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Recommended Findings
Pickett Road Wine Company Major
Modification
P19-00172-MOD

**PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING – SEPTEMBER 15, 2021
RECOMMENDED FINDINGS**

**PICKETT ROAD WINE COMPANY, USE PERMIT MAJOR MODIFICATION
APPLICATION NO. P19-00172-MOD
2339 PICKETT ROAD, CALISTOGA, CA 94515
APN 018-050-067**

ENVIRONMENTAL:

The Planning Commission (Commission) has received and reviewed the proposed Negative Declaration and pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and of Napa County's Local Procedures for Implementing CEQA, and makes the following findings. That:

1. Prior to taking action on the Negative Declaration and the proposed project, the Commission read and considered said Declaration.
2. The Negative Declaration is based on independent judgment exercised by the Commission.
3. The Negative Declaration was prepared and considered in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.
4. Considering the record as whole, there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.
5. The Secretary of the Commission is the custodian of the records of the proceedings on which this decision is based. Records are located at the Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services Department, 1195 Third Street, Room 210, Napa, Calif.

USE PERMIT

The Commission has reviewed the use permit major modification request in accordance with the requirements of Napa County Code §18.124.070 and makes the following findings:

6. The Commission has the power to issue a use permit major modification under the zoning regulations in effect as applied to the Property.

Analysis: The project is consistent with Agricultural Watershed (AW) zoning district regulations. A winery (as defined in Napa County Code Section 18.08.640) and uses in connection with a winery (see Napa County Code Section 18.20.030) are permitted in an AW zoned district with an approved use permit. The project complies with the requirements of the Winery Definition Ordinance (Ord. No. 947, 1990) and the remainder of the Napa County Zoning Ordinance (Title 18, Napa County Code) as applicable.

7. The procedural requirements for a use permit major modification set forth in Chapter 18.124 of the Napa County Code have been met.

Analysis: The use permit modification application has been filed, noticed and public hearing requirements have been met. The hearing notice was posted on May 12, 2021, and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1000 feet of the subject parcel, properties adjacent to Pickett Road and Rosedale Road between the project site and Silverado Trail, and all other interested parties. The CEQA public comment period ran from May 12, 2021 to June 1, 2021.

For the continuance hearing, a 10 day notice was posted on September 3, 2021, and copies were forwarded to property owners within 1000 feet of the subject parcel, properties adjacent to Pickett Road and Rosedale Road between the project site and Silverado Trail, persons who provided prior public comments, and all other interested parties.

8. The grant of a use permit major modification, as conditioned, will not adversely affect the public health, safety, or welfare of the County of Napa.

Analysis: Various County departments have reviewed the project and commented regarding water, waste water disposal, traffic and access, and fire protection. Conditions are recommended which will incorporate these comments into the project to assure the ongoing protection of the public health, safety, and welfare.

9. The proposed use complies with applicable provisions of the Napa County Code and is consistent with the policies and standards of the Napa County General Plan and any applicable specific plan.

Analysis: Compliance with the Zoning Ordinance

The project is consistent with the AW zoning district regulations. A winery (as defined in the Napa County Code Section 18.08.640) and uses in connection with a winery (refer to Napa County Code Section 18.20.030) are permitted in the AW District subject to an approved use permit. The proposed project includes operational changes with increases in employment, visitation, and the marketing program, as well as physical improvements with the addition of a 1,000 square foot crush pad canopy cover, expansion of the winery's domestic wastewater treatment and dispersal system and modifications to the internal driveway and entry structure widths. The project, as conditioned, complies with the Napa County Winery Definition Ordinance (WDO) and all other requirements of the Zoning Code as applicable.

Analysis: Compliance with the General Plan and other applicable specific plans

As proposed and as conditioned, the requested Use Permit Major Modification is consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the General Plan (2008). The General Plan land use designation for the subject parcel is Agricultural Resource (AR) and Agriculture, Watershed, and Open Space (AWOS).

General Plan Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Goal AG/LU-1 guides the County to "preserve existing agricultural land uses and plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land uses in Napa County." General Plan Goal AG/LU-3 states that the County should "support the economic viability of agriculture, including grape growing, winemaking, other types of agriculture, and supporting industries to ensure the preservation of agricultural lands." Goal AG/LU-3 and Policy AG/LU-2 recognize wineries as agricultural uses.

The continued use of the property for fermenting and processing of grape juice into wine supports the economic viability of agriculture within the County, consistent with Goal AG/LU-3 and Policy AG/LU-4 (“The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including land used for grazing and watershed/open space...”). By allowing the expansion of the existing agricultural use, the requested Use Permit Major Modification supports the economic viability of both the vineyard and agricultural product processing uses on the property, consistent with Economic Development Goal E-1 and Policy E-1.

The “Right to Farm” is recognized throughout the General Plan and is specifically called out in Policy AG/LU-15 and in the County Code. “Right to Farm” provisions ensure that agriculture remains the primary land use in Napa County and is not threatened by potentially competing uses or neighbor complaints. Napa County’s adopted General Plan reinforces the County’s long-standing commitment to agricultural preservation, urban centered growth, and resource conservation.

Applicable Napa County General Plan goals and policies

Goal AG/LU-1: Preserve existing agricultural land uses and plan for agriculture and related activities as the primary land uses in Napa County.

Goal AG/LU-3: Support the economic viability of agriculture, including grape growing, winemaking, other types of agriculture, and supporting industries to ensure the preservation of agricultural lands.

Policy AG/LU-4: The County will reserve agricultural lands for agricultural use including lands used for grazing and watershed/open space, except for those lands which are shown on the Land Use Map as planned for urban development.

Policy AG/LU-8: The County’s minimum agricultural parcel sizes shall ensure that agricultural areas can be maintained as economic units.

Policy AG/LU-15: The County affirms and shall protect the right of agricultural operators in designated agricultural areas to commence and continue their agricultural practices (a “right to farm”), even though established urban uses in the general area may foster complaints against those agricultural practices. The “right to farm” shall encompass the processing of agricultural products and other activities inherent in the definition of agriculture provided in Policy AG/LU-2.

Goal CON-10: Conserve, enhance and manage water resources on a sustainable basis to attempt to ensure that sufficient amounts of water will be available for the uses allowed by this General Plan, for the natural environment, and for future generations.

Goal CON-11: Prioritize the use of available groundwater for agricultural and rural residential uses rather than for urbanized areas and ensure that land use decisions recognize the long-term availability and value of water resources in Napa County.

Policy CON-53: The County shall ensure that the intensity and timing of new development are consistent with the capacity of water supplies and protect groundwater and other water supplies by requiring all applicants for discretionary projects to demonstrate the availability of an adequate water supply prior to approval. Depending on the site location and the specific circumstances, adequate demonstration of availability may include evidence or calculation of groundwater availability via an appropriate hydrogeological analysis or may be satisfied by compliance with County Code “fair-share” provisions or applicable State law. In some areas, evidence may be provided through coordination with applicable municipalities and public and private water purveyors to verify water supply sufficiency.

Policy CON-55: The County shall consider existing water uses during the review of new water uses associated with discretionary projects, and where hydrogeological studies have shown that the new water uses will cause significant adverse well interference or substantial reductions in groundwater discharge to surface waters that will alter critical flows to sustain riparian habitat and fisheries or exacerbate conditions of overdraft, the County shall curtail those new or expanded water uses.

Policy CON-72: The County shall seek to reduce the energy impacts from new buildings by applying Title 24 energy standards as required by law and providing information to the public and builders on available energy conservation techniques, products, and methods available to exceed those standards by 15 percent or more.

Policy CON-77: All new discretionary projects shall be evaluated to determine potential significant project-specific air quality impacts and shall be required to incorporate appropriate design, construction, and operational features to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants regulated by the state and federal governments below the applicable significance standard(s) or implement alternate and equally effective mitigation strategies consistent with BAAQMD’s air quality improvement programs to reduce emissions. In addition to these policies, the County’s land use policies discourage scattered development which contributes to continued dependence on the private automobile as the only means of convenient transportation. The County’s land use policies also contribute to efforts to reduce air pollution.

Policy CON-81: The County shall require dust control measures to be applied to construction projects consistent with measures recommended for use by the BAAQMD [Bay Area Air Quality Management District].

Goal E-1: Maintain and enhance the economic viability of agriculture.

Policy E-1: The County’s economic development will focus on ensuring the continued viability of agriculture in Napa County.

Policy SAF-20: All new development shall comply with established fire safety standards. Design plans shall be referred to the appropriate fire agency for comment as to:

- 1) Adequacy of water supply.
- 2) Site design for fire department access in and around structures.
- 3) Ability for a safe and efficient fire department response.

- 4) Traffic flow and ingress/egress for residents and emergency vehicles.
- 5) Site-specific built-in fire protection
- 6) Potential impacts to emergency services and fire department response.

10. The proposed use would not require a new water system or improvement causing significant adverse effects, either individually or cumulatively, on the affected groundwater basin.

Analysis: The subject property is not located in a “groundwater deficient area” as identified in Section 13.15.010 of the Napa County Code, and is consistent with General Plan Conservation Policies CON-53 and CON-55 which require that applicants, who are seeking discretionary land use approvals, prove that adequate water supplies are available to serve the proposed use without causing significant negative impacts to shared groundwater resources. Minimum thresholds for water use have been established by the Department of Public Works using reports by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). These reports are the result of water resources investigations performed by the USGS in cooperation with the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. Any project which reduces water usage or any water usage which is at or below the established threshold is, for purposes of the application of the County’s Groundwater Conservation Ordinance, assumed not to have a significant effect on groundwater levels. A Tier 2 Water Availability Analysis (WAA) was submitted by O’Conner Environmental on August 18, 2020. Due to the project’s location outside of the Valley Floor and the immediate hydrogeological conditions of the project parcel and surrounding areas, O’Conner defined a specific recharge area for the project well by the drainage divide in the encompassing area. The total recharge area was measured at 181.5 acres, of which 20.7 acres are within the project parcel. Utilizing a Soil Water Balance (SWB), O’Conner calculated that the 20.7 acres of recharge area for the project well within the project parcel would have an allowable groundwater allotment of 19.7 acre feet per year (af/yr). The Water Demand Calculations submitted for the project placed the water demand for existing uses impacting the total recharge area (winery domestic, 0.42 af/yr; non-project residential domestic, 1.10 af/yr; non-project irrigation process, 0.13) at a total of 1.65 af/yr. The proposed winery project increases total employees, total visitation, and total marketing events, and this places the new demand for the parcel (winery domestic, 0.49 af/yr; non-project residential domestic, 1.10 af/yr; non-project irrigation process, 0.13) at a total 1.72 af/yr. Based upon this figure, the project would be well below the established threshold for groundwater use on the property and is projected to only increase by 0.07 af/yr. The County is not aware of, nor has it received any reports of, groundwater shortages near the project area. The project will not interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater level.

Therefore, the project is considered not to have a potential to significantly impact groundwater resources. Because the projected water demand for the project is below the estimated water availability acre feet per year for the parcel, the requested Use Permit is consistent with General Plan Goals CON-10 and CON-11, as well as the policies mentioned above that support reservation and sustainable use of groundwater for agricultural and related purposes. The project will not require a new water system or other improvements and will not have a negative impact on local groundwater.

