-way of Yarrow Avenue or 250th Street is prohibited.
16. A continuous vegetative buffer screening running the length of the west and south property lines, excluding the entrance into the site, consisting of primarily evergreen plantings shall be maintained at a minimum height of 5'-tall so long as the special use continues.
17. The owners of the following properties shall be contacted annually by the permit holder offering to apply dust control up to twice each year at the Rustic Barn Venue's expense as desired by those property owners along the applicable gravel road running adjacent to the respective property. The number of feet indicated in parentheses shall be the minimum number of feet running with the length of the respective road if dust control is desired:
 - 24678 250th Street (450 feet)
 - 16678 Yarrow Avenue (500 feet)
 - 17062 Yarrow Avenue and 24040 260th Street (550 feet)

All dust control shall be applied by a contractor licensed by the County Engineer's Office following established procedures. The Rustic Barn Venue shall keep records including contacts made to these residents and dust control applied. Those records shall be made available to the Zoning Administrator upon request.

18. Spratling shall provide proof of liability insurance in writing to the Zoning Administrator for operation of the special use within 60 days of issuance of the Special Use Permit and shall be kept current so long as the special use continues. A current proof of liability insurance shall be provided in writing to the Zoning Administrator upon request.

BOARD DECISION

The Board of Adjustment may consider the following alternatives:

Alternatives

1. Grant the requested Special Use Permit Application subject to any condition as deemed necessary by the Board (The Board reserves the right to remove, amend, or add additional conditions from those recommended as deemed necessary).
2. Deny the requested Special Use Permit Application.

The following motions are provided for the Board's consideration:

Provided motion of **approval**:

To adopt the staff report as the Board's findings and to grant the application, subject to the conditions recommended by staff and as modified by the Board of Adjustment, for the placement of an agricultural-commercial neighborhood business, and further, that the grant of the application be made effective immediately and on the condition that **[NAME OF APPLICANT]** shall perform all operations under the application under the specific direction of the Cerro Gordo County Zoning Administrator, consistent with the proposed conditions and recommendations approved by the Board of Adjustment, until such time as a formal resolution is drafted and adopted by the Board of Adjustment, not to exceed 60 days.

Provided motion of **denial**:

To adopt the staff report as the Board's findings and to deny the application for the reasons stated in the staff report as well as for the following reasons: **[STATE ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR DENIAL, IF ANY]**. Said reasons for denial shall be stated in the official transcript and minutes of the Board of Adjustment, and shall be made in writing to the applicant in letter form by the Board's secretary.

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: Figures
- Exhibit 2: Special Use Permit Application
- Exhibit 3: Operator's Statement
- Exhibit 4: Site plan
- Exhibit 5: Aerial photo of site

Figure 1

Looking at the sign at the entrance of the property



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 2

Looking at the outdoor wedding ceremony area at the east side of the property



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 3

Looking at the machine shed used for receptions and events



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 4

Looking at the outdoor patio area, converted grain bin, and play area



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 5
Looking at the converted corn crib



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 6
Looking at the machine shed at the north side of the property



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 7

Looking along the vegetative buffer along 250th Street east of the driveway



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 8

Looking along the vegetative buffer along 250th Street west of the driveway



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 9

Looking along the vegetative buffer along Yarrow Avenue



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 10

Looking at the parking area located south of the north machine shed



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 11

Looking at the parking area, located at the center and north part of the property



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 12

Looking at the parking area located north of the converted corn crib, just west of the wedding ceremony area



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 13

Looking at the parking area located at the north side of the property, north of the patio area



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

Figure 14

Looking at the location of the septic system installed north of the northeast machine shed



November 2, 2022, J. Robbins

SPECIAL USE PERMIT

APPLICATION

Date Filed 11/1/22 Date Set for Hearing 11/29/22 Case Number: 22-25

Applicant Name: Justin W. Spratling Phone: (641)749-2549 E-Mail: jwsprat@yahoo.com

Mailing Address: 24064 250th Street, Nora Springs, Iowa 50458

Property Owner Name: Justin W. Spratling Phone: (641)749-2549 E-Mail: jwsprat@yahoo.com

Property Owner Address: 24064 250th Street, Nora Springs, Iowa 50458

Property Description (Not to be used on legal documents): Parcel # 081330000800 Township Portland

Property Address: 24064 250th Street, Nora Springs, Iowa 50458 Zoning: A-2 Agricultural

Brief Legal Description: 3.34 acres parcel in the SW1/4 of the SW1/4 Section 13, Portland Township

Type of Special Use Requested: Special event venue for weddings, receptions, reunions and other events

Special Use Description: Please provide a general description of the proposed special use.

This special use permit request is to continue the operation of an established outdoor wedding and special event venue that was purchased in August of this year, but has been in existence since 2017.

***Attach all required items listed in the application checklist, including written operator's statements, site plan, filing fee, and all other materials required to be submitted with this application**

I am the Owner Contract Purchaser Other (Explain) _____ of the property affected.

I, the applicant, being duly sworn, depose and say that I am the owner or that I am authorized and empowered to make the accompanying application; and that the information provided is true and correct, and actual construction, as applicable, and operation of the proposed special use will proceed in accordance with the purposes herein stated on the application and all submitted materials. I further agree to any conditions and/or requirements the Board of Adjustment may stipulate. The Planning & Zoning staff and Board of Adjustment members are also given permission to enter the above property in reviewing this application.

Applicant Signature  Date 11/1/22

Owner's Statement – Justin W. Spratling

This special use permit request is to continue the operation of an established outdoor wedding and special event venue that was purchased in August of this year, but has been in existence since 2017. It is located on 3.34 acres that is one mile west of Zinnia Avenue (County Road S70) and 1 ½ miles south of Iowa 122 in Nora Springs. The parcel is zoned A-2 Agricultural.

The primary use of the venue is on weekends from May through October of each year. Wedding ceremonies usually occur between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM and happen in front of an already installed pergola and windmill. There is a small outdoor sound system that is used for this part of the event.

The receptions happen inside of the machine shed and typically occur between 6:00 PM and 11:00 PM. There is a sound system inside and three restrooms that are attached to the shed that were installed by the prior owners. A covered deck is located at the front of the building and it matches the style of deck on the house. A 1953 Hudson Super Wasp car with a fire pit under the hood sits outside between the deck and the ceremony site. There is a converted grain bin that has been used as an outdoor area to serve beverages. No cooking or food preparation is done onsite.

While the normal size of weddings at the venue have been around 175 guests, up to 250 are possible. There are approximately 100 spaces for people to park, which has proven to be adequate. Any larger events are encouraged to use shuttles from area hotels.

Harmony With the Surrounding Area

The property is not only used for events, but is also a home with a shop and gardens. All of the buildings have been painted with barn style colors to maintain the agricultural look and feel for which they were built and is seen on farms in the surrounding area.

There are nearly 50 trees and numerous shrubs that line parts of the property that can be seen from the road, creating a screen for privacy, dust and wind. In the spring, more shrubs will be planted to continue improving the natural barrier.

The name of the property is The Rustic Barn Venue so every effort is made to keep the country charm and image a priority.

Adequate Access to Public Services

Essential public services such as having street and highway access, refuse disposal and others are already in place. There is an onsite well for water access and two large newly installed septic tanks on the property. Much of the electric has also been recently redone to ensure adequate power is available.

Hazardous or Disturbing Use

There will be no hazardous or disturbing activities at the venue. The goal is to continue to offer a gathering place for the community that compliments the area.

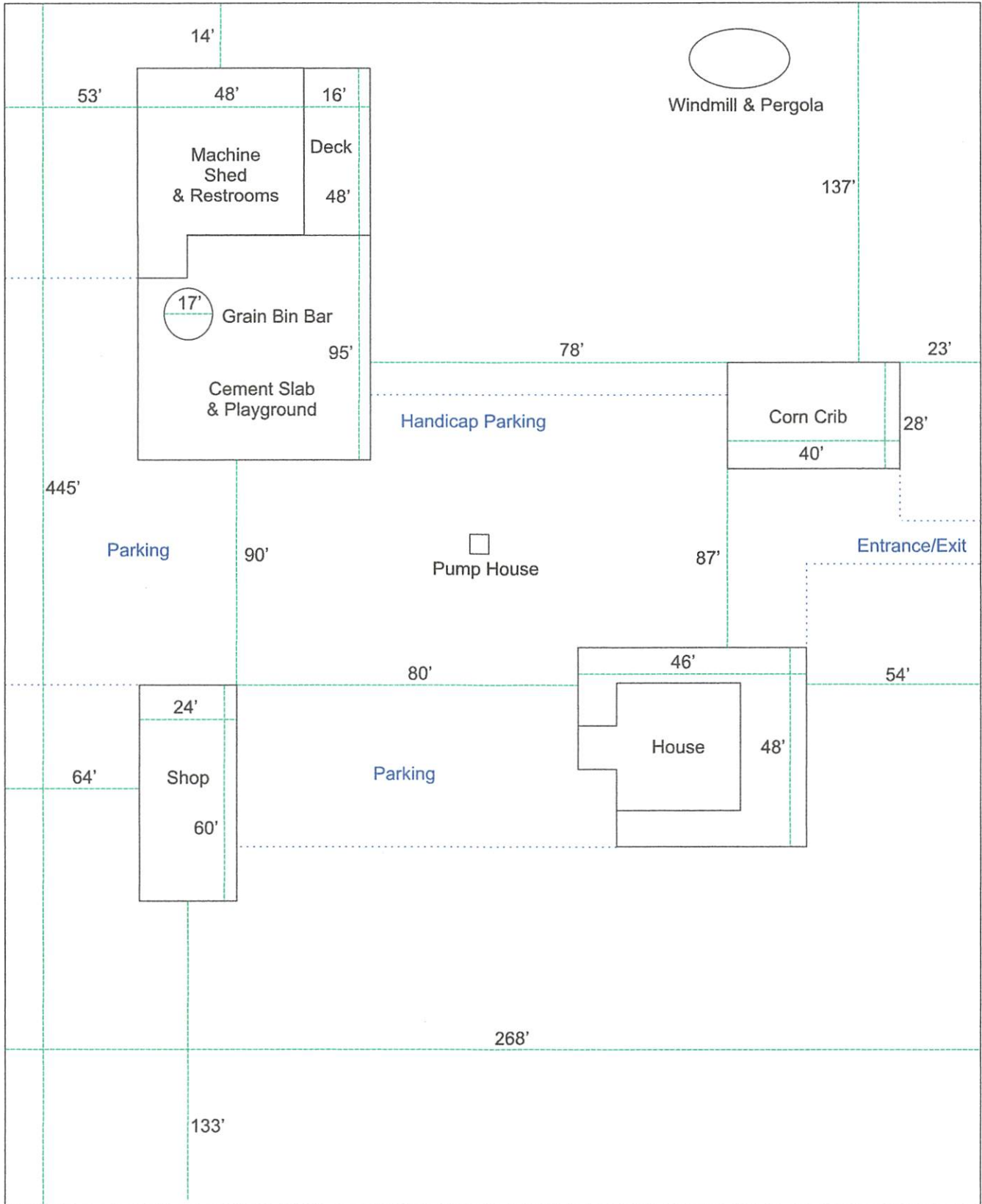
Additional Expense to the Public

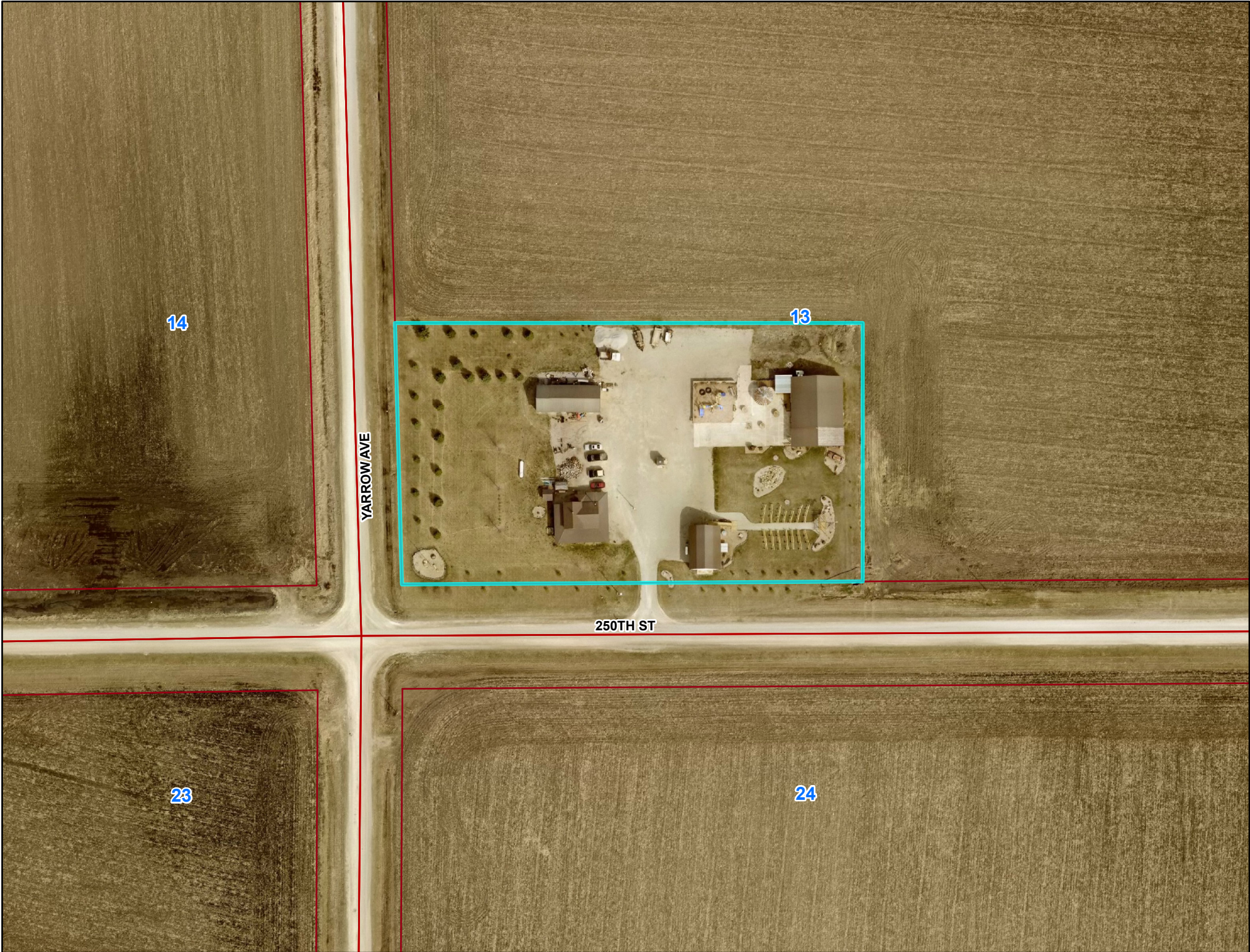
There is no known additional expense to the public. The extra traffic on the roadways will be addressed by having the roads treated in front of the venue and any neighbors that are on access points for guests. This will be paid for by the property owner.

Impact on Local People, Properties and Communities

Hopefully, the impact is positive for the local economy as a lot of these guests are from out of town so they are staying in hotels, buying fuel, enjoying local attractions and dining out. That puts money into local businesses and encourages tourism.

24064 250th Street, Nora Springs, Iowa





14

YARROW AVE

13

250TH ST

23

24