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CEQA Memorandum



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Planning, Building & Environmental Services

1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559
www.countyofnapa.org

David Morrison
Director

MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission	From: Emily Hedge, Planner III
Date: October 23, 2020	Re: P19-00161 Winery Major Modification Categorical Exemption Determination Robert Sinskey Vineyards 6320 Silverado Trail, Napa Assessor Parcel #031-230-017

Background

Pursuant to Section 303 of Napa County’s Local Procedures for Implementing the California Quality Act (CEQA), the Planning Division has prepared this environmental evaluation for the proposed Robert Sinskey Vineyards Winery Major Modification Application (File No. P19-00161).

The project proposes:

Modification of an existing Use Permit (#U-368586 and subsequent modifications) for an existing 143,000 gallon per year winery to allow the following changes:

- A. COMPONENTS NECESSARY TO REMEDY EXISTING VIOLATIONS:
- 1) Recognition of daily by-appointment tastings of 125 persons per day. Currently authorized for 132 “Public” visitors a day, allowed to occur without prior appointment. The by-appointment visitation would be an addition to the currently authorized visitation and would result in a total of 257 visitors per day;
 - 2) Recognition of 36 full-time employees and six (6) part-time employees. Currently authorized for 10 full-time employees and five (5) part-time employees;
 - 3) Recognition of use of portions of the cave for visitation and marketing activities. Currently authorized for production related uses only; and
 - 4) Recognition of on-premises consumption of wines in areas used for hospitality. Currently not an authorized activity.

Existing Setting

The project is located on an 11.82-acre parcel on the north/east side of Silverado Trail. The General Plan land use designation is Agriculture, Watershed and Open Space (AWOS) and is within the Agricultural Watershed (AW) zoning district; 6320 Silverado Trail, Napa; APN: 031-230-017.

Development on the property includes the winery building, 17,500 square foot cave, associated site improvements including parking lots, wastewater system, and water tanks, and approximately 5.1 acres of vineyards.

Past Approvals

Use Permit U-368586 for a new winery with an annual production of 24,000 gallons, a 12,000 square foot building, public tours and tastings, and retail sales was approved by the Planning Commission on February 4, 1987.

Major Modification U-90-07 permitted the winery to increase production to 65,000 gallons, install a demonstration kitchen, and add a marketing plan. The permit was approved by the Planning Commission on December 5, 1990, and subsequently appealed to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS upheld the appeal which approved the permit with a set of modified conditions.

Major Modification #94099 permitted the winery to increase marketing events and revise previous conditions of approval and mitigation measures related to marketing event noticing requirements, production equipment, and traffic during production operations. The permit was approved by the Planning Commission on December 21, 1994, and subsequently appealed to the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The BOS denied the appeal.

Minor Modification #97431 permitted a cave expansion of approximately 7,685 square feet, for production purposes only and installation of new fermentation tanks. The permit was approved by the Zoning Administrator on May 1, 1998.

Major Modification P09-00480 permitted the winery to increase production to 143,000 gallons annually, expand the demonstration kitchen, construct an office addition, expand outdoor terrace, increase parking lot, increase employees, construct a new wastewater disposal system, modify the marketing plan, modify previously conditions of approval and mitigation measures, and allow retail sales of produce and animal products produced on site or on the adjacent parcel under family ownership. The permit was approved by the Planning Commission on August 4, 2010.

Very Minor Modification P11-00441 clarified construction phasing of the approvals in P09-00480. The permit was approved by the Zoning Administrator on February 27, 2012.

CEQA Exemption Criteria and Analysis

Article 19 of the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA Guidelines) establishes a list of classes of projects that are categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA. If hospitality activities are approved in portions of the existing cave, improvements to modify the California Building Code occupancy classification, such as installation of sprinklers and changes to the layout of equipment within the cave, qualify as an interior alterations, which is an exempt activity under Article 19: CCR §15301 (Class 1, Minor Alteration to Existing Facilities).

As noted above, the Use Permit Major Modification Application also requests recognition of existing levels of visitation, employees, and on-premises consumption, occurring beyond their current entitlements. Although not permitted under Use Permit U-368586 or subsequent modifications, these operational activities are already occurring at the subject site and no intensification of these activities is requested as part of this application.

As described in Resolution No. 2018-164 adopted by the Napa County Board of Supervisors on December 4, 2018, the subject application was submitted prior to the submittal deadline of March 29, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. and was found to be substantially conforming. Accordingly, the County may use the winery's existing operations as the environmental baseline for the CEQA analysis related to this application. No expansion of current operations is requested as part of this application, therefore no additional analysis of the winery's operational components is required.

Based upon the above analysis there is no reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment or damage scenic resources because there will be only minor physical changes to the existing development on the project site. Based on the proposed project as described above, the Robert Sinskey Vineyards Winery Use Permit Major Modification Application request meets the criteria for eligibility as a Class 1 Categorical Exemption from CEQA.