

MORRIS PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION
COMMUNITY HALL • 3 EAST STREET • MORRIS, CONNECTICUT 06763

Public Hearing at Morris Community Hall and Live on Zoom

April 21st, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Call in # 1-929-205-6099

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88288807702?pwd=S2NEc3FsdWgzSExpZmJFd3FybE95Zz09>

Meeting ID: 882 8880 7702

Passcode: 480466

	David Wiig Chairman	
Barbara Bongolotti	Robert McIntosh	Alternates:
Del Knox	William Ayles (Secretary)	Chris Ciaffaglione
Veronica Florio	David Geremia Jr.	Geoff Paletsky
Eileen Narbutas (Vice Chairman)	Douglas Barnes	Ron Shaffer
	Staff: ZEO Tony Adili	

Agenda

1. Call to Order

2. Planned Development District Application PDD 21-01 for 21 Higbie Road (17/460/21): South Farms Agro-Tourism.

For previous correspondences and emails please refer to the packet from the previous meeting. That packet is online at on the Town of Morris Website. Additional Files have been added to this agenda.

3. Adjourn

From: [Kirschbaum](#)
To: wjig@optonline.net; planningandzoning@townofmorrisct.com; morrisunitedforpeace@gmail.com
Subject: Noise at South Farms
Date: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 7:58:07 AM

To whom this may concern,

My name is Roberta Kirschbaum and my address is 420 Northfield Road, Litchfield, CT 06759.

I am writing concerning the noise at South Farms. Although I live in Litchfield, I am at the same elevation as South Farms and have a direct line of sight to the farm from my house. I estimate that my property is 5 to 6 miles 'as the crow flies' from the farm.

Last Fall the noise caused significant, repeated disruption to my sleep and consequently I suffered physically, mentally and emotionally day after day from the noise. My relationship with my husband also suffered from the daily stress imposed by this situation. My job performance suffered as well.

This is not an appropriate location for a venue of this type. The company that promotes the concerts has 5 other venues, 4 of which are at **urban indoor** facilities. The only other outdoor facility is at the property that was formerly the Connecticut Tennis Center (Westville Music Bowl) that is **not even remotely** near any residential areas if you look at it on a map. If this does not speak to the fact that a small rural community is not appropriate for these shows then I don't know what does.

I can't even begin to imagine the impact of noise, traffic, loitering, lights and trash to those living in even greater proximity to the farm.

These shows do NOT belong in a small rural community.

Please file this statement as public record to be read by the Planning & Zoning Commission in regard to any decisions made around the PDD application from South Farms (accepted 3/3/2021). Please attach this statement to the April 21, 2021 agenda."

Sincerely,

Roberta Kirschbaum

To whom it may concern:

We have lived in Morris for forty years (15+ years on Trotta Lane). We chose to raise our family here as it was a small, quiet, peaceful town. During the day, we could play outside and listen to the birds chirping, and at night we could open the windows and have the crickets lull us to sleep. Last summer and fall it was a totally different story, the boom boom of the base and raucous cheers from the crowd coming from the South Farms events denied us of this enjoyment even with the windows closed.

We would never wish any businessperson to fail, but if these concerts and events were to continue, it will rob us of our right to peace and enjoyment of our property. One person's success should not come at the expense of many others.

The residents of Morris should be the only voices heard during this hearing. People from out of town have no idea what this will do to our quality of life. Of course they would be in favor of this venue as it is just for their entertainment and then they can go home.

We are begging the planning & zoning commission to do the proper thing and deny this application.

MaryAnn & James Orzell
24 Trotta Lane
Morris, CT 06763

Please file the following opposition statement to be read by the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding any decisions made around the PDD application from South Farms. Please attach this statement to the April 21, 2021 meeting agenda of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chairman Wiig and members of the Morris Planning & Zoning Commission,

I am writing in opposition of the PDD application from South Farms that would allow for the continued operation of concerts that were erroneously permitted under COVID-19 regulations last year. My name is Abbey Seabury Chrupcala. I grew up in Morris and lived on Watertown Road for 20 years. Although I now live in Rhode Island, in many ways Morris will always be my home. My parents still live there and I visit often. I love that town and I love that community.

During last week's meeting, I was heartbroken listening to the stories of the people of Morris and learning how much they've suffered as a result of the South Farms concert/comedy series. I knew how difficult it was for my parents, but I had no idea the extent of the suffering throughout the town. After hearing their stories, I cannot believe that allowing the concert venue to be a permanent fixture in Morris is even a discussion.

Although I'm disheartened, I am not surprised to hear that the applicant is trying to push this through—he has made it abundantly clear that he doesn't care about this town or these people when they stand in the way of his profits. He made that apparent when he disregarded their distress last year, and his recent YouTube interview made it crystal clear that nothing has changed in his mind since then. The applicant smiled while concerns were read. He downplayed and mocked his neighbors' fears. It seems he would rather disrespect them on the internet than talk to them face to face and address their concerns. This is not a witch hunt. Your neighbors' pain and fear is not propaganda. The applicant clearly doesn't uphold the values of the Morris I know and I find it hard to believe he ever will.

That is his prerogative as an individual and a businessman. But this commission is tasked with different goals and should have different values. If the best interests of Morris are truly the priority, you should put a stop to this. Residents of Morris should not have to plead through tears to have peace in their homes. Frontline workers should not come home to rattling windows or need noise-canceling headphones to get some rest after a long day. Your neighbors should not feel scared in their homes or be surrounded by smoke or the stench of porta-potties in their homes. Children in Morris should not have to cower in closets because a businessman wants to turn loud noises into dollars in this once-quiet town. How could you permit a zoning change that would allow this to continue? That doesn't sound like upholding the values of the community or the rural character of the town to me. That sounds like knowingly inflicting pain and suffering on your neighbors. That is not the Morris I have known and loved for all my life.

The residents of Morris deserve so much better. I urge the commission to do the right thing for Morris, to do the right thing for your neighbors—deny this applicant and dismiss his application with prejudice.

Sincerely,
Abbey Seabury Chrupcala

From: [David R. Wiig](#)
To: [Planning & Zoning](#)
Subject: FWD: South Farms
Date: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 11:01:52 PM

Jeton

Please add this to the record for this meeting. It is the last item I will include for this meeting.

Dave

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: cj aleksyna <the427king@yahoo.com>
To: "David R. Wiig" <wiiig@optonline.net>
Date: Wed, 21 Apr 2021 01:20:56 +0000 (UTC)
Subject: South Farms

David, I just wanted to make an observation for the record. .

In the 7/7 minutes Erica Dorsett made a motion regarding South farms when they were not even on the Agenda. It was seconded by Tom Weik and passed . The following day approval was given to South Farms to have concerts which we now know should never have been given.

Additionally I had complained in 2020 on the record the day it happened both in the zoom meeting and also via email the next day to you that Erica Dorsett interjected her self while P and Z was deciding amongst each other whether to open the meeting to public input. She had no right to speak at that time. She told you that only Ben was to speak and was not allowed questions. You agreed, and did not allow questioning even though earlier that day you told me via email you were open to it and if I couldnt attend you would read a question I had for you. It also was never read.

Currently as of February 2021 Erica Dorsetts husband Corey Matthews is listed as partner with Ben Paletsky at South Farms. Chuck Aleksinas.

Please file the following *opposition* statement to be read by the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding any decisions made around the PDD application from South Farms. Please attach this statement to the April 21, 2021 meeting agenda of the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Chairman Wiig and the members of the Morris Planning and Zoning Commission,

My name is Meagan Seabury Wenger and I was a resident of Morris for more than half my life, growing up on Watertown Road. When people ask where I live, I answer with my current town, but when I'm going to visit my family in Morris I still refer to it as going home. I love Morris, graduated from Wamogo, worked at Popey's and often return to Morris so my kids and I can spend time with my parents at my childhood home. What I've always loved and appreciated about Morris is its small town feel- it's calmness, it's friendliness and it's dedication to the charm and character that makes it special. I can think of few things more at odds with this vision than a concert venue in the middle of a residential area in the town of Morris!

I did not write a letter prior to the April 12th meeting because I did not think I had anything to add. The heartbreaking testimonies and letters from the countless Morris residents spoke for themselves. I was devastated to hear of all the individuals who were impacted- people spending their mornings picking up trash, people needing to calm their pets and children when they were afraid and overwhelmed by the noise from the concerts and traffic, individuals who had their cars broken into or property vandalized and the dozens of people who couldn't even open the windows of their homes due to loud music or profane language emanating from the events at South Farms in 2020. I believed that these negative impacts on tax paying town residents should be sufficient to ***reject with prejudice*** the South Farms proposal. I thought, and still believe, that the voices of the town residents should supersede all the outsiders' opinions, as they will be the ones whose everyday lives and well being are directly impacted. So many letters were written by people whose lives will not be impacted by a zoning change for South Farms. Of course they think a music venue in another town is a great idea and I doubt any of those people would support the plan if the venue was being added to their street.

As I listened in via zoom and watched Ben Paletsky's presentation at the last meeting, I realized that there was something specific that I could contribute which is what prompted me to submit a letter to this meeting. In addition to my ties to Morris and my desire to see its rural character preserved, I also feel the need to comment on the noise levels and their impact on the health and hearing of the local residents. I hold a bachelors and masters degree in the area of speech language pathology and audiology from Loyola University and Penn State University and have been a member of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association since 2006 which I believe qualifies me to speak to the health impacts that sustained exposure to loud noise could have on Morris residents.

Noise induced hearing loss occurs when one is subjected to loud sounds. How loud the noise is, how close a person is to the noise and how long you are exposed to the noise will all impact the likelihood and severity of noise induced hearing loss. Noise induced hearing loss can be immediate if the noise is extremely loud or gradual if you have exposure to loud noise over an extended period of time. In either scenario, the damage is permanent. Concerts are typically between 94 and 110dB at the site of the stage and speakers. Noise at or above 80-85 decibels (dB) can begin to irreparably impact a person's

hearing. Since few people have a sound level meter laying around their home, we often describe this level of noise as anything that requires you to raise your voice to be heard or needing people to repeat themselves louder for you to hear them. **We have heard from countless residents that they needed to turn up the volume on their tvs and couldn't carry on conversations without raising their voices on their properties during the shows in 2020 indicating that the noise pollution on their properties exceeded a safe intensity. The graphics from Mr. Paletsky's presentation last week confirm this, indicating that many residents in East Morris were exposed to noise pollution that exceeded that threshold during his 2020 events.** He has spoken of mitigation techniques and strategies that could be employed to lessen the impact on the surrounding homes and families and those may have an impact on the overall level of noise pollution. However, even in his proposed model that represents the best case scenario for sound mitigation, the adjacent properties will still be experiencing disruptive noise. And this is his best case scenario! If the strategies are not correctly implemented, his decibel predictions are meaningless and neighbors might once again be subjected to noise pollution levels that could impact their health. Residents have a right to be concerned about how mitigation techniques might be implemented. Ben showed little regard or concern for his neighbors when they approached him during the 2020 concert season and then continued to speak condescendingly about them across a variety of social media in the months leading up to this PDD hearing. It is understandable that they may be hesitant to believe the idea that he will now work cooperatively with the local residents who would be impacted by this venue.

It should be noted as well that hearing loss is not the only health impact of repeated noise exposure. High blood pressure, faster heartrate and difficulty sleeping (even after the noise ends) are also attributed to noise. And that's on top of the mental health impacts and being tired, irritable and/or stressed because your quality of life has been impacted by excessive noise pollution. Loudness is a subjective measure of how someone perceives sound. So even if the decibel intensity is below the level of causing damage to someone's physical health, it may still be loud enough to disturb the peace and quiet Morris residents are accustomed to and affect their ability to enjoy their property. The potential emotional and physical impact of the PDD on area residents significantly outweighs a single businessman's desire to increase his own profits.

Finally, people keep referencing Bethel Woods and Tanglewood for a comparison to what South Farms can become. These are 800 and 1100 acre properties designed specifically for hosting music events, not a 10 acre area in the middle of a town with homes all around it. They have structures in place, dozens of acres of mature trees in every direction and are essentially self-contained. *It is not by accident that there are no residential houses in the immediate vicinity of these venues. The impact on resident's safety, property values and the general well being would be too great.* It is important that we recognize this PDD proposal for what it is- an opportunity of a single individual to capitalize on a possible opportunity to make himself wealthy at the expense of his neighbors and town.

I implore the members of the board to consider what is in the best interest of the town and its residents and **reject** the PDD application for South Farms. Please hear what your fellow residents and neighbors are saying and preserve what is great about this small town- the serenity, the peace and the sense of unity.

Meagan Wenger MS, CCC-SLP
Former resident of 27 Watertown Road