

**Conestoga Township Planning Commission Minutes: March 23, 2026**

**Present:** John Stipe, Eric Peifer, Dan Alexander, Wes Bruckno, Scott Kriner

**Others:** Jessie Ebersole, Matthew Connelly, Ken Brooks, Deb Brooks, Jeff Jopchak, Lorraine Jopchak, Ernest Wilson, Marion Wilson, Carroll Longenecker, Lori Longenecker, Sheila O'Rourke, Joseph Shelly, Tom Grassel Jr, Benuel Esh.

**Call to Order:** 7:01 pm

**Approval of Minutes:**

The PC approved the February 23, 2026 PC meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Wes Bruckno, second by Dan Alexander; all in favor 5-0.

**Citizens Request or Concerns**

Deb Brooks (4430 Main Street) inquired when the 4459 Main Street Conditional Use Application was "up for a vote". Dan Alexander responded that it would be discussed at the next Township Supervisors meeting, after public comments were heard. Ken Brooks (4430 Main Street) asked if the Conditional Use Application would be judged against the Zoning ordinance. Wes Bruckno then explained the conditional use approval process to those in attendance.

**New Business:**

**4459 Main Street – Conditional Use Application (Buchanan Apartments LLC)**

Sheila O' Rourke (Attorney for the Applicant) presented the Conditional Use Approval application on behalf of Buchanan Apartments LLC. Ms. O' Rourke indicated the following key elements of the application:

- 1) The property is currently split zoned between Village Mixed Use and Rural Conservation.
- 2) The property is served by 2 on-lot septic systems and 3 private water supply wells.
- 3) When the existing barn is not in use for events, the existing cottage (up to 5 guests) and estate house (up to 14 guests) would be available independently for use for smaller events.
- 4) The proposed events tent would be available for use and in place from March to October annually.
- 5) An Events Manager would be on-site or nearby, and will be responsible for the property.
- 6) No on-site food prep is proposed; guests would be responsible for catering.
- 7) Restrooms are available in the house, cottage, and barn; supplementary portable toilets would be brought on for large events.
- 8) No cap or limit on the number of events annually is proposed.
- 9) Alcoholic beverages would only be served at the property by "professionals" during catered events.

Sheila O' Rourke also presented some additional information including the following:

- Tax parcel map

- Zoning map
- Site photographs
- Written plan of Activity and to Control Litter
- Site Plan showing proposed tent and parking locations
- Proposed Sound Control Standards for “The Estate at Harborwood”

Benuel Esh stated that the property is currently being used as an “Airbnb”. Concerns were heard from neighboring property owners as follows:

1. Several events with loud music have recently occurred at the property. A recent example of a helicopter hovering over the site for hours was described by several neighbors present.
2. Ernest Wilson (4353 Main Street) inquired if the required signage/public notice for the Conditional Use Application had been posted at the property: Benuel Esh responded and stated that the appropriate signage had been posted at the property. Jessie Ebersole confirmed that it had on behalf of the Township.
3. Ken Brooks (4430 Main Street) expressed concerns about noise and light pollution from the property. Benuel Esh responded that there would be a process in place to address noise complaints through a designated Events Manager. Mr. Brooks also noted the presence of a 1-lane bridge on the property. Finally, Ken Brooks requested that the term “event” for the proposed facility be clarified. Sheila O’ Rourke indicated that events at the facility would include weddings, private parties and corporate events.
4. Lori Longenecker (4339 Main Street) expressed concerns regarding sight distance, traffic and fast-moving vehicles along Main Street during event ingress and egress. Benuel Esh stated that parking attendants would be on-site during events.
5. Deb Brooks (4430 Main Street) stated that she did not feel the existing driveway was wide enough to accommodate 2-way traffic, and that traffic could back up on Main Street.
6. Carroll Longenecker (4339 Main Street) inquired if music would be permitted inside the barn only, or if music was also proposed for the tent. He also asked if the existing driveway had been approved for improvement, and if the fire department had evaluated the proposed Events Venue. Benuel Esh stated that music was proposed both inside the barn and outside in conjunction with the Sound Control Standards document that was presented. He also stated that the Conestoga Fire Department had visited the property and found driveway access acceptable for their equipment in the event of an emergency. Eric Peifer mentioned the Fire Company was requested to review the access solely in relation to the 3-parcel subdivision plan, and not for an Events Venue. Mr. Longenecker further stated that in his opinion, the intent of the Agritainment section of the Zoning Ordinance was designed for farmers to supplement their income. He asked if the Conditional Use application seeks commercial use under the guise of “Agritainment”.

The PC reviewed the information presented, heard local citizen opinions, and expressed the following concerns:

- 1) John Stipe expressed concerns that the current septic system serving the barn may be insufficient for large events and should be evaluated by the SEO.
- 2) Dan Alexander stated that he was concerned about the driveway being insufficient to accommodate 2-way traffic and first responders in the event of an emergency. He also expressed concerns about the proposed operation of the facility up to 7 days per week.

**Motion:** A motion was made by Dan Alexander to recommend to the supervisors that the applicant complete the following:

1. An improvement plan for the existing driveway. The PC expressed concerns that the existing width of the driveway does not accommodate sufficient, ingress and egress for guests and emergency responders at the same time in the event of fire or another emergency.
2. The operational plan for the events facility needs to strictly follow Section 320-143 Farm-based entertainment activity (agritainment) of the Zoning Ordinance, specifically noting Subsection C(1) Duration, and Subsection C(2) Hours of Operation, which specifies the maximum number of dates per year shall not exceed 30 days within any consecutive 60-day period, and shall not exceed 30 days in any calendar year. It is noted that the applicant requested "no limit placed on the number of events per year", which does not conform to Subsection C(2). It is further noted that Subsection C(2) also states that the Township may modify these hours when the applicant can show that alternate hours shall not substantially increase any disturbance identified in Subsection C(1)(a) Potential for disturbance of neighbors and (b) Potential for traffic disruption.

Second by Wes Bruckno; all in favor 5-0. Wes Bruckno also stated that he was unsure if the applicant had chosen the land use that is ordinarily provided for under the Farm-based entertainment activity "Agritainment" in Section 320-143 of the Zoning Ordinance. He indicated the applicant was close in their approach, but that some disparities did exist.

Motion to adjourn by John Stipe; motion second by Dan Alexander; all in favor 5-0.

**No further discussion. Meeting adjourned 8:00 PM.**