Narrative – Special Use Permit Amendment for Parcel 136-13C (SP201700004)

Applicant: Shotgun Beach LLC, d/b/a James River Runners

Shotgun Beach LLC, doing business as James River Runners, requests an amendment to Special Use Permit SP201700004 to add parcel 136-13C and authorize 6 additional primitive campsites. Access to the parcel will utilize the existing entrance shown on the concept plan. No tree clearing, grading, or permanent construction is proposed. Site preparation will consist solely of mowing existing vegetation to delineate the new campsites. Each site will contain one picnic table and one fire pit, and additional portable toilets will be deployed and regularly serviced to accommodate the increase in campers.

Each site can accommodate two vehicles. Additional vehicles may park in the Main Business Parking and the Overflow Parking when space in the Main Business Parking is unavailable.

Comment: How Many traffic trips are you expecting to be generated at events?

- We anticipate an additional 60 trips to be generated for the new campsites over a four month period
    - 6 sites X 10 additional trips

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1) No Substantial Detriment to Adjacent Parcels

- **Low-intensity, low-impact use:** The proposed primitive campsites maintain the same character and intensity as the existing 15 sites. No new structures or lighting are introduced, minimizing visual or auditory impacts to neighboring parcels.
- **Existing vegetative buffers retained:** Because no tree clearing is proposed, natural screening remains intact, protecting neighbors' views and maintaining privacy.
- **Responsible operations:** Quiet hours, prohibition of amplified sound, and active staff oversight ensure peaceful conditions. Fire pits are standard steel rings, and all County or State fire safety requirements and burn bans are strictly followed.

- **Sanitation and waste management:** Additional portable toilets will be provided and serviced. Trash will be collected and removed off-site daily to prevent litter or odors.

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2) Character of the Nearby Area Unchanged

- **Continuation of an established rural recreation use:** James River Runners has operated a low-impact outdoor recreation business for decades. The addition of primitive campsites is consistent with the existing approved use and does not alter the rural character of the area.
- **Minimal disturbance:** The proposal relies on mowing only—no grading, tree removal, or infrastructure expansion—preserving the natural appearance of the parcel.
- **No new lighting or built facilities:** Campers use their own low-output lights, ensuring nighttime character remains consistent with the rural setting.

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3) Harmony With Ordinance, Public Health, Safety, and General Welfare

- **Safety & emergency access:** Campsites will be arranged to maintain clear emergency access paths from the existing entrance. Site maps and emergency contact information are posted, and staff are available during operating hours.
- **Compliance with district and Section 5 regulations:** The project meets applicable campground and sanitation requirements, maintains adequate buffers, and avoids unnecessary disturbance.
- **Protection of natural resources:** No tree clearing, grading, fill, or in-stream work is proposed. Existing vegetation and riparian buffers remain untouched. Stormwater continues to disperse through vegetated groundcover.
- **Traffic and parking:** The existing entrance serves the new sites. Traffic increases are modest and dispersed, and all parking occurs on-site, with no impact on public roadways.
- **Neighbor considerations:** Natural buffers, quiet hours, and controlled operations maintain the peaceful rural environment and protect public welfare and safety.

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4) Consistency With the Comprehensive Plan

The proposal aligns with the goals and strategies outlined in the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan for the Rural Area:

- **Supports land conservation and natural resource protection.**
  The Rural Area chapter emphasizes conserving ecological systems, scenic resources, and biodiversity. The request introduces only low-impact, temporary campsite improvements with **no tree removal**, **no grading**, and **no permanent structures**, directly supporting these conservation goals.
- **Maintains Rural Area land-use intensity and avoids new residential development.**
  The Comprehensive Plan highlights the importance of reducing residential growth in the Rural Area. Primitive campsites do not introduce new dwelling units and therefore reinforce the County's growth-management policies.
- **Advances rural economic vitality through small-scale outdoor recreation.**
  The Plan supports small-scale businesses and rural recreation that serve both residents and visitors. James River Runners is a longstanding outdoor recreation provider, and the modest expansion of primitive camping is consistent with these objectives.
- **Protects scenic, historic, cultural, and environmental resources.**
  All existing vegetation is retained, riparian areas remain undisturbed, and natural viewsheds are preserved—directly aligning with the County's resource-protection strategies.
- **Efficiently uses existing infrastructure.**
  Relying on the existing entrance and internal circulation aligns with the Plan's intent to minimize new roadway impacts and reduce unnecessary land disturbance.
- **Supports equitable access to recreation and rural amenities.**
  The Comprehensive Plan emphasizes equitable access to community services and rural recreation opportunities. Primitive camping at James River Runners provides inclusive, affordable access to nature-based experiences.

Summary

The proposed amendment adds carefully managed primitive campsites on parcel 136-13C, accessed through the existing entrance, with no tree clearing or permanent construction.

The plan preserves natural resources, maintains rural character, protects neighbors, ensures safe operations, and aligns directly with the County's Rural Area objectives. The expanded camping area will continue to contribute positively to the rural economy while upholding the public health, safety, and general welfare.