

Town of Loxahatchee Groves

Agritourism Committee Meeting Summary

Date: November 18, 2024

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Town of Loxahatchee Groves

1. Meeting Proceedings

Call to Order & Roll Call

The Agritourism Committee meeting was officially called to order. Roll call confirmed the presence of committee members:

- **Chairperson:** Geoff Sluggett (Absent)
- **Vice Chairperson:** Manish Sood (Present)
- **Committee Members Present:** Joseph Chammas, Darrin Swank
- **Committee Members Absent:** Liza Holman (arrived late)
- **Town Representatives Present:** Town Manager Francine Ramaglia, Town Clerk Assistant Sammie Brown, Committee Liaison Jeff Kurtz
- **Additional Attendees:** Public Works Director Richard Gallant, Superintendent Craig Lower, Building Official Jacek Tomasik

Approval of Agenda & Minutes

- **Motion to approve the agenda** was made and seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
 - **Motion to approve the minutes** from the previous meeting was made and seconded. **Motion passed unanimously.**
-

2. Special Event Discussion: Kodak Black Charity Event

A significant portion of the meeting focused on reviewing the proposed charity event by celebrity **Kodak Black**. The event was designed to raise funds for veterans and included a public gathering with music, food, and family activities. Originally planned for Palm Beach, the event was relocated due to security concerns and scheduling conflicts.

Key Discussion Points

1. **Town's Response & Coordination**

- The event organizers approached the town at the last minute, making it difficult to complete all required approvals.
- The town staff, including the **Town Manager, Public Works, and Legal Team**, worked quickly to review the feasibility of the event.
- Organizers praised the **pro-business attitude of the town staff**, stating they may consider future events in Loxahatchee Groves.

2. Regulatory Considerations

- The town relies on **Palm Beach County Fire & PBSO** for safety approvals, as Loxahatchee Groves does not have its own police or fire department.
- Event approval required:
 - **Fire Marshal's safety inspection**
 - **PBSO's traffic and security plan**
 - **Neighbor notifications and consent requirements** (a point of contention)
- Town staff and legal counsel suggested engaging **Palm Beach County Commissioners** to ensure better alignment on future agritourism events.

3. Definition of Public vs. Private Events

- The committee debated **what qualifies as an agritourism event** versus a special event.
- **Kodak Black's event** included farm-related activities and educational experiences but also featured large crowds and amplified music.
- The lack of a clear definition in the town code led to confusion on whether such events should fall under agritourism or require special permits.

4. Security & Emergency Services

- **PBSO Representative Captain Turner** explained that **private security firms** have no jurisdiction over public roads and cannot direct traffic.
- For an event with **1,000+ attendees**, PBSO would require at least **8-10 deputies** and a supervisor.
- **Fire Rescue requires an onsite ambulance for events exceeding 1,000 attendees.**

- The town **requires a 30-day notice** for special event applications, though some exceptions have been made.

5. Traffic & Parking Considerations

- The event planned to **issue 10,000 tickets**, with an expected crowd of **5,000 attendees**.
- Town officials stressed the **importance of offsite parking with shuttle services** to prevent road congestion.
- The event team had arranged for **40 off-duty officers for security**, but PBSO's approval was still required.
- **Committee Suggestion:** Require large events to **submit traffic flow plans** in advance.

6. Sound & Noise Regulations

- Committee members debated whether agritourism events should have **time-based noise regulations instead of strict decibel limits**.
- **Consensus:** Noise should be allowed up to **10:00 PM on weekdays** and **11:00 PM on weekends**, with **exceptions for holidays**.
- The committee passed a **motion to regulate noise by event timing rather than decibel limits**.

7. Defining "Substantial Offsite Impact"

- The committee reaffirmed the need for **clearer definitions** of what constitutes a substantial offsite impact.
- **Proposed metrics:**
 - **Traffic congestion thresholds** (e.g., number of vehicles per acre).
 - **Parking capacity requirements** (onsite or designated offsite lots).
 - **Event size limitations** (e.g., requiring special permits for events over **500 attendees at one time**).
- The town manager was tasked with refining these standards for future discussions.

3. Committee Recommendations & Next Steps

A. Special Event Thresholds

- Define a **maximum attendee count** before triggering special event requirements.
- **Tentative proposal: 500+ attendees at one time** triggers a **special event permit**.
- The town should require **traffic, parking, and emergency response plans** for events above this threshold.

B. Noise & Lighting Regulations

- **Noise curfew:**
 - **Weekdays: 10:00 PM**
 - **Weekends: 11:00 PM**
 - **Holidays (e.g., New Year's Eve): Midnight**
- Security lighting should be allowed past midnight but **must be directed inward** to avoid disturbing neighbors.

C. Parking & Traffic Management

- Require **onsite parking for standard agritourism events**.
- Large events must **secure offsite parking** and provide shuttle services.
- **PBSO must be consulted** for traffic control planning.

D. Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness

- **Fire inspections should be encouraged for liability protection**, even if not mandatory.
- **Events with over 1,000 attendees require an onsite ambulance**.
- Large events must have an **approved emergency response plan**.

E. Engagement with County Officials

- The town should establish a **direct relationship with Palm Beach County Fire, PBSO, and Commissioners** to streamline event approvals.
- Encourage **pre-event site visits** to prevent last-minute compliance issues.

F. Best Management Practices (BMP) Guide

- Develop an official **BMP guide** for agritourism operators outlining:
 - Traffic & parking strategies.

- Noise management guidelines.
 - Lighting best practices.
 - Emergency preparedness requirements.
-

4. Conclusion & Adjournment

- The committee reaffirmed its commitment to **balancing agritourism with community interests.**
 - Future meetings will refine **event classification and offsite impact definitions.**
 - Meeting adjourned.
-