Re: Conference & Event Facility Special Permit

252 Rowley Bridge Road

Topsfield, Mass

To: Topsfield Board of Appeals

A draft decision relating to an application filed on April 18, 2023 with the Topsfield Town Clerk by Connemara House Farm LLC of 252 Rowley Bridge Road for a Special Permit pursuant to Article II, Section 17 of the Topsfield Zoning By-Law for a Conference and Event Facility was circulated on July 24, 2023. Connemara House Farm LLC submits the following comments for consideration:

**The days per week in which events with music may be held are limited to Friday, Saturday and Sunday.**

**Comment:** Friday, Saturday and Sundays are typical days for wedding and other celebratory events are held. However, it is typical for background music to be played at events held during the other weekdays.

**Suggested Condition:** The days per week in which events with dance or celebratory music may be held are limited to Thursday (same as “The Commons”), Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

**Hours of operation – Music must end by 10:00 PM. The events must end no later than 11:00 PM. Events that are held on Monday through Thursday must end by 9:00 PM.**

**Comment:** Often time’s corporate functions include receptions and dinners. These happening often timed include awards and other recognitions that could easily go beyond 9:00 PM.

**Suggested Condition:** Music must end by 10:00 PM. The events must end no later than 11:00 PM. Background music for corporate events that are held on Monday through Thursday must end by 9:00 PM.

**Use of speakers outside of a tented area are limited to no later than 7:00 PM.**

**Comment:** No comment.

**Suggested Condition:** No suggestion.

**The tent facility must be set up in a way such that the direction of the speaker are pointed in a southerly direction towards the orchards and not directed towards residents.**

**Comment: None.**

**Suggested Condition**: None.

**Sound levels from all events at the facility shall not exceed \_\_\_ decibels above ambient sound levels at the property lines.**

**Comment:** This condition will require monitoring devices to be set around the perimeter of the property without any security. Further perimeter monitoring is unnecessary when effective monitoring in the tent occurs.This Board has previously required the Applicants to provide information and data concerning decibel levels in the tent and its effect on noise at the Farm’s perimeter.

**Suggested Condition**: Sound levels from all events at the facility shall not exceed 85 decibels within the event tent.

**All music that is played at the facility must be directed through a sound board or other device that will limit the sound level such that it cannot exceed \_\_\_ decibels, and if the music exceeds the level, it will automatically and immediately be shut down**.

**Comment:** Certain music played (such as an acoustical guitar, violin or harp) at the actual celebratory ceremony is not directed through a soundboard or other device.

**Suggested Condition:** All music that is played at the facility must be monitored through a suitable sound measuring device capable of recording at time and sound levels. Such sound level shall not exceed 85 decibels. If the music exceeds the level, management will immediately correct the sound or shut the music down.

**Connemara Farm shall purchase and install sound monitoring equipment that will automatically read levels at the property lines. The results will be recorded, logged and forwarded to the Town Building Department for review by the Wednesday following any weekend at which events with music are held.**

**Comment:** Sound monitoring equipment that will automatically read levels within the tent.

**Suggested Condition:** Connemara Farm shall purchase and install sound monitoring equipment that will automatically read levels inside the tent. The results will be recorded, logged and forwarded to the Town Building Department for review by the Wednesday following any weekend at which events with music are held and valid complaints are received.

**This finding and special permit shall only be valid for the remainder of the 2023 operation of the facility. The Applicant shall be required to reapply for the finding and special permit for the 2024 and following seasons at which time the Board will have information on the actual impact of the facility on its neighbors with the conditions in place.**

**Comment:** Wedding and other celebratory events are often times booked two years in advance. This condition significantly hampers the Farm’s marketing ability and greatly reduces it chances for a successful operation.

**Suggested Condition:** This finding and special permit shall be valid for twenty-four months. The Applicant may reapply for amended findings and extension of the special permit for following seasons at which time the Board will have information on the actual impact of the facility on its neighbors with the conditions in place.

**The special Permit is personal to Connemara House Farm LLC and members of the Guinee family. The Permit shall cease upon sale of the limited liability company and / or real estate or upon a substantial change in use without prior notification to and approval by the Board.**

**Comment :**None.

**Suggested Condition:** None.