RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:

Adopt a resolution denying Appeal No. 2009-138 with findings, upholding the Planning Director's actions.

Justification is provided in the Staff Report to Board of Supervisors from Mariposa Planning.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:

In addition to information in staff report (Attachment 6):

- The Board of Supervisors discussed the “Use, Density and Operational Requirements for Agritourism in Mariposa County” on October 2, 2007.
- The Board had a presentation on Ag / Nature Tourism on November 27, 2007.
- The Board hosted two public workshops on Agritourism; one was conducted on January 26, 2008 and the other was conducted on March 1, 2008.
- The Board hosted two educational workshops on Agritourism; one was conducted on August 26, 2008 and the other was conducted on December 9, 2008. Direction to staff was given on December 9, 2008.
- The Board denied Appeal No. 2008-193, an appeal of the Planning Commission’s denial of Appeal No. 2008-155 for the Planning Director’s Zoning Use Determination resulting from review of Building Permit No. 27681. Action was by Board of Supervisors Resolution No. 09-42 on January 27, 2009.
- The Board adopted Ordinance No. 1049 on February 3, 2009 prohibiting the approval of any agritourism uses. An extension to Ordinance No. 1049 was adopted on March 10, 2009.
- The Board adopted Resolution No. 09-296 on June 16, 2009 initiating amendments to County Code for agritourism, as recommended.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Grant the appeal and reverse the Planning Director’s action on the appeal, reversing or modifying the Planning Director’s determination or portions of the determination. This action could result in the Planning Department signing off on Building Permit 27628, relative to zoning compliance.

Financial Impact? ( ) Yes (X) No Current FY Cost: $  
Budgeted In Current FY? ( ) Yes ( ) No ( ) Partially Funded  
Amount in Budget: $ 
Additional Funding Needed: $  
Source: 
Internal Transfer  
Unanticipated Revenue  
Transfer Between Funds  
Contingency  
( ) General  
( ) Other

Staff Report to the Board with Attachments:
- Vicinity Map
- Planning Director Determination
- Notice of Appeal
- AE Zone and Definition
- Ordinance No. 1049
- History of determinations and actions by Mariposa County as referenced in Staff Report
- Draft Resolution

Clerk's Use Only:
Res. No. 09-585  
Vote – Ayes:  
Noes:  
Absent:  
( ) Approved  
( ) Minute Order Attached  
( ) No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date:  
Attest: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board  
County of Mariposa, State of California  
By: Deputy

County Administrative Officer: 
( ) Requested Action Recommended  
( ) No Opinion

Comments:  

CAO:  

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MARIPOSA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Resolution No. 09-535

A resolution denying Appeal No. 2009-138, upholding the Planning Director’s denial of Building Permit No. 27628 for the proposed construction of a 957 square foot structure entitled “agritourism bathroom” on APN 016-220-008; a 21.47 acre parcel located at 2100 Old Highway in Catheys Valley; part of Coyote Springs Ranch.

WHEREAS, Building Permit Application No. 27628 was submitted to the county on 27th day of March 2008 in response to a Stop Work Notice (“red-tag”); and

WHEREAS, the permit application was for property owner Theresa Castaldi for her property located at 2100 Old Highway in Catheys Valley, also known as Assessor Parcel Number 016-220-008 and hereinafter referred to as “subject property”; and

WHEREAS, the subject property is known to be part of the Coyote Springs Ranch; and

WHEREAS, the plans submitted on the 27th day of March 2008 for Building Permit Application No. 27628 are entitled, “Public Toilet Facility with Optional Shower” and were prepared by DA Drafting. Sandip Guha stamped certain sheets of the plans. The project showed construction of 957 sq. ft. structure with 4 toilets, and an optional construction area with 3 showers in the women’s facility; and 3 toilets, 3 urinals, and an optional construction area with 3 showers and lockers in the men’s facility; and

WHEREAS, on the 24th day of April 2008, a correction notice for the plans was issued by the Building Department to the applicant, advising of corrections needed to the project; and

WHEREAS, on the 9th day of May 2008, additional information was submitted to the Building Department by the applicant in response to some of the items listed in the correction notice; and

WHEREAS, on the 9th day of May 2008, a correction notice was issued by the Building Department to the applicant, advising of corrections needed to the project; and

WHEREAS, the correction notice issued on the 9th day of May 2008 was not addressed by the applicant within one hundred eighty (180) days, and the permit application technically expired per California Building Code (CBC) Section 105.3.2 on the 9th day of November 2008; and
WHEREAS, the applicant asked that Building Permit Application No. 27594 (the Big Barn #2 – 2nd floor) be put on hold in a letter dated the 30th day of October 2008; however based on its specificity, this letter would not cover Building Permit No. 27628; and

WHEREAS, during a telephone conversation on the 27th day of July 2009, an agent for the applicant made a request to county administration staff that Building Permit Application No. 27628 be reactivated; and

WHEREAS, on the 3rd day of August 2009, a set of new (corrected) plans for the project was received at the Building Department from the applicant. These plans are entitled, “Coyote Springs Guest Ranch Agritourism Bathroom” and were prepared by TDM Draft Services. Paul Gillespie stamped certain sheets of the plans. The project showed construction of a 957 sq. ft. structure with 4 toilets, 3 showers and lockers in the women’s facility and 3 toilets, 3 urinals, 3 showers and lockers in the men’s facility; and

WHEREAS, based on provisions of California Building Code Section 105.3.2, this submittal is technically a new application; and

WHEREAS, on the 3rd day of August 2009, a correction notice for the plans submitted on the 3rd day of August 2009 was issued by the Building Department to the applicant advising of corrections needed to the project; and

WHEREAS, on the 7th day of August 2009, the applicant’s agent was advised that the Planning Director determined that he is unable to authorize issuance of the permit. The project is not allowed by Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 09-42. The project may not be authorized pursuant to the Agriculture Exclusive (AE) zone (Chapter 17.40) as either a permitted use or a conditional use. The project may not be authorized as “exempt” from Mariposa County Ordinance No. 1049; and

WHEREAS, on the 13th day of August 2009, correspondence from the Health Department was sent to the applicant to document conversations on the 31st day of July 2009 and the 12th day of August 2009 regarding septic system permits on-site. The correspondence states the applicant will need to amend the application and plans to reflect the new proposal to use an existing on-site septic system installed for another project, for the agritourism restroom project. The Health Department advises, “The Building Director has informed me that the current design of the ‘Public Restroom’ will support up to 300 people. The limited capacity of the system installed under permit #25784 will not support that many people; therefore you may want to consider amending your restroom plans accordingly”; and

WHEREAS, the permit plans and design is still not complete for processing as the permits are not ready to be issued and project amendments are still necessary pursuant to Health Department comments; and

WHEREAS, on the 24th day of August 2009, an appeal of the Planning Director’s determination was submitted to the Board of Supervisors and that appeal was
determined to be complete on the 26th day of August 2009. This was given a file number of Appeal No. 2009-138; and

WHEREAS, there has been no additional activity regarding the project plans for Building Permit No. 27628, and the plans are still not approved for issuance. The plan check (compliance with Uniform Building Code) has not been satisfactorily completed. The information necessary for authorization of septic system connection has not been satisfactorily completed; and

WHEREAS, processing of Appeal No. 2009-138 was conducted pursuant to Mariposa County Resolution No. 02-525; and

WHEREAS, a duly noticed Board of Supervisors' public hearing to consider Appeal No. 2009-138 was scheduled for the 3rd day of November 2009; and

WHEREAS, a Staff Report addressing the Notice of Appeal was prepared pursuant to local administrative procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors did hold a public hearing on Appeal No. 2009-138 on November 3, 2009 and considered all of the information in the public record, including the Staff Report packet, testimony presented by the public concerning the Planning Director Determination and Findings, the Notice of Appeal, and the comments of the appellant.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Board of Supervisors of the County of Mariposa does hereby:

1) Deny Appeal No. 2009-138 based upon the findings as contained in Exhibit A of this Resolution; and

2) Uphold the Planning Director's action denying Building Permit Application No. 27628 as outlined in correspondence to the applicant from the county dated August 7, 2009 including all determinations in the correspondence, and all findings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the denial of Appeal No. 2009-138 is based upon the discussion of Appeal Issues as contained in the Staff Report to the Board of Supervisors and is also hereby incorporated into this resolution by reference.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED THAT all previous Planning Director determinations (including those which were not appealed and those which were upheld through the appeal process), all previous Planning Commission determinations and actions, including those which were upheld through the appeal process, and all Board of Supervisors’ actions on which involve agritourism and the Coyote Springs Ranch are also hereby incorporated into this resolution by reference.

ON MOTION BY Supervisor Allen, seconded by Supervisor Bibby, this resolution is duly passed and adopted this 3rd day of November, 2009 by the following vote:
AYES: Aborn, Bibby, Cann, and Allen

NOES: Turpin

EXCUSED: None

ABSTAIN: None

Brad Aborn, Chairman
Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

Margie Williams
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Steven W. Dahlem
County Counsel
Exhibit A

Findings

1. There is ample evidence in official county records to support a finding that, since September of 2007, there has been no existing legally established permanent on-site land use at APN 016-220-008, a 21.47 acre parcel in the Agriculture Exclusive (AE) zone, which is consistent with the definition for Agritourism as found in Chapter 17.148 of Mariposa County Code or which is consistent with written interpretations of the definition of Agritourism which have been formally made, for which a 300 person occupancy “agritourism restroom” can be found to be appurtenant. This evidence includes Planning Director determinations, Planning Commission actions on appeals, and Board of Supervisors’ actions on appeals.

2. There is ample evidence in official county records that Mariposa County has consistently and on multiple occasions advised the applicant that the scope and extent of her plans for business necessitate a Conditional Use Permit in order to operate as a Guest Ranch in the AE zone, or a rezoning to the Resort Commercial zone.

3. The appellant has not submitted any evidence to support a claim that an agritourism restroom with a design which is adequate to support a 300 person occupancy is appurtenant to an existing legally established permanent Agritourism land use on APN 016-220-008, as defined in Chapter 17.148 of Mariposa County or is consistent with written interpretations of the definition of Agritourism which have been formally made and upheld through the appeal process. Pursuant to Section 17.08.080, Mariposa County Code, it shall be the burden of an applicant to provide all necessary information in support of any matter heard and decided by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. Failure to provide such necessary information in support of a matter as described above shall be deemed grounds for denial of application.

4. The appellant’s claim that Building Permit Application No. 27628 was deemed complete for processing on March 28, 2008 is not consistent with information from the files for Coyote Springs Ranch. Pursuant to Section 17.08.080, Mariposa County Code, it shall be the burden of an applicant to provide all necessary information in support of any matter heard and decided by the Planning Commission or Board of Supervisors. Failure to provide such necessary information in support of a matter as described above shall be deemed grounds for denial of application.

5. The appellant has not submitted any evidence to support a claim that the County’s action regarding Building Permit No. 27628 was in any way arbitrary, capricious or contrary to California law. The Planning Director’s determinations regarding permits and agritourism development on the subject property have been made in accordance with authority granted by County Code. Pursuant to Section 17.04.050.G, where ambiguity or conflict appears to exist in the use of certain terms, words or phrases as defined in Chapter 17.04 or elsewhere in Title 17, the Planning Director shall resolve the conflict or ambiguity in accordance with the provisions of Title 17. The appellant
has routinely exhausted her administrative appeal rights related to discretionary Planning Director determinations made regarding agritourism development on the Coyote Springs Ranch since 2007. The County's position regarding agritourism development has been consistent since 2007.

6. The Planning Director's determination is consistent with past determinations made since September of 2007, which have been upheld through the appeal process, by both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors. The applicant has been told, in writing, a number of times since 2007, that the scope and extent of her planned activities for development necessitate a Conditional Use Permit for a guest ranch development or a rezoning to Resort Commercial. The requirement for these permits has been upheld by the Board of Supervisors. The applicant has been told, in writing, that uses which have recently occurred and which are scheduled to occur (including those events which have occurred through the Public Assemblage Permit Process in 2008) are not consistent with the definition and intent of agritourism in the AE zone. Uses which have occurred that are high-intensity uses must be reviewed through a discretionary planning process. A 300 person capacity stand-alone restroom is a facility which would support a high intensity guest ranch or a resort commercial operation which is not consistent with the Board of Supervisor's determinations made on 10/2/07.

7. There is no evidence in the record that the processing of Building Permit 27628 has ever been delayed by the county. The permit plans have never been satisfactorily revised by the applicant such that they are “ready to issue”. Regardless of the status of the plan check, in March of 2008, at the time of permit submittal, the standing Planning Director determinations (supported through the appeal process and upheld by the Board of Supervisors), would not have allowed a 300 person stand-alone restroom.

8. Development which is not consistent with an area's zoning, density and use provisions does have potential to impact the public's health, safety and welfare. There are potential traffic impacts, noise impacts, lighting impacts, fire hazard impacts, impacts on government services, and impacts on agricultural uses. The purpose of zoning is to ensure compatibility of land uses and development in a given area. The applicant has been advised that the extent of her business plans necessitates a conditional use permit (for a guest ranch) or a rezoning (to resort commercial). The purpose of a conditional use permit (established for a listed conditional use) is to conduct a project specific and site specific evaluation of a project, which may or may not be appropriate for a site or for an area, depending on a case specific review. A conditional use permit may be approved, approved with conditions or denied, based upon the conclusion of the review. A rezoning application is reviewed to ensure that the proposed zoning (and allowable land uses) will not create significant impacts and is physically suitable in the area. The review includes an analysis of General Plan policies. Finally, a conditional use permit and a rezoning are both subject to environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the purpose of which is to address potential impacts to the environment, which include health, safety and welfare issues. Development which “by-passes” a required discretionary review process (the
conditional use permit or the rezoning processes) also impacts potentially affected neighbors' rights to participate in the public review process.
TO: KRS SCHENK, Planning Director

FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board


RESOLUTION 09-535

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED THIS Order on November 3, 2009

ACTION AND VOTE:

10:58 a.m. Kris Schenk, Planning Director;


BOARD ACTION: Chair Aborn reviewed the hearing procedures. Sarah Williams, Deputy Planning Director, presented the staff report, including a review of the history of the project and issues and previous actions that have been taken relative to the agritourism issues. She reviewed and advised of the five appeal issues that were submitted: 1) Permit authorized as necessary to continue permitted use existing prior to Ordinance No. 1049; 2) Permit application was deemed complete prior to Ordinance No. 1049; 3) refusal to continue processing Permit Application was arbitrary, capricious and contrary to California law; 4) decision was discriminatory, in bad faith and violates appellant’s civil rights in violation of Title 42, U.S.C. Section 1893; and 5) appeal is without prejudice to appellant’s right to seek relief at any time. Kris Schenk and Sarah Williams responded to questions from the Board relative to clarification of whether the issue on appeal is the size of the restroom facilities or whether they are permitted. Debra Willis responded to a question from the Board relative to the status of the cabins.

The public portion of the hearing was opened and input was provided by the following:

Appellants Presentation:

Attorney Gerald Weaver advised that he is representing Castaldi and Oakander, owners of the Coyote Springs Ranch. He advised that the request is for a ministerial building permit and that there is an obligation for the permits to be issued as long as they meet the Building Code. He feels that based on their history with Planning staff, that staff is trying to keep this use from happening until the policy is
adopted for agritourism uses. He referenced the arena events and uses that have been held on the Ranch. He provided input on the status of the building permit application for the free-standing restrooms in relation to the urgency Ordinance that was adopted earlier this year, and stated he does not understand why there is a concern about the proposed size of the facility. He feels that the permit was accepted by the County and other applications were submitted for the Ranch; and it was subsequently agreed to put this application on hold, and then the County accepted reactivation of the application. He does not understand the relevance of Resolution No. 09-42 to the restroom project. He presented the following documents for evidence:

1) Letter from Theresa Castaldi dated October 30, 2008 to the Building Department putting the Public Restroom Project on hold;
2) Letter from the Planning Director dated August 6, 2008 to the applicant relative to the review of Plans for Permit No. 27681, along with a schedule of events for 2008 at the Ranch;
3) Letter from the Deputy Planning Director dated February 3, 2009 to the applicant concerning the adoption of Resolution No. 09-42, along with a copy of said Resolution;
4) Letter from the Building Director dated October 31, 2008 to the Health Director and the Planning Director relative to the processing of the permits; along with a letter from Planning dated July 25, 2007 to the applicant relative to serving food and beverages; and
5) Staff report for the Board meeting of January 13, 2009 relative to Appeal No. 2008-193.

Ken Baker, Project Manager for Coyote Springs Ranch, testified as to the agritourism uses that have occurred on the property since 2007, and showed a file full of flyers and brochures that he has for the events; i.e., Western Fair, rodeos, arena events, and ranch tours, etc. He advised of their presence on the Web and that they are a cow/calf operation and are experimenting with growing other products on the Ranch. He advised that they applied in 2009 for permits to have bus tours and to feed the guests by catering. They are applying for a Gathering Permit for their third annual Catheys Valley Fair. He appealed to the Board to look at what we have in the County and the possibility and to do something to make it work for everybody versus putting obstructions in the way.

Speakers in Support of the Appellant:
Steve Fortner, property owner in Catheys Valley, stated he has been fighting with the County for fifteen years over what they can do with their property. County Counsel admonished that the testimony needs to be limited to the five issues raised on appeal. Steve Fortner continued and advised that there is a nexus as they have a mortgage against Coyote Springs Ranch and this is the first issue that has gone through the administrative process and if there is any litigation, they will need to be faced also. County Counsel reiterated that the testimony needs to be related to the issues raised in the appeal. Steve Fortner referred to his installation of the water tank which was “against the rules” and stated he feels this is the same. He stated he feels that things need to be brought up in the administrative process so they can be used in an appeal to the Court. He feels the bathrooms are a nexus to trying to limit the size and success of this organization.

Opponents Presentation:
County Counsel reiterated his statement that the testimony needs to be related to the issues raised in the appeal.

Rita Kidd stated she is a member of MERG (Mariposas for the Environment and Responsible Government) and she presented a letter from MERG dated November 2, 2009 asking the Board to apply existing law and uphold the decisions made by County staff. She presented a letter from herself and her husband, Tony, dated November 3, 2009 relative to the appeal and urging the Board to defend and support the Planning Director and Building Director’s determinations. She advised that she serves on the Agritourism Advisory Committee; and she used an analogy of Savoury’s Restaurant moving and building a restroom first. Then they see that they can add more tables and chairs and serve more people and exceed the Fire Marshall regulations. She noted that the Agricultural Exclusive zone is different than the other zones. She also noted that this operator has a permit to build a use that is in excess of what is recommended in the agritourism policy that is coming to the Board. She provided input on the agritourism uses being located in areas with other uses.

Rick Benson, County Administrative Officer, asked the Board about continuing the hearing for the Chair to participate as he has another appointment. Chair Aborn asked the appellants if they are agreeable with continuing the hearing. Attorney Weaver concurred and advised that his staff report will be the same for the Building appeal. County Counsel provided an admonishment and advised that since
the Board is in the middle of the hearing process, this matter should not be discussed by the Board members outside of the hearing process. (M)Turpin, (S)Allen, the hearing was continued to 2:45 p.m./Ayes: Unanimous.

12:21 noon Lunch

2:46 p.m. The Board reconvened and continued with the public hearing to consider Appeal No. 2009-138. Chair Aborn called for any further opponents presentation, and none was received.

Rebuttal by the Appellant:

Attorney Weaver referred to the opponent’s presentation that the use of the property now is in excess of what the new policy would allow. He advised that this is assuming that a new ordinance is adopted that limits the occupancy to less than 250 persons a day; and even if that happened, his clients would have an existing non-conforming use.

The public portion of the hearing was closed and the Board commenced with deliberations. Staff responded to questions from the Board relative to the application process for this permit; relative to Public Assemblage Permits and how many times they could be issued at a location where the zoning is improper; relative to the current permit for up to 250 day guests and how this request for the restroom facility fits in; current allowed uses and what would be permitted as non-conforming (grandfathered) use once an agritourism ordinance is established; and being able to accommodate needs of the guests that are allowed with a Public Assemblage Permit, and clarifying that issuance of a Public Assemblage Permit is not guaranteed and it is for a temporary use. Fred Lustenberger responded to questions from the Board relative to the status of the cabins since the last hearing. Planning staff responded to questions from the Board clarifying that this appeal stands on its own and does not address the cabins; and relative to determining “deemed to be complete” for permits. County Counsel reviewed the options available to the Board for action: 1) deny the appeal; 2) uphold the appeal; or 3) request further action from staff.

(M)Allen, (S)Bibby, Res. 09-535 was adopted denying Appeal No. 2009-138, with the recommended findings. Further discussion was held. Ayes: Aborn, Bibby, Cann, Allen; Noes: Turpin. The hearing was closed.

Cc: Building Department
    Steven W. Dahlem, County Counsel
    File
October 6, 2009

Gerald C. Weaver via fax (559) 642-2707
P.O. Box 494
Bass Lake, CA 93604

RE: Correction on Scheduling of Public Hearings for Appeal. No. 2009-138 (Planning Appeal) and Appeal for Building Director Determination (Building Appeal)

Dear Mr. Weaver,

Thank you for your telephone call this morning. This is to correct the letter I sent out, dated October 2, 2009, in which I described the tentative date for scheduling of the above referenced appeals.

We have scheduled the public hearings for these appeals for Tuesday, November 3, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. or as soon thereafter as possible.

I apologize for the incorrect date reference in my previous correspondence.

Sincerely,

Sarah Williams
Deputy Director

CC: Coyote Springs Ranch
Margie Williams, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Steven W. Dahlem, County Counsel
Kris Schenk, Planning Director

Our Mission is to provide our clients with professional service and accurate information in a respectful, courteous, and enthusiastic manner resulting in a well-planned rural environment.