



**Carlisle | Wortman**  
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**TO:** Cohoctah Township Planning Commission

**FROM:** John L. Enos, AICP, Township Planner

**DATE:** September 29, 2022

**RE:** Agricultural Tourism Use 8000 Oak Grove Road

#### PROJECT AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The applicant is requesting an Agricultural Tourism use in order to develop an existing farm into an event facility. Agricultural Tourism is permitted under Section 16.52 of the Cohoctah Township Zoning Ordinance, and it is our understanding that the Township has interpreted this section of the Ordinance under Section 16.52 (f) to allow a variety of agriculturally related uses including barn dances which we would also interpret to allow for weddings and other gathering for celebrations. In addition to these type events other uses are proposed including but not limited to the following:

1. Sale of agricultural Crops and Crafts.
2. Picnics
3. Pony Rides
4. Selling of Baked Goods
5. Petting Farms
6. Wagon and Hayrides
7. Gift Shops

This is a partial list as submitted by the applicant, but it has been our experience that these types of uses have the tendency to evolve as they find different agricultural tourism type uses. While we understand that there is some history with this site the Planning Commission at this time is tasked with reviewing the request for an agricultural tourism use at this location of Cohoctah Township. We also note there are some ownership issues, again this should not be an issue the Planning Commission is involved in as this is a legal matter for others to decide. In reviewing this request, please consider the following as volunteered by the applicant and as recommended by the Township Planner.

**Figure 1. Images of Subject Site**



### SITE ACCESS AND CIRCULATION

Vehicles will access the site via the existing driveway on Oak Grove Road. No plan for emergency vehicle access is provided, especially in light of a large gathering of people.

**Items to be Addressed:** *Approval of Township Fire Department.*

### ESSENTIAL SERVICES

While we expect the site will use the existing well and septic it may not be able to handle uses larger than typically needed for single family home and active farm. The well and septic must be approved by the Livingston County Health Department.

**Items to be Addressed:** *If necessary, the applicant must receive permits for well and septic from the Livingston County Health Department.*

### LANDSCAPING

Existing landscaping will remain which is primarily several mature trees. We would suggest the applicant consider installing additional landscaping on the north property line to better screen the existing home.

**Items to be Addressed:** *Consider additional landscaping to better buffer the home to the north.*

### LIGHTING

No lighting is provided. We question whether any outdoor areas will be lighted to better provide safety for visitors at night. We would limit lighting on the north side of the site/barn to not impact the neighbor.

**Items to be Addressed:** *Consider limited down shielded safety lighting.*

### SIGNS

No sign is proposed by the applicant.

**Items to be Addressed:** *None.*

### FLOOR PLAN AND ELEVATIONS

While no floor plans have been provided, they are not necessary for Planning Commission approval. Note however that the Livingston County Building Department will be required to approve the use for a public gathering space.

**Items to be Addressed:** *Approval of Livingston County Building Department for public gathering.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is our experience these type facilities can be very successful and provide a destination for people in the area and they also successfully promote and encourage agricultural preservation.

**If the Planning Commission does approve, we would recommend the applicant come back before them after the first full year of operation to gauge in cooperation with the applicant any issues or changes that need to be addressed.**

1. We would recommend approval of this site, conditional upon the following:
2. Ownership issues are addressed to the satisfaction of the Township Attorney.
3. Approval of Livingston County Building Department for public gathering.
4. Consider limited down shielded safety lighting.
5. Consider additional landscaping to better buffer the home to the north.
6. Approval of Township Fire Department.
7. If necessary, the applicant must receive permits for well and septic from the Livingston County Health Department. The applicant has indicated they will be using portable facilities as well.
8. Limit capacity to 150 people.
9. Hours of operation
  - a. Weekdays 8:00am -10:00 pm
  - b. Weekends 8:00am - 11:30 pm
10. Consider the number of “barn dance” events held each year. Twenty-six (26) would allow two per weekend for half the year. This would not limit the several other agricultural tourism uses as proposed throughout the year.
11. Bands and/or DJ’s at “barn dances” should be limited to playing indoors.