



February 15, 2018

Jerry Moore, Story County Planning and Development Director
900 Sixth Street
Nevada, IA 50201

RE: Raspberry Hill Bed and Breakfast and Event Center at 5500 240th Street

The proposed facility is within the Southwest I Allowable Growth Area of the City of Ames and recognized as such by the Urban Service Area designation within the jointly administered Ames Urban Fringe Plan. This brings unique considerations into the review process for the conditional use permit compared to other rural areas of Story County. The Fringe Plan includes Urban Service Area Goals 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 to help guide expectations for review of development. These goals are part of the development review process to address consistency with the Fringe Plan, provision of adequate public facilities with development, new development sharing in improvement costs, and that the provision of services and infrastructure are coordinated with new development.

The City has some reservations about the use of the site with an event center and whether it is designed and will be operated in a compatible manner with future urbanization. It is important to the City that the development of the site does not interfere or detract from the desirability of adjacent property owners seeking annexation and urbanization of their property in furtherance of the Fringe Plan.

The event venue is of particular concern as we understand that it has stated maximum occupancy of 300 persons, it has no restriction on the numbers of events in a year, and that its hours of operation can extend late into evening. The scale of the event center seems to be out of scale to the principal use of the site as an eight room bed and breakfast. We request the Zoning Board of Adjustment consider conditions of approval to limit the number of events in a year and to reduce the intended capacity for the facility to be more in scale with the size of the bed and breakfast. Hosting events past 10:00 pm could also be disruptive to residential neighbors and could be an additional operational condition of the conditional use permit.

The second issue regarding development of the site is ensuring that the new development appropriately facilitates urbanization of the area. The subject site has a significant amount of frontage (861 feet) along an unpaved street. Development in an area designated for urbanization would best be served by a paved road and to have abutting property owners contribute towards future improvements in an equitable manner.

The City requests that the Board include a condition of approval that a minimum of 40 feet of right-of-way be required to be dedicated across the site's frontage for future road construction (total right-of-way width of 80 feet with both sides). The City also requests that a condition be included that is consistent with standard rural subdivision covenants that a property owner agrees to participate in future assessments for public improvements at the request of the City. This can be done by requiring a covenant on the property that waives a right to protest assessment costs associated with improvements of public infrastructure benefitting the site. We request the right-of-way be dedicated and the covenant be recorded prior to initiating use (certifying occupancy) of the site for the proposed facility.

The proposed water system is designed to serve the new levels of use, but does not include placement of a hydrant(s) or ensuring water pressure is adequate to provide for fire protection. The City believes it would be prudent to provide water services capable of supporting urban fire protection measures based upon the proposed size of the facility. The property owner and Xenia should review the technical requirements and ability to provide water service that would accommodate future fire protection and provide this information with the conditional use permit application prior to its approval.

The subject property is also located in the middle of a Growth Area and could be a key property in securing annexation of properties in the area and ensuring logical boundaries at the time of future annexation. A covenant acknowledging that the property owner must voluntarily participate in annexation at the request of the City would be appropriate to assist in creating future logical annexation boundaries for the Southwest I area. This request is typical of what is expected with rural development within an Urban Service Area to ensure consistency with Fringe Plan Policies.

The City believes that with the requested conditions of limiting the event center operations, requiring dedication of right-of-way, designing water service for fire protection, and securing covenants to assist in future annexation and infrastructure improvements benefitting the site that the impacts of the rural development can be minimized and found to be compatible with intent of the Urban Service Area designation.

Sincerely,



Kelly Diekmann
City of Ames
Planning and Housing Director