

## Staff Report

**Subject:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – Zoning Map Amendment  
**Author:** Chelsie Fernald, Senior Planner  
**Department:** Development Services  
**Meeting Date:** February 6, 2024

**Item Description:** **Hallie Myers** as agent for **Blue Sky Acres, Inc.** requests a **conditional use** for an **Agritourism Business**. Located at 729 Ardmore Oaky Road. [Map# 285 Parcel# 5]

### Summary Recommendation

Staff and Planning Board have reviewed the application and recommend **approval** of the request for a **conditional use** for an **Agritourism Business**.

### Executive Summary/Background

- The request for Agritourism Business - Conditional Use is a requirement of Appendix C – Zoning Ordinance, Article V – Uses Permitted in Districts, **Section 5.1.2.13 - Agritourism Business**
- At the June 6, 2023, Board of Commissioners meeting, a conditional use for a rural business, to allow for an equine therapy facility was approved.
- On November 7, 2023, the Agritourism Business ordinance had its second reading and was passed unanimously by the Board of Commissioners.
- The applicant is requesting the Agritourism Business conditional use as their future plans to expand include a workshop to provide job training for people with disabilities, and a classroom and covered arena for equine programs.
- The largest building the applicant plans to erect in the future, the covered arena, will be placed in the middle of the property and will be 500ft from the road and 350ft from property lines.
- Staff and the applicants have met multiple times to discuss the original rural business and Agritourism Business conditional use. The applicants have provided all necessary documentation including a concept site plan and a business narrative.
- The applicant has continuously worked with staff while the Agritourism Business ordinance was in draft form, with plans to apply for Agritourism Business when it was complete.
- Per the Agritourism Business ordinance, examples of uses permitted include the following:
  1. On-farm sales
  2. Pick your own.
  3. Agricultural crafts/ gift sales
  4. Fee fishing/ hunting
  5. Wildlife viewing and photography.
  6. Equine related activities
  7. Wagon rides
  8. School tours
  9. Garden/ Nursery tours
  10. Farm Technical Demonstrations and sales  
(canning, weaving, soap-making, etc.)
  11. Winery tastings or tours
  12. Corn mazes
  13. Haunted attractions
  14. Small, private zoological attractions or  
sanctuary
  15. Christmas tree farms

- This conditional use for Agritourism Business is consistent with the Future Land Use Map for this area as well. This parcel is projected to be an agricultural area.
- At the January 10, 2024, Planning Board meeting, Mr. Peter Higgins made a motion for approval. The motion was second by Mr. Brad Smith and carried unanimously.

**Alternatives**

1. **Approve** the request of a **conditional use** for an **Agritourism Business** with the following conditions:
  - The applicant shall obtain, and keep in good standing, an Effingham County Occupational Tax Certificate (business license).
2. **Deny** the request of a **conditional use** for an **Agritourism Business**.

**Recommended Alternative: 1**

**Other Alternatives: 2**

**Department Review:** Development Services

**FUNDING:** N/A

**Attachments:** 1. Zoning Map Amendment