

Staff Report

Subject: Ordinance Revision
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Department: Development Services
Meeting Date: October 17, 2023
Item Description: Consideration of an **amendment** to the Code of Ordinances **Appendix C – Zoning Ordinance, Article V – Uses Permitted in Districts, Section 5.1- AR-1 Agricultural Residential Districts.**

Summary Recommendation

In order to create public-facing commerce which embraces the rural character of Effingham County, Staff recommends **approval** of an ordinance revision which creates a new business conditional use specific to conforming AR-1 districts: **Agritourism Business.**

Executive Summary/Background

- The new ordinance would accommodate agritourism type businesses within Effingham County.
- The definition of an agritourism business states, “the activities conducted on a working farm and offered to the public or to invited groups for the purpose of recreation, education and/or active involvement in the farm operation. These activities link agricultural production and/or processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining and/or educating the visitors and generating supplemental income for the farm or ranch owner. Agritourism activities are linked directly to the primary agricultural use of the property and any recreation, education or active involvement in the farm operation is secondary and shall constitute only a percentage of the total working farm.”
- This ordinance would eliminate the need for obtaining an assemblage permit for agricultural residential businesses that host events on their property that are strictly related to the agricultural use of the property.
- Agritourism Businesses would have to provide a concept plan for the business and obtain recommendation and approval from Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners.
- Agritourism Business would be a conditional use within conforming AR-1 districts and not located within a residential subdivision.
- Staff has had an influx of correspondence with business owners and agriculturally zoned property owners who are currently obtaining an assemblage permit annually or who would like to participate in agritourism businesses.

Alternatives

1. **Approve** an **amendment** to the Code of Ordinances **Appendix C – Zoning Ordinance, Article V – Uses Permitted in Districts, Section 5.1- AR-1 Agricultural Residential Districts**
2. **Deny** an **amendment** to the Code of Ordinances **Appendix C – Zoning Ordinance, Article V – Uses Permitted in Districts, Section 5.1- AR-1 Agricultural Residential Districts**

Recommended Alternative: 1

Other Alternatives: 2

Department Review: Development Services, County Attorney

FUNDING: N/A

Attachments: 1. Draft of Agritourism Ordinance