

DRAFT Memo

To: Peninsula Township Planning Commission

From: Agricultural Advisory Committee

cc: Peninsula Township Board

Date: 9/16/25

Re: Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Ordinance

Introduction

On behalf of the Peninsula Township Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), we respectfully submit the following recommendations for consideration by the Peninsula Township Planning Commission (PC), and Township Board (TB). We developed these guidelines as part of our ongoing charge to support and sustain agricultural character and preservation of open space on Old Mission Peninsula. It is the AAC's understanding that a new 'Agritourism Ordinance' could take immediate effect with Board Approval and thirty-days' notice. As such, and with a sense of urgency, we request that this ordinance recommendation go through the Planning Commission's public process, and a formal recommendation be made to the Board independent of the proposed zoning ordinance rewrite. These recommendations are intended to provide clarity, balance, and opportunity—supporting farm viability while ensuring that community values and land use objectives are upheld.

Agritourism and Agribusiness have long been recognized across Michigan as a vital component of farm sustainability, offering farmers opportunities to diversify income while educating and engaging the public in the state's agricultural heritage. The Michigan Right to Farm Act (Public Act 93 of 1981) established important protections for farming operations, and subsequent guidance from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) has acknowledged agritourism as an accepted farm practice when conducted in ways consistent with Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs). There is no state or federal definition of Agritourism and/or Agribusiness, but neighboring Long Lake Township ordinance has a good working example, and is included in this memo as an attached reference.

Proposed 'Agritourism and/or Agribusiness' Integration in current Peninsula Township Zoning Ordinance

ARTICLE III – DEFINITIONS

Section 3.2 Definitions:

[ADD] Agritourism and/or Agribusiness: *An activity conducted on a working farm or agricultural property that is intended to involve members of the public. Agritourism and/or Agribusiness includes activities including but not limited to U-pick operations, harvest festivals, farm tours, educational workshops, experiences utilizing on-site farm products including processed products, on-farm sales, farmstands, farm markets, farmers markets, farm-to-table gatherings, cooking classes using farm products, corn mazes, hay rides, nightly rental farm stays, classes and tours, horseback riding, small farm animal meet-and-greets, wildlife viewing, farmland art and photography, and food or beverage service related to on-site products including processed products.*

ARTICLE VI – ZONING DISTRICTS

Section 6.7.2 Uses Permitted by Right in the A-1 Agricultural District:

[ADD new subsection (Agritourism and/or Agribusiness)]: Agritourism and/or Agribusiness activities accessory to a principal farm operation, subject to compliance with the performance standards in Article VII, Section 7.2.

Section 6.7.3 Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit:

[ADD new subsection (Agritourism and/or Agribusiness)]: Agritourism and/or Agribusiness operations that include any of the following shall require a Special Use Permit:

- Events hosting more than 250 people
- Permanent or semi-permanent structures for event (however temporary tents and high tunnels will be exempted from SUP requirement)
- Appropriate parking facilities to support gathering, field parking permitted in accordance with GAAMPs so long as parking is not in the right of way

ARTICLE VII – SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS

Add Section 7.2.10: Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Performance Standards

Section 7.2.10 Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Performance Standards

Agritourism and/or Agribusiness activities permitted by right or by special use permit shall comply with the following standards:

- (a) Agritourism and/or Agribusiness shall be accessory to an active farm operation; financial metrics shall not be used as the basis of determining subordination.
- (b) Hours of operation shall follow MLCC rules for hours, unless otherwise approved.
- (c) Adequate off-street parking must be provided. No parking shall occur within the public right-of-way.
- (d) Traffic and noise impacts shall be mitigated to protect adjacent residential uses.
- (e) Signage must comply with Article VII, Section 7.11 (Signs). **May be updated with new Sign Ordinance**
- (f) Outdoor amplified sound is prohibited unless in accordance with Peninsula Township Noise Ordinance No. 40 **May be updated with adoption of pending Peninsula Township Noise Ordinance 61**
- (g) Waste disposal and sanitation facilities shall comply with applicable health codes.
- (h) Food service shall comply with all County and State regulations.
- (i) Fire Chief sign off confirming proposed activity meets fire code standards.

ARTICLE VIII – USES AUTHORIZED BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT

Section 8.7.2 Miscellaneous Special Uses:

[ADD new item (I)]:

- (I) Agritourism and/or Agribusiness operations that exceed the limitations for permitted accessory uses in the A-1 District.

Table of Zoning Conflicts and Recommendations

Ordinance Section	Title	Current Status / Conflict	Proposed Markup or Recommendation
Article III, Section 3.2 (Page 3)	Definitions	<i>No definition for "Agritourism and/or Agribusiness" currently exists.</i>	Add definition of Agritourism and/or Agribusiness as provided above. Also clarify related terms like "Farm Stand," "Retail Farm Processing Facility," and "Tasting Room."
Section 6.7.2 (Page 47)	A-1 Agricultural District – Uses Permitted by Right	Permits only traditional agriculture; accessory commercial uses (e.g., retail, tours) not clearly allowed.	Amend to include: "Agritourism and/or Agribusiness activities accessory to active farm operations, including U-pick, educational tours, farm stays, and direct sales, subject to standards in Article VII."
Section 6.7.3 (page 53)	Uses Permitted by Agritourism and/or Agribusiness	Does not include Agritourism and/or Agribusiness as a special Event Permit in A- use.	Add: "Agritourism and/or Agribusiness activities exceeding thresholds in Section 7.2 (e.g., event size, traffic, food service) may require an Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Event Permit."
Section 7.2.1 – Supplementary 7.2.5 (Page 70+)	Use Regulations	No guidance for traffic, parking, or noise from farm-based visitor events.	Add new subsection: "Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Performance Standards," covering: hours, parking, signage, noise, traffic, restroom facilities, and lighting.
Section 8.7.2 (Page 148)	Miscellaneous Special Uses	Does not include Agritourism and/or Agribusiness.	Add "Agritourism and/or Agribusiness operations exceeding accessory use scale" as a Miscellaneous Special Use. Include examples: wedding barns, large seasonal events.

Next Steps

The AAC respectfully requests that the PC place this matter on its upcoming agenda for discussion, and initiate the public hearing process necessary to formally consider adoption of the proposed Agritourism and/or Agribusiness Ordinance language. Following PC review, we ask that a recommendation be forwarded to the TB for prompt action. Given the alignment with state law, the prevalence of Agritourism and/or Agribusiness throughout Michigan, and the immediate need for clarity within our zoning framework, we believe that early adoption of these provisions will provide both certainty for farmers and confidence for the community.

LONG LAKE TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE

SECTION 4.24 AGRI-TOURISM AND AGRI-BUSINESS [This Section has been amended by Ordinance #157, adopted November 10, 2016, effective November 27, 2016]

1. Intent. This section is intended to allow agri-business and agri-tourism uses as part of farm operations in the Township in order to promote the following:

- a. Preservation of agricultural uses and the agricultural sector in the Township and in the region.
- b. Retention of large tracts of land for land preservation and to sustain current-day and future farming opportunities.
- c. Allow for agriculturally-related business opportunities to make agricultural pursuits economically viable.
- d. Promote a multi-jurisdictional agricultural district and agri-business hub along the M-72 corridor.
- e. Provide for food security for our region.
- f. Conformance with all applicable laws, including but not limited to the Michigan Right to Farm Act, Act 93 of 1981 as amended, and the Michigan Agricultural Processing Act, Act 381 of 1998 as amended, and with the Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS) promulgated by the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development.

2. Agri-business/agri-tourism Uses Permitted by Right. The following uses are permitted by right in association with a farm anywhere that agricultural uses are allowed under this Ordinance.

- a. Storage, retail or wholesale marketing, or processing of agricultural products or value-added agricultural products provided that the fifty percent rule is observed.
- b. Cider mills (non-alcoholic) selling product, with or without a tasting room, derived from crops provided that the fifty percent rule is observed.
- c. Seasonal you-pick fruits and vegetable operations.
- d. Food sales/processing, processing of fruits or produce provided that the fifty percent rule is observed.
- e. Seasonal outdoor mazes of agricultural origin such as straw bales or corn.

3. Agribusiness/agri-tourism Uses Permitted Following Conditional Use Approval. In addition to the uses in Paragraph 2 above, the following uses are permitted in the LB, GB, LDR, AG, or CR districts following conditional use approval provided that all standards of this Section 4.24 and the underlying zoning districts as listed and conditional use standards of Article 19 are met.

- a. Cider mills (alcoholic), distilleries, breweries, or wineries selling product, in a tasting room, where the 50 percent rule is observed.
- b. Small event venues, open air or within an enclosed building, designed for use by fewer than 200 persons.

4. M-72 Agribusiness Overlay. The M-72 Agribusiness Overlay includes all properties located within the AG zoning district with a minimum of 2 acres of land and minimum of 200 feet of frontage on M-72. In addition to the uses in Paragraph 2 above, the following uses are permitted within the M-72 Agribusiness Overlay following conditional use approval:

- a. Small event venues, open air or within an enclosed building, designed for use by fewer than 200 persons
- b. Cider mills (alcoholic), distilleries, breweries, or wineries selling product, in a tasting room, where the 50 percent rule is observed.
- c. Restaurants or cafes with maximum seating capacity of 100 and no drive through service.
- d. Agriculturally related tourist overnight accommodations (i.e., tourist work camps or dude ranch experiences)
- e. Agriculturally related retailers such as a saddlery shop, feed store, or similar uses as approved by the Planning Commission.
- f. Large event venues, open air or within an enclosed building, designed for use by over 200 persons but no more than 400 persons, provided that due to the location, buffers provided, hours of operation, access, and proposed lighting and sound amplification, there will be minimal impact upon neighboring properties.

5. Standards and Requirements. All agribusiness and agri-tourism uses regulated under this Section 4.24 are subject to the following conditions as applicable

- a. Parking shall be provided based on the capacity of the activity or the retail floor space in compliance with Section 25.4.
- b. Parking for agri-tourism or agri-business uses may be located on a grass or gravel area for seasonal uses such as road side stands, you-pick operations and agricultural mazes. All parking areas shall be defined by either gravel, cut lawn, sand or other visible marking. Parking to be located on the same parcel as the agritourism or agri-business use. Parking shall not be located in any required setback area.
- c. Signs associated with an agri-tourism or agri-business use shall be in conformance with Section 21.4.
- d. The applicant shall secure and maintain all required state and local permits.
- e. Outdoor event venues including such elements as, but not limited to, tents, restrooms, and parking areas shall provide a minimum 100 foot buffer from any residentially zoned or used property.

f. Newly constructed buildings or additions to existing buildings housing an agri-business or agri-tourism use shall be set back a minimum of 50 feet from any property line of an adjacent parcel in residential use or zoned residentially.

g. The Planning Commission may limit the hours of operation for any use approved under this Section in consideration of adjacent land uses.

h. Landscaping may be required to buffer any proposed parking areas or outdoor public use areas including, but not limited to mechanical equipment, outdoor storage, trash dumpsters, etc. from adjacent residentially zoned or used properties.

6. Accessory Uses Permitted. The following accessory uses may be permitted in conjunction with any approved agribusiness or agri-tourism use:

a. Value-added agricultural products or activities such as education tours or processing facilities, etc.

b. Bakeries selling baked goods containing produce grown in observance of the 50% rule

c. Petting farms, animal display, and pony rides

d. Wagon, sleigh and hayrides

e. Nature trails

f. Open air or covered picnic area with restrooms

g. Educational classes, lectures, seminars

h. Historical agricultural exhibits

i. Kitchen facilities for processing items for sale

j. Retailing of non-agriculturally related products such as antiques or crafts, packaged food or beverages, gifts, or other similar products, limited to twenty-five percent (25%) of gross sales