

Town of Mesilla, New Mexico

THE PLANNING, ZONING AND HISTORICAL APPROPRIATENESS COMMISSION
(PZHAC) WILL HOLD A WORK SESSION AT THE MESILLA TOWN HALL,
2231 AVENIDA DE MESILLA.
MONDAY- SEPTEMBER 30, 2024, AT 2:00 PM

WORK SESSION

AN INTEREST TO OPERATE A WINERY VENUE BUSINESS IN RURAL FARM
ZONE. EXISTING STRUCTURES WILL BE USED TO OPERATE BUSINESS.
AGRICULTURAL USE OF THE LAND WILL NOT BE DISRUPTED.



ATTENDEES

Commissioner Walkinshaw
Commissioner Miller
Commissioner Gallegos
Community & Economic Director (CED) Salazar

Sylvia D'Andrea
Barbara Benton
Harold Benton
CID Inspector Maese

PUBLIC

Mary H. Ratje
Trina Witter

CED Salazar – opened up the meeting by introducing the applicant, Sylvia D’Andrea and applicant’s project designer, Barbara Benton. Mrs. D’Andrea is considering in buying a property for sale in the rural farm (RF) zone. Before purchasing the property, she would like some feedback from the commission if it would be allowed.

The property is approximately 6.28 acres with pecan orchard, a residential home and a large barn type structure. Mrs. D’Andrea is proposing to operate a winery type venue where she would have wine tasting and a place where she could accommodate large groups that do not fit at her nearby restaurant, Lunna Rosa. She could cater to them there.

Three points were made to consider the application of a winery in the RF zone, 320 W University. One, the parcel is the last property in Mesilla, adjacent to Las Cruces on University Ave. Highway currently is going under construction going from single lane to double lane. The concern for the potential of excessive traffic is dissolved due to its location and it being on a main highway. It would be totally different scenario if the property was in the middle of the RF zone and no main arteries for traffic.

Secondly, the agricultural use of the property will not be disrupted. It will continue to be agricultural use. The structures on the property will be used with little to no changes. The parking lot will be of dirt, similar to other venues.

Third, the code does allow with the use of special use permit, agricultural industry, packaging and such. There will be a wine tasting available which is agricultural use.

Commissioner Walkinshaw – concern with section of the RF code 18.20.030 (B)(4) – no industry shall be permitted within 500 feet of adjacent properties. A variance would have to be given if the applicant were to produce and/or package wine.

CED Salazar – Mesilla town code 18.20.020 (K) allows you to stockpile manure, yet we are debating if we should allow a winery which is an auxiliary business to agricultural use of the land? Also, Mesilla town code 18.20.020 (C) allows to have quarters for farmhands. Who does that now a days. These are just few examples on how unrealistic parts of this code is and why we need to be subjective to our modern times until we amend our ordinance to best meet our town’s needs.

Sylvia D’Andrea – introduced herself and family. History behind their family in the winery business stemming back all the way back to Italy where her husband is from. Main winery is in Deming, from growing grapes to processing and packing. Has a restaurant in Las Cruces just yards away from Mesilla jurisdiction called Lunna Rosa.

The property has a residence that still haven’t been decided if she will be staying there or her son. The barn will be used for wine tasting and for overflow large crowd from our restaurant that we can’t accommodate. Want to serve large groups like football teams, etc.

Commissioner Walkinshaw – concerned the agricultural use of the land, no grape orchards.

Harold Benton – there is also that thought of removing some struggling pecan trees on the property and replace with a grape orchard for wine.

Sylvia D’Andrea – a lot of them pecan trees are in bad shape. We will have someone to take a look at them and see if they are salvageable. If not, we are going to have to replace them or put in a vineyard.

Commissioner Gallegos – asked about possibility with issue of light pollution.

Barbara Benton – there won’t even be any parking lot lights.

CED Salazar – if there is additional lighting, they would just have to conform to our light pollution code and either shield the lighting with cones/reflectors and also the lumines of the lights would have to be low.

Sylvia D’Andrea – there is a possibility to grow grape on the property too. Remove some of the older/sicker trees and have a vineyard. Processing it and bottling it as Mesilla Wine.

CED Salazar – if you grow and package the grapes/wine at the site, it will fall under a section of our code that is permissible under a special use permit.

Inspector Maese – asked if the catering on this site from your restaurant, would it still require having a kitchen? Are there some rooms upstairs of the barn that used to be classrooms? Parking previously approved when that barn was approved for a church. Where would your ADA parking at? ADA parking will require a hard surface such as concrete, asphalt or certain types of compacted soil.

On another note, emergency lighting inside the building, front doors would need to swing out and not in.

Commissioner Walkinshaw – asked about fire truck access in and out of property.

Sylvia D’Andrea – there will be enough room and willing to adhere to any requirements are set from any agency such as fire, environmental or CID.

Inspector Maese – don’t see an issue with the building itself meeting the requirements. Suggest NM Regulations and Licensing Dept is contacted to advise if outdoor wine tasting such as outdoor patios require any special enclosure.

Harold Benton – if they require anything, we will make sure to adhere to it.

Inspector Maese – University Ave. is considered to be state highway and under DOT jurisdiction. They are widening that highway. I would check to see if that will impact your property and plans.

Commissioner Walkinshaw – understanding there is supposed to be a walkway on one side of the highway and the other side a bike trail.

Town code 18.20.030 (B)(4) – limits industrial agriculture to be no less than 500 feet from adjacent properties. If necessary, the commission could consider to amending it according to the type of industry.

Commissioner Gallegos asked if he wanted to go and taste a bottle of wine, would I have to make an appointment?

Sylvia D’Andrea – no, you would stop by my restaurant Luna Rossa.

CED Salazar – no more discussion. Reminder of the purpose of the workshop is to ask questions and for commission to understand what the applicant is requesting. No decision to approve or deny has been made. Will follow up with the applicant and see if she wishes to move forward.

End of Workshop @ 3:07pm



Eric Walkinshaw
Chairperson -acting



Gloria Maya
Town Clerk/Treasurer



NOTICE

If you need any accommodation for a disability to enable you to fully participate in the hearing or meeting, please contact us on 524-3262 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

Posted on 9/27/2024 at the following locations: Town Hall - 2231 Avenida de Mesilla; Public Safety Building - 2670 Calle de Parian; Mesilla Community Center - 2251 Calle de Santiago; Shorty’s Food Mart - 2290 Avenida de Mesilla; and the U.S. Post Office – 22e. 53 Calle de Parian; Mesilla website

<https://www.mesillanm.gov/minutes-agendas/>