

**Minutes
Williamson County
Board of Zoning Appeals
6:00 P.M. March 25, 2021**

Members Present

Chairman David Ausbrooks
Vice-Chairman Don Crohan
Karen-Emerson McPeak
Sue Workman
Andrew Ring

Staff Present

John Bledsoe, Codes Compliance Director
Brenda Beard
Holly Scott, Codes Compliance Inspector
Kristi Ransom, County Attorney

The Williamson County Board of Zoning Appeals meeting was conducted during an electronically held session on March 25, 2021. Chairman David Ausbrooks called the meeting to order and conducted roll call to establish a quorum. He then advised that a motion is required declaring the electronic meeting was necessary due to the Covid 19 virus. Vice-Chairman Don Crohan made a motion that due to Covid 19 it is a necessity that the Board meet electronically. Andrew Ring seconded the motion. Motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chairman Ausbrooks asked the members to consider the minutes from the January 28, 2021 meeting. Sue Workman made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2021 meeting as presented and Vice-Chairman Don Crohan seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Chairman David Ausbrooks read a public statement stating that the Board of Zoning Appeals is made up of five citizens nominated as Board members by the County Mayor and confirmed by the County Commission. One member is a Planning Commissioner, one member may be a County Commissioner and the remaining members are not otherwise connected with County Government. He went on to say the Board will hear from anyone who has anything to say to the Board relevant to the request at hand. However, the Board will not view or hear anything that does not have a direct bearing on the item or issue being heard. He requested that all comments be addressed to the Board.

ITEM 1

A request by Mike and Jackie Freeman for a Special Use permit for a temporary Special Event - Extensive Impact (2021 Tennessee Renaissance Festival) at 2124 New Castle Road. The property is zoned Rural Development 5 (RD-5) and is located in the 5th district.

Holly Scott read the staff report. Codes Compliance Director John Bledsoe stated the festival will be held every weekend in the month of May.

Mike and Jackie Freeman along with Recca Edwards represented the request. Mrs. Freeman stated they missed not being able to have the festival last year due to Covid, but felt steps could be taken this year to keep the public safe. She also stated they would do everything that is required to comply with CDC guidelines and the Williamson County Zoning Ordinance.

Chairman Ausbrooks opened the public hearing and asked Mr. Bledsoe if anyone was online for the meeting.

John Bledsoe stated that he did send the meeting information to two individuals regarding being online for the meeting. He has not heard from them, but did receive three letters regarding the traffic on Spanntown Road, which he sent out a copy to all the Board members.

Sue Workman stated she only got two of the letters Mr. Bledsoe sent.

Attorney Kristi Ransom suggested that Mr. Bledsoe read the one letter into the record that was not received by Ms. Workman.

Mr. Bledsoe read to the Board the letter written by Sheryl and Sam Bottoms of 10601 Spanntown Road which is in Rutherford County. The Bottoms' letter stated the use of Spanntown Road during the festival is causing traffic safety issues because the road is so narrow and expressed concern about emergency vehicle access. The Bottoms requested signage on both ends of Spanntown Road stating Spanntown Road be used for local traffic only and that this be enforced by off-duty officers so outside traffic could not use the road during the festival.

Mr. Bledsoe stated all three letters sent were basically the same with all stating there is a traffic problem on Spanntown Road during the festival.

Chairman Ausbrooks asked again if anyone was online for the hearing.

Hearing no one from the public wishing to speak, Chairman Ausbrooks closed the public hearing.

Vice-Chairman Crohan asked if there had been any incidents recorded during the last event.

Mrs. Freeman stated in 2019 while during the heat a lot of patrons would request extra water and some would overheat at the jousting field where there isn't any shade. Paramedics were onsite to tend to their needs.

Chairman Ausbrooks asked if anyone had to be transported to the hospital.

Reca Edwards stated one gentleman had a heart attack at the jousting field and the onsite paramedics quickly helped. He was transported to a Murfreesboro hospital where he received a stint. After surgery the patient ended up doing well.

Vice-Chairman Crohan asked the applicants if they had any solutions to the Spanntown Road traffic problem.

Mrs. Freeman stated they looked at their signage plan after learning of the submitted letters from the public. She was not sure if they could legally block a road.

Chairman Ausbrooks suggested they go back to their signage consultants and see if they could suggest a solution. He felt this was not the first time that this had been a problem for events. He stated he reviewed all three letters and they all seemed to have the same theme to them regarding the traffic.

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Mrs. Freeman stated the road becomes very narrow at the gravel part where it is not paved. She stated that traffic apps direct traffic onto Spanntown Road, and she has asked that the public contact them so that they can direct them to the main entrance. Mr. Freeman stated they were willing to place signs at both ends of Spanntown Road reading “for local traffic only.”

Secretary Karen Emerson-McPeak stated she noticed the estimated total attendance increased from 4,500 from their last event to 5,000 guests this year and wanted to know if the change was for the entire month. She also wanted to know how many vendors and staff would be at the event.

Mr. Freeman advised that the number of 5,000 is the number of guests per day attending. Mrs. Freeman stated attendance depends on the weather and on rainy days the number of guests is very low. The highest number of guests is usually on Memorial Day weekend.

Reca Edwards stated there would be approximately 280 individuals as staff and vendors during the event.

Vice-Chairman Crohan asked if it would be possible for the Freemans to have more than one officer directing traffic. He would like for one officer to be placed on Spanntown Road at Nolensville Road and also would like to see additional signage to be placed at both ends of Spanntown Road.

Chairman Ausbrooks suggested placing an officer on the Williamson County side and placing a sign on the Rutherford County side for traffic.

Mr. Bledsoe asked the Board to make the request a part of their motion for the officer and additional signage.

Chairman Ausbrooks asked County Attorney Kristi Ransom if she had anything she wished to say regarding the traffic problem.

Attorney Kristi Ransom stated the Freemans could go back to Huddleston and Steel and see if any additional signage was needed. The applicants could also ask their traffic consultants to look into additional signage and an officer at the Spanntown Road entrance off of Nolensville Road area. The Board, through its motion, could authorize staff to confirm the results of the findings of the traffic consultants.

Don Crohan made a motion to approve the Special Use request stating it meets the Standard of Sections 5.01, 11.05(D)(7)(d)(i)(C) and 16.02 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Special Use approval is contingent on approval from the Beer Board. He also requested a sign be placed on each end of Spanntown Road stating the road is not to be used for festival traffic along with an officer being placed each morning at the end of Spanntown Road on the Williamson County side to direct traffic. Andrew Ring seconded the motion. Motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

With no other business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

Secretary's Signature

Date