



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Agenda Date: 11/16/2011

Agenda Placement: 9C

Napa County Planning Commission Board Agenda Letter

TO: Napa County Planning Commission

FROM: John McDowell for Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning

REPORT BY: LINDA STCLAIRE, PLANNER II - 707.299.1348

SUBJECT: Lodestone Winery Use Permit

RECOMMENDATION

LODESTONE VINEYARDS WINERY - WAI & CHRISTOPHER CHANG, dba DIVERSIFIED BUSINESS GROUP, USE PERMIT P11-00280-UP & VARIANCE P11-00281-VAR

CEQA Status: Negative Declaration Prepared. According to the proposed Negative Declaration, the project would not have any potentially significant effects. The project site is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code section 65962.5.

Request: Approval of a Use Permit to: 1) establish a 20,000 gallon per year winery; 2) demolish existing residence & construct an approximately 15,660 square foot winery with a 7,310 square foot winery building, an 1,800 square foot outdoor covered crushpad and 6,550 square foot caves; 3) establish 10 or fewer employees; 4) construct 9 parking spaces; 5) establish by-appointment tours and tastings with a maximum of 35 person per day; 6) establish an annual marketing plan with 6 events for a maximum of 40 guests per event and two events with a maximum of 75 guests per event; 7) construct an on-site commercial grade kitchen; 8) install a new wastewater treatment system with sub-surface drip disposal; and 9) widening of the existing access drive to 20 feet onsite. The project also includes approval of a variance to allow the winery structure to encroach 35 feet into the 300 foot winery setback from Long Ranch Road. The 42.1 acre project site is located on the north side of Long Ranch Road, approximately 2.2 miles south of Highway 128 within the AW (Agricultural Watershed) Zoning District, Assessor Parcel Number: 032-010-071, 200 Long Ranch Rd, St. Helena.

Staff Recommendation: Adopt the negative declaration and approve the requested variance and use permit as conditioned.

Staff Contact: Linda St. Claire, 299.1348 or linda.stclaire@countyofnapa.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Proposed Action:

That the Planning Commission:

1. Adopts the Negative Declaration for the Lodestone Vineyard Winery, based on findings 1-6 of Exhibit A;
2. Approves Variance #P11-00281 and Use Permit P11-00280-UP based on Variance findings 7-11 and Use Permit findings 12-16 of Exhibit A and subject to the recommended conditions of approval (Exhibit B).

Discussion:

This project consists of constructing a new 20,000 gallon per year winery on a parcel currently occupied by a residence and vineyard. This use permit will establish by appointment tours and tastings, a marketing plan, parking spaces, construction of a new onsite septic system, upgrades to the existing driveway and requests a variance to the 300 foot winery setback. Staff has determined the request, as conditioned, has no adverse environmental impacts and is consistent with all applicable Zoning standards. The proposed visitation and marketing are similar to other wineries of this size within the County. As such, staff recommends approval of the request as conditioned.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Negative Declaration Prepared. According to the proposed Negative Declaration, the project would not have any potentially significant effects. The project site is not on any of the lists of hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code section 65962.5.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Owner/Applicant: Lodestone Vineyards Winery, Mr Wai Chang and Mr. Chistrophe Chang, dba Divisified Business Group, LLC

Representative: George Monteverdi, Ph.D., Monteverdi Consulting, LLC

General Plan Designation: AWOS (Agriculture, Watershed, and Open Space)

Zoning: AW (Agricultural Watershed)

Filed: July 28, 2011

Deemed Complete: September 28, 2011

Winery Square Feet: Proposed - 15,660 square feet

Production Capacity: Proposed: 20,000 gal/yr

Visitation: Proposed - 35 visitors per day/245 visitors per week

Marketing: Proposed - Six events per year with a maximum of 40 visitors and two additional events per year for up to a maximum of 75 persons

Number of Employees: Proposed - up to ten

Days and Hours of Operation: Proposed - 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, 7 days per week.

Parking: Proposed - 8 spaces

Parcel Size: 42.1 acres

Accessory/Production Ratio: 20%, meets standards

Winery Coverage: 2.8%

Winery Road Setbacks: 265 feet from centerline of Long Ranch Road. Variance requested to encroach 35 feet into the 300 foot winery setback.

Adjacent Zoning/Land Use:

North - AW - two parcels: a vineyard and rural residence (42.26 acres) on the first, and a winery, Colgin Partners, with a residence (124.81 acres) on the second parcel

South - AW - two parcels: both with a vineyard and rural residences, one with 41 acres and and the other with 32.17 acres

East - AW - David Arthur Vineyards (47.85 acres)

West - AW - vacant (40.21 acres)

Nearby Wineries (within 2 miles of project site):

The number of wineries in this area is increasing. There are currently three wineries on Long Ranch Road, one on a nearby parcel which gains access from Silverado Trail and six nearby which gain access from Sage Canyon Road.

David Arthur Vineyards - 210 Long Ranch Road

13,400 square feet, 30,000 gal/yr, tours and tasting by appointment (35/wk), marketing with 14 events/yr;

Colgin Partners Winery - 220 Long Ranch Road

16,556 square feet, 20,000 gal/yr, tours and tasting by appointment (25/wk); marketing with 5 events/yr;

Two Rocks Winery - 135 Long Ranch Road

36,657 square feet, 62,500 gal/yr, tours and tasting by appointment (15/wk), marketing with 21 events/yr;

Ovid Winery - 255 Long Ranch Road

13,214 square feet, 18,000 gal/yr, tours and tasting by appointment (245/wk), marketing with 8 events/yr.

Comparison Wineries

Winery	Production	Visitors per Week	Marketing per Year
Ovid Vineyards	18,000 gpy	245	8
Joseph Cellars	20,000 gpy	525	106
Rossini Winery	20,000 gpy	175	9
Rocca Family Winery	20,000 gpy	224	216

Property History:

An erosion control plan was obtained in 1998 in which approval was granted to plant the existing vineyards. In 2003 the previous owner was granted a demolition permit for the then existing residence and subsequently the existing residence was constructed. Various outbuildings such as a garage, pool house and pool were later constructed.

In 2004 the same previous owner requested a use permit for a helicopter landing pad on the parcel. The planning Commission granted a continuation in order for the applicant to address neighbor concerns. In 2005, the applicant withdrew his request.

Discussion:Winery Design

The applicant is proposing a small family owned estate winery with a gravity fed production facility in which all winemaking activities will occur below ground, in the winery cave. The winery itself will be developed entirely within the bounds of the existing residential development area. The winery and residence will be built with natural earthen materials and flat roofs to minimize visual impact and allow for a living roof and solar panels, thus reducing their dependence on outside utility services.

Greenhouse Gas Checklist

The applicant has submitted a Greenhouse Gas Checklist and identified twenty-three activities which will reduce emissions (see attached greenhouse gas checklist). This includes designing the winery in harmony with the existing natural features, recycling much of the rocks used for the existing structures, installing drought resistant plants, utilizing ultra water efficient fixtures and appliances, and as stated above - installing a living roof and solar panels.

Visitation and Marketing

The proposed project includes daily and weekly visitation limits. The requested visitation, 35 persons per day and 245 persons per week, is similar to other wineries of similar annual production levels and identical to Ovid Vineyards, which is located two parcels to the southeast. Both marketing and visitation (at separate times) will be held within the the hospitality building and at the exterior courtyard, south of the winery production building. Any food served at the marketing events will be prepared by a catering company (for the larger events) or prepared in the proposed onsite commercial kitchen (for the smaller events). All parking can be accommodated onsite utilizing vineyard rows for the larger marketing events. Staff has reviewed the visitation and has not identified any negative traffic impacts. The applicant reached out to the neighboring property owners in an effort to solicit comments and

concerns. They have received positive feedback for the proposal.

Variance Request

In order to minimize earthmoving and other environmentally disruptive activities, the applicant proposes developing the winery and residence entirely within the footprint of the existing residential developments. The winery structures will extend up to 35 feet into the 300 foot winery road setback. Moving the winery out of the setback would necessitate additional grading on steep slopes, and removing existing vegetation.

Strict application of the zoning regulations would preclude any construction within the 300 foot winery setback. Large sections of the property are steeply sloped and rocky, thus limiting an alternative site for the crushpad, winery and parking. Over 50% of the parcel is currently used for agricultural purposes and the Napa County General Plan contains a number of policies related to the preservation of agriculturally productive lands. Granting this variance is consistent with the General Plan policies related to the preservation of agricultural use in areas so designed, along with the objective of minimizing development of man-made features that might impede "the continuance of agriculture and maintenance of open space which are economic and aesthetic attributes and assets of the County of Napa." The David Arthur Vineyards on the adjacent parcel received the benefit of a variance to the winery setback for similar reasons.

Consistency with Standards:

Zoning

The project is consistent with all AW (Agricultural Watershed) zoning district regulations except winery setback requirements, for which the applicant has requested a variance.

Department Comments

The Fire department, Building department, Environmental Management and Public Works and reviewed the project and recommend approval with comments.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Exhibit A Findings
- B . Exhibit B Proposed Conditions of Approval
- C . Agency Comments
- D . Environmental Documents
- E . Use Permit Application
- F . Variance Application
- G . Graphics

Napa County Planning Commission: Approve

Reviewed By: John McDowell