



March 25, 2019

Madison County Planning Commission

Carlton Yowell, Chairman

PO Box 1206

414 N. Main Street

Madison, Virginia 22727

(Transmitted via email)

Re: Rural Resort -- Ordinance to Amend The Madison County Zoning Ordinance # 2019-XXX

Dear Carlton,

The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) respectfully submits this letter to address the Ordinance to Amend the Madison County Zoning Ordinance (#2019-XXX), specifically the version discussed during the March 20, 2019 Madison County Planning Commission Work Session (Work Session).

As we expressed during the Work Session, PEC is concerned that the current form of this ordinance may leave the County vulnerable to land use applications that may not represent the rural character of the County. Agritourism should remain tied to agricultural and natural purposes.

PEC applauds the County's proposed creation of a special use permit for Rural Resorts. This type of public process allows for site specific issues to be raised and addressed and gives the community the ability to place their concerns on the record. I have attached a brief summary of the points that PEC is raising, in regards to the Rural Resort ordinance.

Thank you for taking the time to review PEC's concerns on this important matter. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or requests for additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Hawk", enclosed within a circular scribble.

Christopher Hawk

Land Use Representative - The Piedmont Environmental Council

(804)337-6716

Attachments:

Recommendations/Considerations for Rural Resorts (Amendment to Ordinance #2019-XXX)

# RECOMMENDATIONS/CONSIDERATIONS FOR RURAL RESORTS (AMENDMENT TO ORDINANCE #2019-XXX)

## 1. DEFINITIONS

PEC offers the following updates to the definitions included in Article 20:

- **20-77B Resort Store:** PEC recommends the following definition:  
“A store offering for sale, but not limited to, such items as food, clothing, sundries, conveniences, general hardware articles, sporting goods. Motor vehicle fuels may not be offered for sale.”
- **20-151A Public Event:** PEC recommends removing “public” from this definition, as the nature of these events are not always open to the public.
- **20-198A Transient Guest:** PEC recommends that the County include a modifier to the 60 day limit. For example, the inclusion of “consecutive” to the definition, so that the latter portion of the definition reads “...lodging not to exceed 60 consecutive days.”

## 2. STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES TO BE ALLOWED

PEC offers the following concerns with wording in Section 14-18.2 that may permit undesirable land uses with future applications:

- PEC recommends including additional language to this section that mandates the quantity of events that may be held in any given year, as well as the time of day in which the events may operate.
- PEC questions the purpose of “indoor athletic and physical fitness facilities” and “construction facilities” for use at a Rural Resort. These types of facilities seem more appropriate for a commercial resort, such as a hotel.

## 3. SITING REQUIREMENTS

PEC offers the following concerns with wording in Section 14-18.3 that may permit undesirable land uses with future applications:

- **Open Space**
  - PEC recommends that the County draft additional requirements for the open spaces, such as the following:
    - “Open Spaces” may only be calculated as those areas in which recreational activities, such as those “customarily incidental and subordinate to the rural resort facility” can take place.
  - PEC is concerned that the current description of “Open Space” does not adequately address activities that may be conducted in open space, such as the following previously provided statement:

- “Recreational uses customarily incidental and subordinate to the rural resort facilities, permitted in the open space area may include: swimming pools, and related facilities, boating facilities, tennis and other sport courts, equestrian facilities, picnic areas, ball fields, children’s play equipment and passive recreation facilities. Driveways and parking areas supporting these recreational facilities may also be located in the open space area.”
- These uses include substantial built environments which do not seem to constitute “open space” by any reasonable definition
- **Building, Height Of**
  - In addition to the 40 foot height requirement, PEC contends that the County should include architectural standards for new buildings.
- **Parking and Loading**
  - Special attention must be paid to the construction and surfaces associated with parking and loading areas. Impervious surfaces should be avoided at all costs, giving precedent to “agricultural field-style parking” and “gravel parking” to avoid the use of asphalt and concrete areas. PEC contends that the use of impervious surfaces will cause damage to agricultural soils, and void these areas as useful for future agricultural means.
- **Transportation Impacts**
  - PEC is concerned about transportation impacts associated with the types of events that could be conducted at Rural Resorts, especially as it relates to public health, safety, and welfare. Given event types and unquantified capacities for Rural Resorts, minimum road standards should be considered when reviewing applications. For example, larger Rural Resorts should have direct access to primary roads, as Emergency Response situations (particularly mass casualty events) could be adversely affected by geographic location and transportation access.