



PLANNING COMMISSION

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS

GREENE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
Post Office Box 358
Stanardsville, Virginia 22973

Tel: 434-985-5282
Fax: 434-985-1459

www.greenecountyva.gov
planning@gcva.us

MEMORANDUM

TO:
Members of the Greene County Board of Supervisors

FROM:
Jim Frydl, Zoning Administrator and Planning Director
Stephanie Golon, Deputy Planning Director

SUBJECT:
Public Hearing: Agricultural Events, Farm Wineries, Farm Breweries, and Limited Distilleries

DATE:
February 24, 2026

STATUS

Section 18-1 of the Zoning Ordinance provides that regulations, restrictions, zones, and boundaries established in this Ordinance may be amended, supplemented, changed, modified, or repealed by the governing body pursuant to § 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia. This application proposes amendments to various sections of the Zoning Ordinance for purposes of clarification, correction, and refinement of district regulations and general provisions. The amendments focus on clarifying intent, adding definitions, and addressing inconsistencies.

ANALYSIS & EFFECT

The Board of Supervisors directed staff and the Planning Commission to review and refine zoning ordinance language related to Farm Wineries, Farm Breweries, Limited

Distilleries, and Events at Agricultural Operations. The Board requested enhanced clarity and additional regulation regarding the number of events, number of attendees and vehicles, and the use of amplified sound.

Following the joint work sessions in July 2025 and October 2025, and after six Planning Commission work sessions that incorporated feedback from the public, business owners, and stakeholders, the Planning Commission has developed the following recommended changes:

Changes Included in the Planning Commission Recommendations

- Revising the definition of “events” to include only activities with 50 or more attendees.
- Establishing size limitations for event/sales structures.
- Reducing the number of by-right events to 30 per year (subject to Board discussion).
- Allowing outdoor amplified sound only with a Special Use Permit (wedding ceremonies excluded).
- Adding parking regulations specific to agricultural events and alcohol-producing agricultural uses.
- Defining allowable food service.
- Establishing restroom facility requirements.
- Limiting the number of by-right participants to 150 attendees.
- Adding specific lighting standards.
- Establishing methods for calculating space associated with events, sales, and agritourism.
- Adding Limited Distilleries as a use.

Changes Made Since July 2025 and October 2025 Joint Sessions

- Ensuring language clearly states these uses must be subordinate to the agricultural operation.
- Changing the term “visitors” to “attendees” for consistency.
- Incorporating the definition of “events” directly into the ordinance text.
- Clarifying that agritourism must occur on parcels with a bona fide agricultural operation and meet the definition of the “bona fide production of crops, animals, or fowl.”
- Adding Agritourism Events to the ordinance title.
- Clarifying time references within the noise regulations.
- Including a size-guidance chart within the Special Use Permit section, based on parcel acreage.
- Adding language related to emergency services coordination.
- Adding a definition for “subordinate.”
- Refining the food service definition for consistency with Virginia State Code.

How the Greene County Comprehensive Plan Supports Agritourism, Agricultural Events, and Rural Character

1. Support for Agritourism

The Comprehensive Plan identifies agritourism as a critical sector of Greene County's economy. It highlights farmers markets, wineries, vineyards, and farm-related attractions as major draws that strengthen both tourism and the agricultural economy.

The Plan recognizes:

- Farmers' markets as anchor tourist destinations showcasing local food and crafts.
- The Monticello Wine Trail's presence in Greene County via Stone Mountain Vineyards and Kilaurwen Winery.
- Agritourism as a means to highlight the County's rural identity and attract visitors seeking authentic experiences.

Strategic support includes encouraging niche farming operations, vineyards, equestrian activities, and other specialty agriculture.

2. Support for Agricultural Events

The Plan explicitly supports agricultural and community events that celebrate Greene County's heritage and promote tourism.

These events reinforce Greene's agricultural identity, attract visitors, and support the local economy.

3. Retaining Rural Character

Preserving rural character is a priority throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Citizens identified it as a defining feature of Greene County.

The Plan also emphasizes that rural character is essential to a successful tourism industry, reinforcing the link between rural preservation, agritourism, and community identity.

4. Combined Policy Impact

Taken together, the Comprehensive Plan clearly supports agritourism, agricultural events, and rural character preservation. These policies work together to strengthen Greene County's agricultural economy, promote sustainable tourism, and preserve the scenic qualities that residents and visitors value.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on December 17, 2025, and recommended approval of the changes with a 4-1 vote. The commissioner who voted against recommending approval felt that the number of events allowed by-right was too few to support the investment required to open an agritourism business.

The Agricultural Forestal District Committee met on January 5, 2026, at the request of the Board of Supervisors to review the definitions for “**agricultural operation**” and “**devoted to bona fide production of crops, animals, or fowl**”. The committee recommended minor changes to the definitions and recommended that the definition and use of the word “subordinate” be removed from the proposed ordinance. The committee stated that it is too difficult to differentiate one agricultural activity from another and that attempting to define any activity as subordinate added unnecessary confusion.

MOTIONS

- 1) In accordance with the Greene County Zoning Ordinance, public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, I move to approve OR#24-004 as submitted by the applicant.
- 2) In accordance with the Greene County Zoning Ordinance, public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, I move to approve OR#24-004 as submitted by the applicant with the following amendments:
(List any recommended amendments)
- 2) In accordance with the Greene County Zoning Ordinance, public necessity, convenience, general welfare, and good zoning practice, I move to deny OR#24-004 for the following reasons:
(List any reason for denial)
- 3) I move to defer action on this application until _____, due to the following: (Date)
(List any reason to defer)