



**TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES
AGRITOURISM COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

SEPTEMBER 23, 2024, 6:02 P.M.

Meeting audio available in Town Clerk's Office.

CALLED TO ORDER

Chairperson Geoff Sluggett called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Geoff Sluggett led every present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Chairperson Geoff Sluggett, Vice Chair Manish Sood, Committee Member Joseph Chammas, Committee Liaison Jeff Kurtz, and Town Clerk Assistant Sammie Brown were present.

Committee Member Darren Swank and Committee Member Liza Holman were absent.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Sluggett called for a motion to approve the agenda. A motion was made by Committee Member Sood and seconded by Committee Member Chamas to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Regarding the minutes from the Agritourism Committee Meeting on August 26, 2024, Chairperson Sluggett opened discussion on the minutes. Committee Member Sood noted that he believes the minutes do not reflect the committee's request for a report on prior complaints related to Agritourism operations. It's important we include that for accountability. Chairperson Sluggett clarified that the request is documented under the 'Next Meeting Focus' section on page six of the agenda packet presenting the minutes.

A motion was made by Committee Member Chamas and was seconded by Committee Member Sood to approve the August 26, 2024, agenda meeting minutes as provided. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Chairperson Sluggett outlined, "The focus of tonight's discussion is traffic, parking, and noise. These have been identified as recurring concerns, particularly regarding code enforcement and operational challenges."

Chairperson Sluggett shared insights from the Code Enforcement Department, "There have been

very few complaints directly tied to Agritourism businesses. Most issues stem from property development concerns, such as obtaining permits for FDA compliance. Traffic and noise complaints primarily involve one business, which we won't name for privacy reasons. These were resolved without findings of violation or magistrate action."

Committee Member Chamas detailed his experience hosting a farm-to-table event: "I had about 150 attendees and managed it smoothly by hiring parking attendants. One person directed cars at the bridge, and another guided them to a designated area with space for 100 vehicles. This eliminated traffic backups. My background in valet parking made this an easy task."

Chairperson Sluggett noted, "This underscores the importance of planning. Events like this succeed when internal traffic flow and parking are well organized. When people self-park without guidance, it creates traffic queuing issues."

Chairperson Sluggett suggested, "The Town's planners and engineers should recommend thresholds based on property size and event type. For example, a 10-acre property hosting 500 cars should submit a parking plan."

Committee Liaison Jeff Kurtz added, "We've had success when business owners voluntarily approached the Town for guidance. For instance, Swank Farms resolved their traffic issues by hiring attendants and coordinating parking solutions."

Committee Member Sood proposed, "We should focus on off-site impacts like stacking and traffic flow. On-site management should remain the responsibility of the business owner unless it directly affects neighbors."

A motion was made by Committee Member Sood and seconded by Committee Member Chamas to define off-site impact standards (e.g., stacking, traffic, and weight limits) and to avoid regulation on-site parking management unless off-site impacts occur. The motion passed unanimously 3-0.

Chairperson Sluggett explained, "The Town's current noise ordinance limits sound to 55 decibels during the day and 50 decibels at night, measured at the property line. This is impractical and unenforceable for outdoor events, as even moderate rain exceeds these levels.

Committee Member Sood emphasized, "Continuous loud noise can disrupt the quality of life for neighbors. We need clear limits that balance business operations with community peace."

Committee Member Chamas shared, "Most Agritourism businesses, like Swank Farms, voluntarily shut off music by 9:30 or 10 PM. This practice works well and avoids complaints."

Proposals and Recommendations included setting consistent hours of operation. It is proposed that Loud music ends at 10 P.M. on weekdays and 11 P.M. on weekends. Cleanup activities are permitted until midnight.

Chairperson Sluggett suggested that special exceptions be provided. “Holiday events, such as New Year’s Eve, could qualify for extended hours through a special event permit.”

Committee Member Chamas explained, “Measuring decibels isn’t practical. A simpler approach is regulating hours of operation.”

A motion was made by Committee Member Sood and seconded by Committee Member Chamas to direct staff to provide updated noise standards focusing on hours of operation and to explore exceptions for special events. The motion passed unanimously 3-0

During the discussion regarding lighting, it was mentioned that current guidelines allow lighting to remain on for two hours post-event for cleanup purposes. Staff directed the alignment of lighting and noise standards for consistency. Discussion deferred. The committee acknowledged minimal complaints in these areas.

The Agritourism committee outlined future objectives for staff, which include researching decibel standards and practical enforcement methods, drafting a townwide traffic and parking impact standard for events, clarifying the definition of “loud music,” and proposing updated guidelines.

The next Agritourism Committee Meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 18, 2024.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No comments from the public

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Committee Member Sood and seconded by Committee Member Chamas to Adjourn the September 23, 2024, Agritourism Committee Meeting at 7:50 P.M.

ATTEST:

Signed by:

Sammie T. Brown

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Sammie T. Brown, FRA-RP, MEDP
Town Clerk Assistant

TOWN OF LOXAHATCHEE GROVES, FLORIDA

Signed by:

Geoff Sluggett

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Geoff Sluggett
Agritourism Committee Chairperson