

From: [Jennifer Bourbonais](#)
To: [Michelle Claviter-Tveit](#); [Angela Lepak](#)
Cc: [George Knutson](#)
Subject: FW: Emily Richie Conditional Use Permit Comments
Date: Monday, January 10, 2022 7:59:12 AM
Attachments: [2022-01-07 Planning Commission Letter.docx](#)

For the file. Thanks.

From: Donald Schreiner <doschreidnr@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 9, 2022 3:19 PM
To: Jennifer Bourbonais <BourbonaisJ@StLouisCountyMN.gov>; George Knutson <KnutsonG@StLouisCountyMN.gov>
Subject: Emily Richie Conditional Use Permit Comments

WARNING: External email. Please verify sender before opening attachments or clicking on links.

Dear Jennifer and George – First, we would like to thank you for supplying the information we requested in a timely manner, it was extremely helpful. We have attached our comments in a letter to the Planning Commission for both your and their consideration. We trust you will forward it ASAP to the Planning Commission so they have ample time to review before the meeting.

This is a difficult situation for us as we really do not want an Events Center with all the related issues located directly across the road from our home. However, we want to be reasonable and work with our neighbors to try and find a balance that works for both parties. I will not repeat our concerns here since you will note our suggestions in the attached letter.

We are not sure how the normal Conditional Use Permit process is undertaken, but are asking that if the permit should be looked upon favorably, that it be given only tentative approval so we are allowed time to work out the noise issue from the amplified music if it is allowed. We have discussed this with Emily and Kyle and anticipate that we will find a noise level that is acceptable to both parties. However, because Emily is out of the state, it requires that the permit not be finalized until the information on acceptable noise can be gathered and the issue can be resolved.

Please feel free to contact us with any concerns or questions.

Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Don Schreiner and Mary Negus

We are writing in regard to a notice received from Jennifer Bourbonais about a hearing that concerns a conditional use permit for parcel 210-0010-06510. This permit was applied for by our neighbor, Emily Richie. The permit is to establish a Wedding/Event Center, a commercial business on their newly purchased property. We have spoken with Emily and Kyle to get a better idea of how this business will be operated and what impacts it might have on our activities, living conditions, and adjacent property.

We have reviewed the application and a number of other conditional use permits granted by the board in 2021. The establishment of Wedding/Event Centers seems to be a growing business in rural areas of the county. We submit this letter/email to formally express our concerns to the Commission, and trust that they will be taken into consideration as the permit is discussed.

We have lived in the Clover Valley area for 32 years. Our first home was on a 10A parcel located about two miles from our present home. We purchased our present property with home and outbuildings on 40A in 1998. We moved here as our family expanded and required a larger home, but more importantly we wanted to ensure the privacy and rural living conditions that this property afforded. We especially appreciate our property because of the peace and quiet, the wildlife, and the undisturbed natural environment. We have hiking and XC ski trails that we walk daily with our dog, we are improving our woodlands, and we enjoy bird watching, hunting, and other outdoor activities here. We feel extremely fortunate to have found this property and have very much enjoyed living here over the last 24+ years.

We do have concerns that the proposed commercial business will negatively impact our living conditions. The new business will be located approximately 700 ft. from our home “as the crow flies” or as we will soon discuss “as the sound travels.” We understand from Emily that this new business has been a dream of hers for some time. We appreciate that, as our dream has been to obtain the property and living conditions that we presently enjoy. Although we do not know Emily and Kyle well, we enjoy visiting with them and welcome them as neighbors. As stated earlier, we have discussed some of our concerns with them and I believe they appreciate our perspective, as we do theirs.

We are not outright opposed to the new business that is being proposed by Emily, but we do request that some conditions be considered and some adjustments might be made as it moves forward and we all get a better feel for the future impacts that might occur. Below is the section entitled “*Neighborhood Compatibility*” copied directly from the permit application (in italics, **bold added to highlight specific concerns we share**) that generally addresses issues of importance to us.

B. Neighborhood Compatibility:

1. *The proposal may have some impact on the neighborhood in terms of development.*
 - a. *An event tent may be used that may be visible from the road. Vegetative screening exists that may limit any visual impact of the tent from the road.*
 - b. *In addition, the **parking area is visible** from the road.*
2. *The proposal has the potential to impact the residential properties in the area with **added noise and traffic during events.***
 - a. *The nearest residential dwelling is located south from the subject parcel across Two Harbors Road. It is **approximately 700 feet from the existing development** on the subject parcel.*
 - b. *There are approximately eleven residential dwellings within 0.5 miles of the subject parcel.*

3. ***Amplified music for the purpose of an outdoor reception or reception within a tent, may cause a nuisance to surrounding neighbors. A condition limiting hours of amplified music may lessen the impact to adjacent properties.***

In regard to our concerns, we offer some discussion along with our preferred recommendations/ conditions for the permit:

1. Our greatest concern is that of noise generated from amplified outdoor music as well as traffic. This would be of little concern if a large party only occurred once or twice a year, but if hosting parties becomes a commercial business that occurs every Fri./Sat. for 30+ weekends as described in the application, it would certainly disrupt our living conditions and likely those of our neighbors. We have discussed this with Emily and Kyle and they appreciate our concern. We agreed to set up a sound system so we can “test” how loud the music can be before it becomes a burden to us, and hope that it does not become an issue at all. To minimize the noise issue some previous permits have not allowed amplified music at all, while others have not allowed music beyond 9 PM.

Suggestions:

- a. **Once a sound level (decibels) is determined and agreed upon as a result of our “test”, that criteria can be inserted into the permit as not to exceed.**
 - b. **Only allow amplified music in the meadow behind the building sites to take advantage of the trees as a sound screen and direct any amplified music to the NE where there are no residential homes.**
 - c. **Discontinue the use of all amplified sound after 9 PM (as stated in recommendations by the Planning Department, pg 4 of application).**
 - d. **If amplified music infringes upon the current residents, discontinue its use.**
2. We are also concerned about the large increase in traffic and activity over 30+ weekend events (~60 days) and potentially other events during the week. The proposed parking lot will be directly across the road in a field where the sewage mound system is presently located, about **500 feet** from our house. This is presently used as a hay field. If 50+ vehicles are parked there and they all leave within 15-30 min. after the event has ended, there will be increased congestion and significant noise. During the summer, we normally keep our windows open and turn in at about 10 PM. A parade of vehicles leaving at midnight (as stated in the application) would certainly impact our living conditions.

Suggestions:

- a. **Limit the number of participants to no more than 125 as stated in the application, which should also cap the number of vehicles.**
 - b. **Ensure the hours of operation do not extend beyond 10 PM on any night.**
 - c. **Identify where folks will park if the field become saturated and getting stuck becomes an issue.**
3. At events/wedding receptions where alcohol is served, it is not uncommon for some folks to become drunk and potentially disorderly. We understand that no one wants this outcome, especially the owners and us, but it is not out of the question given the plans for events on Fri./Sat.

30+ weekends (~60 events). At many venues, some type of security is required, but we are not sure what the law enforcement requirement is in this situation, under this permit. If a drunk/disorderly event occurs, law enforcement might have to be called. We certainly don't want such an outcome affecting our property or safety. We understand this is a worst case scenario, but there is certainly potential, given the frequency of the events and the party atmosphere of this business.

Suggestions:

- a. **If such situations develop some type of security should be enforced when alcohol is served.**
- b. **Alcohol should not be allowed if such behavior becomes an issue.**

- 4. We agree and support all of the **recommendations by the Planning Department**, as stated on **pg 4 of the application** and assume that all permit conditions will be enforced by the county.
 - In regard to #3 which concerns "Lighting", according to the application, **the only light visible** will be a light on the Agate Acres sign.
- 5. We understand that the Wedding/Event Center Conditional Use Permit ordinarily remains with the property even if it is sold. We suggest that the permit be reexamined in the event of a sale, as any future owners may have very different values and ideas for the use of the property, and these may affect nearby landowners to a greater extent.

As stated previously, we do not want to infringe upon Emily's plans/dreams, but neither do we want her plans for a commercial business to infringe upon our lifestyle and living conditions. We hope we can find a balance that all can live with, but ask the Commission that any conditions put on the permit remain flexible so they can be adjusted as the situation evolves. Our hope is that this commercial business does not affect us at all, but that seems very unlikely. We are concerned that the establishment of this business may lower the desirability of our property for future use, decreasing its value or appeal to potential future purchasers who have values similar to ours.

Change and the unknown are always scary, especially when it can affect us and our property in very significant ways. We hope you will seriously consider our concerns and suggestions and allow flexibility in how we might address any issues as they arise.

We apologize for the length of our comments but as you can see we very much appreciate our current property and life style and would hate to see any negative changes. We believe we are being reasonable with our suggestions and want to be good neighbors and work together so this does not become an irresolvable problem.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We would be happy to answer any questions you may have and/or work with the Commission and Emily to resolve any concerns in the future.

Sincerely,

Don Schreiner and Mary Negus