

9525 Burgess Rd, Letter of intent

El Paso County Planning Director,

We are seeking approval of a Temporary Use Permit from you for our property to have a small/seasonal Christmas activity for 15 total days between November 27-December 23. Our understanding is that under your newly adopted codes, you have expanded authority under the Temporary Use Permit application to approve activities that happen “seasonally” and “infrequently” such as our once-a-year Christmas activity. We are asking that this application be met with favor and conditions as necessary to gain approval to operate in 2020.

Summary: The intent of Christmas at our Farm is to have a peaceful place for families to come and make great memories and to celebrate the “Reason for the Season”. We desire to have the name of Jesus proclaimed during Christmas! This is not a place for chaotic light shows, but a place to bring your family for traditional but simple family activities such as enjoying a cup of hot chocolate, roasting a marshmallow for a S’more, viewing and making family photos around an 18’ lighted and decorated Christmas tree, doing Christmas-themed crafts in the barn or event tent, and occasionally singing carols with each other in a homelike setting. We have trees decorated with lights in our corral that a short tractor ride will be running through periodically. To ensure a quality experience (and reduce unexpected traffic), we have implemented a Reservation Only system that will eliminate the risk of having too many people showing up at one time and creating difficulties in managing parking / cars on site. We believe that we have made certain key improvements in our planning that will mitigate all the areas of concern (light, noise, traffic, etc.) and look forward to receiving a Temporary Use permit, either with manageable conditions or no conditions. Please help us ensure our seasonal family-oriented activities are in compliance and good standing with the County and respectful of our neighbors and the community of Black Forest.

Hours of Operation: Our event is by reservation only (no pull ups allowed) as we want to keep the crowds limited and the parking manageable. We propose to be open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 3 pm to 8 pm from the last weekend in November and the three weekends leading to Christmas in December. The week of Christmas we would like to be open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday as well. This totals to be 15 days in duration.

Expected Cars and Parking: We expect to average 40 cars a day. Our understanding is there is a limitation of no more than 50 cars on site at any given time including personal vehicles. We are requesting a waiver to this limitation. We believe we will never average more than 50 cars per day while open, however there may be times where some guests do not leave at the expected time and could cause a “surge” of more than 50 cars to be on site temporarily. Our parking lot, in our grass pasture south of our house, is easily accessible from our lane onto the property and has plenty of space for 50 or more cars. See site map.

Toilets: There will be 3 portable toilets provided and they will be serviced weekly during the event. They are located on the site plan map for your review.

Barn: This 2500 sqft structure was built prior to permits being required for barns. The barn is a cinderblock and wood frame construction and was built more like a house than a barn. In 2019, I called PPRD to inquire as to the need for a permit to host the public in this structure for this event, and

Savannah at PPRD noted that our barn was “grandfathered” and didn’t require a permit since it was built prior to the 1985 requirement. To clarify, I stated I was in discussions with the Land Use / Planning Department for hosting events and she stated again that if I was not doing work on the structure, it would not require a permit and that PPRD would have that same message for Land Use if they inquired. We are requesting the ability to have the public access the inside of our barn. There are 3 easily accessible doors that remain unlocked plus 2 large garage doors in the event of an emergency. Lighted EXIT signs are installed.

Nativity Animals: Two goats and two sheep will be in our corral for viewing. Hand sanitation pumps will be provided outside and inside.

Concessions: Hot cider (store bought) and hot chocolate (made with purchased filtered water) are available to our guests. Store bought Graham crackers, marshmallows, and Hershey’s chocolate are also available for guests to roast over our fire pit.

Light and Noise Mitigation:

Light - We have given careful consideration regarding how to provide necessary light for safety, while not impacting our neighbors in any way. All activities are lit by standard and tasteful white Christmas lights (C9/C7/and minis) and Christmas decorations to include our parking areas. There will be no flood lights used, or any direct lighting (other than normal lights from the outside of the barn) that could interfere in any way with neighbor’s quiet enjoyment of their property. These lights are strategically and tastefully placed to allow for safe walking conditions on site, and to and from the parking area. Given that we have 20 acres, we were able to place the vast majority of our events directly east and south of our barn. This location places our guests and activities as far from all the neighbors’ homes as possible. We are installing some fencing, and can deploy a visual wind screen / barrier (10’ tall) just north of our barn if needed or requested. The wind screen will only be raised during our events and taken down immediately after. Our intent is to block light and observable activity from our neighbors directly to the North and North East for their privacy.

Noise – There will be no music outside, and all activities are designed for families to enjoy a peaceful, classical, traditional Christmas experience. Activities in the Barn will not be “rowdy” in any way. Our hours of operation also have all guests leaving the premises by 8 pm with lights needed for safe egress to be turned off shortly after all guests have safely left. No activity will exceed the allowable decibel levels.

Overall: We look forward to addressing any concerns and receiving approval for this year. Thank you for your consideration and we welcome your questions.

Patrick & Elisa Clark, Matt & Amber Tanner