

PROPOSED CHANGES TO REGULATE AGROTOURISM IN GREENE COUNTY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' MEETING FEBRUARY 24, 2026

PUBLIC COMMENTS

WHAT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS BUT NOT DISCUSSED

- Farmers are under greater financial pressure today than ever before
- Most farmers rely on agricultural production for their livelihood exclusively
- The farmer's ability to support themselves solely from agriculture is challenged
- Some have to work part time or even full time jobs to support the farm

I SUBMIT THAT THE LATTER CHOICE BEGETS ALL OF THE THINGS THE PROPONENTS OF THIS CHANGE MOVED HERE TO AVOID AND OBJECTABLE TO MOST LONG TERM RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY



THE CURRENT CONDITIONS ARE NOT SUSTAINABLE LEAVING FARMERS WITH TWO ALTERNATIVES

DIVERSIFICATION

Broaden agricultural products

Diversify revenue streams

Long term residential

Short term rental

Agrotourism

LIQUIDATION

- More Homes
- More infrastructure
 - Fire Department
 - EMS
 - Policing
 - Schools
- More Traffic
- More Taxes

IT'S A MATTER OF PRESERVATION

- Rural property in general and farmland in particular are being developed at accelerating rates
- With development comes all the issues associated with it
- The State of Virginia, the County and the overwhelming majority of its residents, all recognize the importance of preserving our agricultural heritage and rural ambiance of Greene County.

THE IRONY

Ironically, the proposed changes will make keeping their land more difficult, eventually helping to destroy the very character and heritage of Greene County that the proponents of this proposal claim they want to preserve.

AGROTOURISM ATTRACTS A HOST OF VISITORS TO OUR COUNTY.

DIRECT BENEFITS FROM OPERATIONS

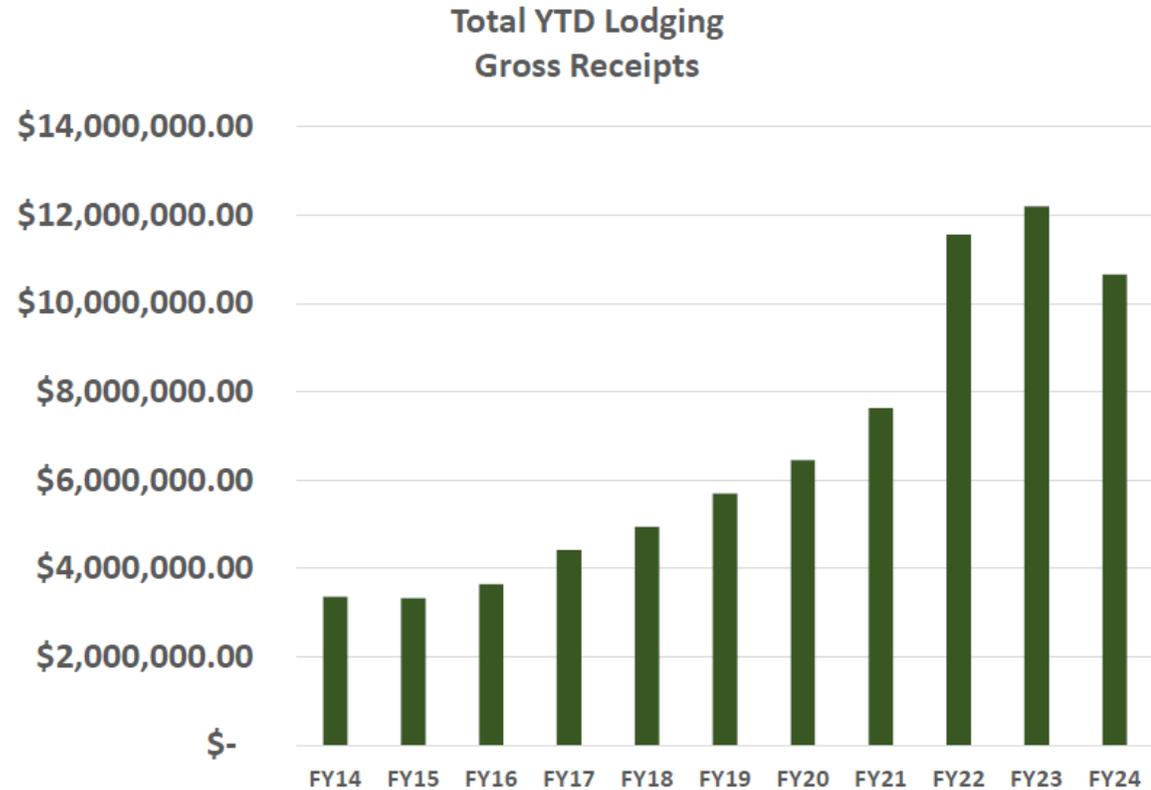
- Hotels, air B&B's
- Restaurants
- Hair dressers
- Farm hands
- Wait staff
- Catering businesses
- Local musicians
- Bartenders
- Florists
- Grounds people
- Repair services

INDIRECT BENEFITS FROM INVESTMENT

- Excavators
- Framers
- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Roofers
- Septic installation companies
- Driveway Construction & Maintenance
- Equipment

Impact of Tourism in Greene

Fiscal Year	Total YTD Lodging Gross Receipts	YTD Increase
FY14	\$ 3,358,855.00	
FY15	\$ 3,325,956.80	2%
FY16	\$ 3,645,755.40	11%
FY17	\$ 4,419,682.20	14%
FY18	\$ 4,936,811.00	15%
FY19	\$ 5,696,704.40	21%
FY20	\$ 6,452,782.60	7%
FY21	\$ 7,631,487.33	15%
FY22	\$ 11,557,029.60	44%
FY23	\$ 12,198,769.80	10%
FY24	\$ 10,655,313.20	-13%



Virginia Tourism Corporation Reporting on Greene County

Total Economic Impact: \$31,000,000

Local Taxes: \$1,600,000

BLOSSOM RIDGE

Prioritizes companies in Greene County and patronizes local businesses when possible.

We reach out to surrounding counties when services are not available in Greene contributing to the regional economy.

Blossom Ridge has invested nearly \$3M in construction costs alone since 2022.

TOURISM 2025

MISSION STATEMENT

To promote Greene County as a destination and raise the tourism economic impact.

VISION STATEMENT

Greene County will be recognized as a centrally located destination to the region's diverse tourism opportunities. The community will appreciate the tourism impact and protect related assets.

GOALS:

Assure Stanardsville's Vitality and Sustainability

Capitalize on Shenandoah National Park's Assets and Potential Guests

Develop a Comprehensive Marketing and Advertising Strategy

Advocate for Planning and Protection of Growth

Support Individual Tourism Industries

Strengthen and Capitalize on Partnerships

CORE VALUES

The Greene County Tourism Council and the Office of Economic Development and Tourism believe in our Vision Statement and hold the following Core Values as essential to reaching our vision. These values are the foundation of the economic and tourism potential of our community.

- We value tourism's contribution to the entire community, including the county's financial growth that includes:
 - The need for tourism-supported businesses and services
 - Our small businesses and the entrepreneurs that serve our guests
 - The need to support growth in tourism-related industries
 - The need to evolve the diversity of our tourism trades
- We value the county's significant assets that include:
 - The Shenandoah National Park (SNP) bringing tourists to the area and providing a number of great opportunities for our guests
 - The Route 29 corridor, the individuals it brings through the county, and the need to enhance and protect the corridor
 - Our agricultural heritage and our agri-tourism opportunities
 - Our ability to offer Stanardsville's small town charm and recognize the importance of serving the county's seat
 - Our central location to the region's diverse tourism sites
- We value preservation and planned development that enhances the tourism experience that includes:
 - Preserving our natural beauty, rural scenery, mountain views, view sheds, and night skies
 - The convenience of the retail district in Ruckersville and the protection of the rural character of the western part of the county
 - The encouragement of sustainable businesses and protection of the environment.
 - Ruckersville Master Plan study
 - Planned development on Route 33 west of Ruckersville to preserve our rural/agriculture, in particular protecting the SNP entrance corridor
- We value the opportunity to provide a wide range of lodging accommodations from a national chain to a variety of hide-a-way cabins.
- We value our partnership opportunities that include: Shenandoah National Park (SNP), the region's other locality's tourism offices (DMOs), Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), Virginia Green, etc.
- We value Greene County's heritage in agriculture, the mountain communities, historic events, and historic buildings.



CODE OF VIRGINIA

"Agritourism Activity" [is defined as]

Any activity carried out on a farm or ranch that allows members of the general public, for recreational, entertainment, or educational purposes, to view or enjoy rural activities, including farming, wineries, ranching, horseback riding, historical, cultural and harvest-your-own activities, or natural activities and attractions.

An activity is an agritourism activity whether or not the participant paid to participate in the activity.

Virginia localities are **prohibited** from regulating or restricting agritourism activities unless the activities have a substantial impact on public health, safety, or welfare.



CONSIDERATIONS IN THE PROPOSAL

- Limiting the number of Events permitted “by right”
- Adequate EMS access to the site and surrounding community
- Parking – simply requiring unnecessary space or specific surfaces can lead to water management issues that would not otherwise be a problem
- Additional sanitation restrictions - currently defined by the Department of Health, completely adequate; requiring no adjustment
- **Adequate access to drinking water however is completely unaddressed**

SIZE AND TRAFFIC THRESHOLDS

In some jurisdictions, such as Albemarle County, agritourism events on sites larger than 21 acres with fewer than 50 visitor vehicle trips per day do not require zoning clearance.

Smaller sites or higher traffic, may require an Administrative Operations Clearance.

Current Restrictions by P&Z seem more than adequate & do not require further adjustment

Determined on a case-by-case basis considering access to the property and surrounding roadways

BLOSSOM RIDGE FARM & VINEYARD

DESCRIPTION

1. It is a family Farm and registered as such with the USDA
2. Products
 - a. Hay ~ 150 bales/year
 - b. Flowers – 3500 bulbs planted last year
 - c. Fruits – 30 mixed cultivars (peach, plumb, Pear, Fig) planted across property
 - d. Honey
 - e. Vegetables
 - f. Eggs
3. Residence
4. Agrotourism

AGROTOURISM AT BLOSSOM RIDGE

INDIVIDUAL

- natural activities and attractions
 - Bird watching
 - Hiking
 - Fishing
- educational opportunities
 - Piedmont Community College
 - Nature Bus School
 - Adult education in Farming and Ag Technology
- to view and enjoy rural activities
 - Photography
 - Painting
 - Farm Stays
- Harvest-your-own activities

GROUP

- Fund Raisers – Green Care Clinic
- Charity Events – Prom, Sherrif's Dept
- Meetings-Chamber (2), AA (2)
- Gatherings – Birthdays, Christmas parties, Christenings, Memorials
- Weddings
 - ~ 15/year
 - Average duration ~ six hours
 - Average attendance 100 people
 - Amplified Sound ~ 3 hours (<50% external)
 - Off Property at 2300

RESTRICTING THE NUMBER OF EVENTS “BY RIGHT” WILL LIMIT

The County’s ability to encourage and promote tourism in general

And

Blossom Ridge from providing Low cost/No cost service to the community

RESTRICTING AMPLIFIED MUSIC IS THERE A NEED?

- Currently
 - Restricted to 65db (a mother singing a lullaby) at the property line 7a-10p
 - Quiet after 10pm (55db)
- In reality its probably Unenforceable

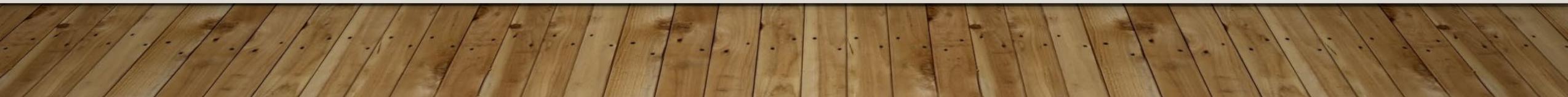
COMPLAINTS SINCE MARCH 2024

#1

- July 14, 2024
 - Followed our posting of my son's family birthday party
 - “we should remember that we are located in a residential community”,
 - Posted to our Facebook Page by a resident of the adjoining neighborhood before we even our 1st agrotourism event.
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- Notwithstanding that Blossom Ridge farm is **NOT** located in a residential community at all. Our family farm is in an agricultural area Zoned IA and their neighborhood is located in it.

COMPLAINTS SINCE MARCH 2024

#2

- June 1, 2024,
 - Call to Sheriff's Office at 10:03pm
 - Complaint was "the music was not yet off"
 - Admittedly, the quiet ordinance takes effect at 10:00pm; not 10:01 or later.
 - Result- A deputy was dispatched but apparently the music was off by his arrival requiring no further intervention.
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COMPLAINTS SINCE MARCH 2024

#3

- May 10th 2025 - far more insidious
- Call to the Sheriff's Office ~9:30 pm
- Complaint was "that a woman was screaming and being attacked at Blossom Ridge.
- Result – TWO deputies arrive at my son's wedding reception. The only outside noise at the time was a cheer by the 55 guests for their send off.
- One of the deputies who responded was married on our farm and greeted us warmly. However, the nature of the call warranted the other deputy to circulate among our guests which was totally appropriate but embarrassing to say the least, especially given the attendance of a foreign ambassador to the US.

COMPLAINTS SINCE MARCH 2024

#4

- November 8, 2025
- Complaint made at the Dec 17 P&Z meeting inviting public comment
- Music recorded at 85db Statute 65db (a lullaby); 55db after 10pm
- So loud it rattled their windows.

- Inconsistencies

85db = the noise of a dishwasher & unlikely to rattle windows >900ft away

We measured 65 db at the property line in compliance with current regulations

Admitted music ended at 10pm in compliance with the current ordinance.

OTHER COMPLAINTS SINCE MARCH 2024

- Erection of our pavilion
- Location of our Hay Bales

THE SUPPOSED NOISE ISSUE

- Complaints from less than 20 homes across the County
 - 14 homes on Vista Heights Dr
 - 2 Homes in Dyke
- None objectively confirmed

EXCEPTIONS TO VA CODE § 15.2-2288.6

Virginia localities are **prohibited** from regulating or restricting agritourism activities unless the activities have a substantial impact on public health, safety, or welfare.

Local governments cannot require special use permits for these activities if they are customary.

“NOISE” AT BLOSSOM RIDGE

<15 events/year X <3 hours/event = <45 hours of noise/year

Most have music inside

~7pm – 10pm



DOES THE NOISE POSE SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT TO THE COMMUNITY'S WELFARE?

Does this rise to a level requiring Legislative Change by the Board?

Will the proposed changes restricting Agrotourism help?

Are they enforceable?

Will the proposed changes withstand the scrutiny of the Virginia Court?



WHAT CONSTITUTES A "SUBSTANTIAL IMPACT"

- Typically determined on a case-by-case basis suggesting a quasi-judicial process **not** a legislative one
- Localities cannot enact zoning ordinances that unreasonably restrict or regulate farming, forestry or related agritourism activities unless there is a substantial impact.
- Accepted exceptions generally include excessive traffic, noise, or inadequate sanitation.

WE NEED ENFORCEABLE SOLUTIONS TO REAL PROBLEMS

Require significant agrotourism operations, activities or events, to have a data logging decibel meter to ensure compliance with existing ordinances

Cost of the unit shown here = \$45.99 (Amazon)

Does not require legislative action

Completely enforceable

Requires minimal investment

