

April 20, 2015

Project Name: King Family Polo

From: David L. King, Manager/part Owner of both:

King Family Vineyards, LLC, (KFV) lessee/operator of TM 55-80,
and
Roseland Farm, LLC (Roseland Farm) owner/lessor of TM-55-80.

Applicant: Roseland Farm, LLC (Roseland Farm), owner of TM 55-80.

Note on Ownership:

Roseland Farm is the legal owner of the parcel affected by this application and is wholly owned by the five King family members, David, Ellen, Carrington, Stuart and James King.

KFV is the legal operating entity that leases the land from Roseland Farm for the sole purpose of operating a winery, holds the Virginia farm winery license, and is wholly owned by the same five King family members. KFV as operator is required to maintain commercial and equestrian liability insurance.

KFV has 13 full time and 52 part time employees.

Tax Map Parcels affected: 55-80, Rural Area 3

Project Proposal:

General Background of Roseland Farm and KFV:

Our family moved to Charlottesville in 1995 and purchased the original 325 acre farm (55-80, 55-81, 55-21) in 1996.

In 1999 KFV began operations and the first vineyard was planted.

All three parcels were placed under Virginia Outdoors Foundation conservation easement in 2000.

In 2002 we opened our first tasting room/production winery in 2002, and expanded with our event facility in 2007 and a new production facility in 2013.

We've purchased three other parcels of land: 55-80A and 55-80A1, a total of 4 acres with two houses in 2009, and the 50 acres of 55-23B in 2014. Roseland Farm now totals 379 acres.

Four owners, David, Ellen, Carrington and James, live on Roseland Farm. The other owner, Stuart, lives a quarter of mile down Half Mile Branch Road. Carrington, Stuart and James are employed at KfV and are part owners of Roseland Farm and KfV.

Polo Background:

The polo field was constructed starting in 2003 and we played on it for the first time in 2005. We understand from County Staff that there have been no complaints regarding Sunday polo since 2005.

The closest adjacent home/neighbor to the polo field is at least 400 yards away.

The users of our polo field are normally the approximately 20 local players, occasionally supplemented by players from northern Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and rarely, from around the world.

Sunday polo begins on the last Sunday in May and normally ends the second Sunday of October. This means around 20 or 21 potential dates per season.

Sunday polo is the only time that winery customers are allowed as spectators but we often use the field during the other 6 days of each week for practice and training.

Sunday polo is free of charge to winery customers. Attendance averages 500 people and 200 vehicles per Sunday.

Sunday polo is held weather permitting, meaning when it's not raining and the field is dry enough to be safe for the horses and players. We average around 6 rain outs per year.

Sunday polo begins at 1:00 pm and generally lasts about 2 hours.

Since 2005, Pink Ribbon Polo, a local cancer charity, has had a special use permit for a single weekend in June which allowed for up to 2,000 spectators. This special use permit expired in 2014.

Current Sunday Polo Operations:

KFV staff puts out flags and cones showing parking areas around the polo field early Sunday morning. Spectators are expected to tailgate, so the parking areas and the spectator areas are the same.

A KFV employee answers the phone at the winery all day (10 am to 5:30 pm) on Sundays and the KFV website contains general information and weather updates.

At 11 am a certified traffic control contractor is on station at the main entrance on Half Mile Branch Road to prevent traffic backup south towards Yancey's Mill.

Some attendees began coming in around this time, but most trickle in between 12 and 1 pm.

After 11 am, a total of 6 KFV employees on three golf carts monitor the parking areas around the polo field, answer questions and have wine and water for sale.

6 portable toilets are available field side, four on the north end and two on the south end of the field, and the winery toilets are within easy walking distance.

Once the polo game is over, some customers linger but most are off the farm by 4 pm.

The winery and grounds close at 5:30 pm. Only private events are allowed at the winery after 5:30 pm.

We have never found it necessary to provide for garbage cleanup and do not provide garbage cans. Our guests have proven to be very considerate in this regard.

The flat area around the polo field has accommodated over 700 cars for the Pink Ribbon event without incident. The large area, and the fact that we only play when the grounds are dry enough to play the game, and therefore dry enough to drive on the grounds, have prevented parking problems.

There is no announcer, no public address system and no amplified music.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan:

The Comprehensive Plan intent for Rural Areas is the “preservation of agricultural and forestall lands and activities,” to “preserve the county’s active farms” and to “enhance the economy and maintain employment and lifestyle opportunities.” The Comprehensive Plan strategies include maintaining “clearly visible rural character (and) activities,” and to “support rural land uses that provide rural landowners with economic viability.”

Farm winery uses and events, and events and activities at agricultural operations are allowed by right and by special use permit in Rural Areas.

Impacts on Public Facilities and Public Infrastructure:

Traffic flow on Half Mile Branch Road is the only impact on public facilities. Our history over the last 10 years has shown that the average number of vehicle trips entering the property between 10 AM and 4PM for polo is 150 to 250.

Two Notes on traffic:

In 2000 when we were researching the traffic flows on Half Mile Branch, VDOT informed us that Half Mile Branch was designed for 3300 cars per day and was carrying approx. 900 per day. We are unaware of VDOT’s current use estimate.

The three parcels placed under VOF conservation easement in 2000 had a total of 27 development units available. Using VDOT estimates, if this property had been developed by right there would be 270 vehicle trips per day, every day of the year.

Impact on Environmental Features:

None

Proposal:

1. Sundays only, 10 am to 5:30 pm,
2. Last weekend of May through the second weekend in October each year,
3. Limit spectators to 1,000, free admission,
4. No outdoor lighting will be used,
5. No public address system, announcer or amplified music will be used,
6. No new permanent structures will be constructed for this event,
7. A VDOT certified traffic controller will be at the main entrance on Half Mile Branch Road from 11 am to 4 pm,
8. One crowd manager for every 250 people,
9. Otherwise generally as described in Current Sunday Polo Operations above.

Other Items

A Public Safety Plan has been approved and is attached.

A copy of a letter from the Virginia Outdoors Foundation is attached.

VDOT local Albemarle office has informed us that a Land Use permit will be issued once the SUP has been issued.