

**AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE  
WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP ZONING ORDINANCE**

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP  
INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**ORDINANCE NO.:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Williamstown Township hereby amends its Zoning Ordinance to add regulations allowing “event barns” under the codified terms and provisions in the following Ordinances by amending the agricultural tourism definition, adding a new definition for event barn, establishing site development standards applicable to specific uses for event barns, establishing event barn as a special use in the AG-SF, Agricultural Small Farms and the AG-C, Commercial Agricultural zoning districts, and clarifying language so it is consistent with the rest of the Zoning Ordinance to protect the health, safety, and general welfare of Williamstown Township.

**WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP, INGHAM COUNTY, MICHIGAN ORDAINS:**

**SECTION 1**  
**AMENDMENT TO SECTION 1.03 DEFINITIONS**

*The definition of “Agricultural Tourism” in Section 1.03 is amended to read as follows:*

**Agricultural Tourism (also known as Agritourism and Agtourism):** The practice of visiting an agribusiness, horticultural, or agricultural operation, including, but not limited to, a farm, orchard, winery, greenhouse, hunting preserve, a companion animal or livestock show, for the purpose of recreation, education, or active involvement in the operation, other than as a contractor or employee of the operation; and for the purpose of preserving agriculture and the rural open space environment of the Township. Agricultural Tourism uses not covered under the Michigan Department of Agriculture’s Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPs) such as, but not limited to wineries and event barns, are considered special uses in specified zoning districts.

*Section 1.03 is amended by adding the following definition of “Event Barn:”*

**Event Barn:** One or more permanent buildings originally constructed for bona fide agricultural purposes, or a new permanent building whose character emulates the architectural features of an historic agricultural building, that is now used for business meetings, banquets, weddings and wedding receptions, reunions, and similar gatherings.

*Section 1.03 is amended by adding the following definition of “Event:”*

**Event:** As used in the context of Event Barn regulations, an **Event** is a scheduled private gathering (i.e., not open to the general public) for the purposes of celebration or conducting business.

**SECTION 2**  
**AMENDMENT TO SECTION 8.02 SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC USES**

*Section 8.02(OO)(12) is amended to add Event Barns. Section 8.02(OO)(12) will read as follows::*

1. **Exclusions.** The provisions in this subsection OO do not apply to the following uses:

- a. Nature centers or demonstration farms, to the extent that they are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection HH.
- b. Recreation facilities, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection W.
- c. Outdoor events, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection GG.
- d. Event Barns, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection RR.
- e. Roadside stands, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection Z.
- f. Wineries, to the extent that such uses are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection JJ.
- g. Distilleries, to the extent that such uses are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection PP.
- h. Bed-and-breakfast establishments, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection (F).
- i. Brewpubs and Microbreweries, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection (NN).
- j. Riding stables, which are regulated by Section 8.02, subsection (AA).
- k. Any use for which zoning regulations are superseded by Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS), such as farm markets.

### **SECTION 3**

#### **AMENDMENT TO SECTION 8.02 SITE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR SPECIFIC USES**

*Add Section 8.02(RR), which will read as follows:*

#### **RR. Event Barns**

##### **1. Site Plan and Special Land Use Approval.**

- a. Event Barns shall require site plan and special land use review and approval, pursuant to Sections 29.02 and 29.03.
- b. The initial special land use approval shall be limited to one (1) year. Following the initial year of operation, the applicant may apply to the Township Board for continuation of special land use approval for an additional three (3) year period. The Township Board may grant approval for an additional three (3) years if it finds that the Event Barn is in full compliance with all Ordinance requirements. In considering the request for approval, the Township Board may also consider complaints about the Event Barn received at the Township Hall or by the Meridian Township Police.

Following the fourth year of operation, the applicant may apply to the Township Board for ongoing special land use approval, provided that the Event Barn remains in full compliance with all Ordinance requirements and that there are no unresolved complaints about the Event Barn.

- 2. **Health Department Approval.** The septic system, water supply well, and kitchen facilities shall be subject to approval by the Ingham County Health Department prior to final Township approval.
- 3. **Emergency Service Agencies Approvals.** NIESA inspection and approval shall be required prior to final Township approval, pursuant to the current adopted Fire Code. NIESA shall be requested to establish a maximum occupancy load for the facility, determine if the facility must be sprinkled, and approve the fire access route to the Event Barn and within the site. Emergency access routes shall be durable all-season driveways that remains unobstructed during events.

Event Barns shall also be subject to review and approval by the Meridian Township Police.

4. **Building Inspector Approval.** All buildings and improvements shall be subject to inspection by the Williamstown Township Building Inspector. Event Barns shall comply with the regulations in the current adopted Michigan Building Code covering Assembly Group A, including but not limited to the regulations dealing with egress in Section 1029 of the Building Code. Following approval of a site plan for an Event Barn, the applicant shall apply for a building permit, pursuant to Section 29.02(D)(8) of the Zoning Ordinance.
5. **General Public Excluded.** Food service and other Event Barn facilities shall be made available only to patrons of scheduled events; such facilities shall not be open to the general public. This regulation is not intended to prevent agricultural tourism operations and sale of farm products to the general public, which may be permitted under Section 8.02(OO) of the Zoning Ordinance.
6. **Minimum Lot Area.** Event Barns shall not be permitted on parcels that are less than forty (40) acres in size.
7. **Access.** Event Barns shall have access to a paved County primary road or to Grand River Avenue (M-43). Event Barns that have access to Grand River Avenue (M-43) shall require approval by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT). Event Barns that have access to County primary roads shall require approval by the Ingham County Road Department (ICRD). Driveways for ingress and egress shall also be subject to review and approval by the Planning Commission and the Northeast Ingham Emergency Services Authority (NIESA).
8. **Parking.** One (1) off-street parking space shall be provided per three (3) people, based on the occupancy load of the building. Parking areas shall comply with the following setbacks:

Minimum setback from road right-of-way	75 ft.
Minimum setback from side or rear property lines	100 ft.

Parking in the road or road right-of-way is prohibited.

Parking shall comply with applicable requirements in Section 4.01 of the Zoning Ordinance. However, the Planning Commission may waive the requirement for parking lot paving, upon making the determination that a gravel surface will be adequate to handle the anticipated level of traffic. In making such a determination, the Planning Commission shall consider the types of vehicles anticipated (e.g., volume of bus traffic, size and weight of vehicles, etc.). If paving is not required, then the site plan shall include a commitment to provide dust control. All parking areas shall be clearly defined by gravel, wheel stops, fences, and/or other visible markings.

Compliance with the barrier-free parking requirements in Section 4.01(C)(6) shall be required. Barrier-free spaces and side aisles shall be paved, even if the remainder of the parking is gravel surfaced.

9. **Overnight Use.** Overnight accommodations and parking are prohibited.
10. **Alcoholic Beverages.** Alcoholic beverages may be served for on-premises consumption during scheduled events, but only if the alcoholic beverages are produced on-site. For example, alcoholic beverages produced at an on-site brewery, winery, or distillery may be served at an event. Alcoholic beverages produced off-site are not permitted to be served.

The property owner or vendor shall obtain the required license(s) from the Michigan Liquor Control Commission. The person responsible for serving the alcoholic beverages shall be identified, and a copy of the LCC license(s) shall be submitted to the Township prior to any event at which alcohol will be served.

11. **New Building Design.** Any new building constructed to be used as an Event Barn shall emulate the architectural features of an historic agricultural building, as described in the Michigan Barn and Farmstead Survey Manual published by Michigan State University. For example, appropriate Event Barn roof shapes include gable, gambrel, gothic, ogee, round, monitor, and hip. Typical accessory barn features include cupolas, dormers, lightning rods, ventilators, and weathervanes.
12. **Screening and Landscaping.** Event Barns shall comply with the screening and landscaping requirements for Non-Residential Uses in a Residential or Agricultural District (Section 5.03 (C)). If the setbacks are substantially greater than those specified in item 13, following, the Planning Commission may make a recommendation to waive some of the screening and landscaping requirements, provided requirements for screening for adjacent residential zoning and uses are met. Generally, required screening shall be located along the property line (rather than next to the Event Barn).
13. **Setbacks.** Event Barns, including outdoor gathering areas, shall comply with the following setback requirements:

Minimum setback from road right-of-way	75 ft.
Minimum setback from side or rear property lines	250 ft.
Minimum setback for residential structure on adjacent property	300 ft.

The Planning Commission may reduce the side or rear setback requirements where the distance between lot lines and an existing Event Barn is so limited that the specified setback would result in practical difficulties in achieving a logical relationship between the Event Barn and outdoor use areas. Adequate screening shall be required to mitigate potential impacts on surrounding properties and on the visual character of adjacent public road corridors.

14. **Lighting.** Parking areas, sidewalks, and outdoor areas used after dark shall be adequately lit. Exterior lighting shall comply with the requirements in Section 2.12. Exterior lighting must be turned off at the conclusion of the event, except where needed for clean-up or tear down after the event.
15. **Permitted Months of Operation.** Event Barns shall be permitted to operate only between May 1<sup>st</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
16. **Hours of Operation.** Events shall not start before 9:00 a.m. or extend beyond 9:00 p.m. Set-up operations shall be completed within these hours but tear down operations may extend to 10:00 p.m.
17. **Noise and Other Nuisances.** Event Barn activities shall comply with the requirements in the Blight Control Ordinance and the Performance Standards in Article 9 of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to noise and other nuisances. Amplified music is prohibited.
18. **Signs.** Signs shall comply with the requirements for agricultural seasonal events in the table in Section 7.05(C).
19. **Residential Dwelling Requirement.** An Event Barn shall be permitted on a parcel only if the parcel is also occupied by an owner-occupied residential dwelling.
20. **Attendance Limits.** Event Barns shall limit attendance at any wedding or other event to 150 people, not including staff and vendors.

21. **Permitted Frequency and Duration of Events.** An Event Barn shall hold no more than two (2) events per month and no more than one (1) event per week. No event shall last longer than one (1) day. The proprietor of the Event Barn shall maintain a log of events held for review by the Township. The log shall record date and purpose of the event, number of attendees, and whether alcohol was served.
22. **Minimum Open Space.** A minimum of thirty-three percent (33%) of any parcel occupied by an Event Barn shall be reserved as undeveloped open space or farmland, which shall comply with the following requirements:
- a. **Exclusions.** Reserved open space shall not include the area of any public road or road right-of-way, the area of any easement providing access to the site, the area of any outdoor gathering area, the area of any conventional storm water retention or detention basin, and any area used for off-street parking.
  - b. **Open Space Objectives.** Open space shall be located on the site to meet the following objectives:
    - i. To preserve distinctive natural features, wooded areas, and rural features.
    - ii. To preserve farmlands.
    - iii. To minimize impact on wetlands, streams, and other sensitive environmental features.
  - c. **Reservation of Open Space.** Required open space shall be permanently protected by the property owner with a recordable instrument that assures that the open space will remain undeveloped or will be farmed for the entire time that the Event Barn is in operation. This can be accomplished, by way of example, through a deed restriction, or an irrevocable conveyance, such as a conservation easement or restrictive covenant that runs with the land, whereby development rights are conveyed to a land conservation organization or other public body. Evidence that this document has been recorded with the Ingham County Register of Deeds shall be provided to the Township prior to issuance of any permits to commence construction.
23. **Performance Guarantee.** To ensure compliance with the requirements in this subsection RR and any conditions of approval, the Planning Commission or Township Board may require that a performance guarantee be deposited with the Township, pursuant to Section 2.18 of the Zoning Ordinance.
24. **Additional Site Plan and Special Land Use Requirements.** In addition to the information required in Sections 29.02 and 29.03 for site plan and special land use review, the following information shall be included with an Event Barn application:
- a. The planned frequency of events and the maximum number of attendees to be accommodated at any single event.
  - b. Months of operation.
  - c. Delineation of all portions of the parcel to be part of the Event Barn operation, including parking areas and outdoor gathering and activity areas.
  - d. Food preparation facilities that are to be part of the Event Barn.

**SECTION 5**  
**AMENDMENT TO SECTION 15.02**  
**PERMITTED USES AND STRUCTURES (IN THE AG-SF DISTRICT)**

*Amend Section 14.02(C)(15), which lists special uses in the AG-SF District, to include Event Barns. New item 15 will read as follows:*

15. Event Barns, subject to the provisions in Section 8.02, sub-section RR.

**SECTION 6**  
**AMENDMENT TO SECTION 18.02**  
**PERMITTED USES AND STRUCTURES (IN THE AG-C DISTRICT)**

*Amend Section 18.02(B)(25), which lists special uses in the AG-COM District, to include Event Barns. New item 25 will read as follows:*

25. Event Barns, subject to the provisions in Section 8.02, sub-section RR.

**SECTION 7**  
**AMENDMENT TO SECTION 29.03(B)(10) SPECIAL LAND USE VIOLATION**

*Amend Section 29.03(B)(10) to include municipal civil infractions as a remedy for a special land use violation. Section 29.03(B)(10) will read as follows:*

10. In the event that construction or subsequent use is not in compliance with the approved special land use application, the Building Inspector shall issue a “stop work” order or similar notice until corrective action is taken, or a revised special land use application is submitted for Township review, following the normal special land use review procedures in Section 27.03. If the builder, developer, or current user fails to take corrective action or pursue approval of an amended plan, the Building Inspector may commence enforcement action outlined in Section 29.10, Violation and Penalties. Such action may include issuance of a municipal civil infractions ticket and pursuit of corrective action and penalties under the Municipal Civil Infractions Ordinance.

**SECTION 8**  
**SEVERABILITY**

Should any portion of this Ordinance be invalidated for any reason it does not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Ordinance.

**SECTION 9**  
**REPEAL**

Any ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent necessary to give this Ordinance full force and effect.

**SECTION 10**  
**PUBLICATION**

A summary of this ordinance must be published in a general circulation newspaper in Williamstown Township fifteen (15) days after adoption.

**SECTION 11**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE**

This Ordinance takes effect seven (7) days after publication, pursuant to Section 401(6) of the Zoning Enabling Act (Michigan Public Act 110 of 2006, as amended).

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Williamstown Township Board of Trustees on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

EFFECTIVE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robin Cleveland, Clerk  
Williamstown Township  
Ingham County, Michigan

McKenna  
January 29, 2022

DRAFT