

Dear Planning Board,

It was recently brought to our attention the Planning Board's intention to restrict agritourism in town. I am writing to express our disapproval of such a restriction.

We own and operate Rogers Maple Syrup, LLC. It is a year-round endeavor of working the land to produce a product we can be proud of. It is a tradition that has been passed from one generation to the next. One of the joys of doing this work is sharing it during the boiling season, in particular Maple Weekend, which is a state-wide initiative for sugar makers to share our practices with others. We entertain hundreds of people and educate them on the production of maple syrup. We have had 4-H groups and class field trips to our sugar house. We love watching people see what we do and ask questions. We love sharing our syrup.

We should be proud of what we have to offer in Warner. And we should share that with others. Making maple syrup is science, so much so there is a program at Cornell dedicated to the science and research of maple sugaring. The University of New Hampshire started as an agricultural school. It just does not make sense to limit agritourism in the heart of agriculture!

If neighbors have an issue with other neighbors there should be a process in place for the disagreement to be resolved. Making new rules around agritourism in our town that affects all of the agritourism will hurt our family personally. Worse, however, is the affect these changes would have on other businesses in town. Agritourism attracts people to our town and in turn, we hope those people will frequent our town's other establishments. We are in sore need of the business in this town. Making it difficult to share what we have by placing limits on agritourism is not in this town's best interest.

Kindly,
Courtney Rogers

To the Planning Board,

It has recently been brought to my attention that there is a proposed ammendment for the upcoming meeting on January 20th regarding Agritourism.

What was it that brought about these proposed changes?

My family has owned Blue Moon Berry Farm for the last 21 years. The Wunderli's before us, and the Brunner's before them.

As with many of the longstanding farms in town, our farm is a destination for people from all over the state, country, and occasionally other parts of the world on an annual basis. Warner has MANY such farms, who support our village by bringing in more visitors.

With the loss of the Foothills, seasonal visitors are even more important to our small economy. As farmers, we want to work together to see eachother succeed, and support eachother, and our communities.

During pumpkin season, I get many calls regarding where to get pumpkins, and corn, and of course, I send them to Courser's.

Organic meats, the Yankee Farmer's market, Ir Bobby Bower. Hay, try the Allens, and so on and so forth.

This summer, MANY customers were looking for things to do outdoors, and were excited to hear about the lavender farm in town, as well as customers returning from the lavender farm saying how wonderful it was.

People stop at the ice cream shop after visiting our farm, and now that we are adding Orchids to our farm, we had been planning to do more around that. Without special permissions from the planning board, it seems that this puts a lot of people in a bad place. We wouldn't be able to stay open. Period.

Many of the local farms have been in business for quite a long time, and this rezoning just doesn't make sense for Warner.

I appreciate the time that you have taken to read my personal concerns, as I am sure you are receiving many messages concerning this.

I will be attendibg the Zoom meeting on the 20th, as this is very important to me.

Sincerely,

Heidi Crozer

Town of Warner Planning Board

Ben Frost Chairman

Re: Amendment C: Agritourism

Chairman Frost,

We wish to express our opinion regarding the Agritourism amendment being taken up by your committee. This proposal, which effectively bans Agritourism in Warner, strikes at the heart of what we are as a community and what we want to be in the future. Do we wish to be known as a vibrant innovative community striving to defend and expand our lifestyle, or a town dedicated to those who wish to pull up the ladder of opportunity once they have attained their own? If we choose to unnecessarily restrict farm activities, the result will inevitably be the sale of large parcels of land to developers. We know this because we have lived it.

We see no reason for the additional regulation of Agritourism beyond the State Statute. It seems to us that people of good will can work out their differences without increasing regulation on an already over regulated portion of our community.

This is bad policy and a bad look for the town.

Respectfully,

Mark Govoni

Denise Dalaker

Bagley Pond Farm

648 Pumpkin Hill Road

603-320-0232

Warner NH

This is really beyond comprehension. This is socialism/communism.

A solution in search of a problem,

If the town can dictate what a farmer can and can not do with their own property, what is next?

Stop this nonsense

John M. Healy
76 Pleasant Pond Rd.
Warner, NH 03278

Planning board members,

I am writing to you today to voice my opposition to the proposed changes regarding agritourism in the town of Warner.

Warner is well known in the region for its abundance of small and large farms which operate seasonally and year-round to produce a wide array of products. From blueberries, lavender, pumpkins, maple syrup and everything in between Warner is lucky to have these operations which bring people from near and far. Rural New Hampshire has depended on agritourism for generations, and that will not stop anytime soon. In fact, I'll be damned to let what Warner is well known for be washed away during my lifetime by a small number of individuals who would rather see Warner become a retirement community than a thriving destination for tourism, and a place where new families settle down and build a life.

I'm more than aware of the fact that my new neighbors on Pumpkin Hill Road have had a thorn in their side since the opening of the new lavender farm. The farms owners have delt with repeated attacks from their neighbors and the town when it comes to their operations. If people want to do away with a simple lavender farm because it brings to much traffic to their road than what is next? Are we going to start shutting down the sugar houses in town because their steam blocks out your view of the sun? Or should we end the fall foliage festival because a few people cannot stand to have to detour off Main Street? I would hope the answer is no. Its incredible to me that a couple of angry neighbors could not only attempt to shut down a thriving farm, but also negatively affect the dozens of other farms in town that survive on agritourism. The grievances of a few do not outweigh the benefit that many receive from the agritourism that brings people and money to this town.

As a landowner whose property abuts the lavender farm, I have zero issue, at all with their operation. I plan to build a home in the coming year, and I hope to one day bring my kids on a walk through the woods to our neighbor's lavender farm and enjoy all that it has to offer. And I'll take those same kids to the local farmers market, and to sugar houses on maple weekend, and support the small farms that are so vital to this town's heritage and future. Simply put; the last thing this town needs is more regulations for its farms.

Again, I strongly oppose these new proposed changes to agritourism in Warner, and I urge the members of the planning board to do the same.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Kraig Havey

Dear Planning Board Members,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed amendment C to Article 3 regarding agri-tourism. I believe this amendment is a direct contradiction to the Town's Master Plan:

Chapter 5, item G - Support and encourage home-based businesses and local agricultural enterprises with appropriate zoning and land use regulations

In addition, requiring farms to apply for exceptions for each instance of agritourism places an unnecessary bureaucratic burden on the farm owners, and the lack of detail around why, how, and when the exceptions would be required and approved are nothing but a hindrance to economic growth.

The farms in Warner are a vibrant and attractive component of our town. Why we wouldn't be celebrating and encouraging more agritourism? Surely establishing this extra hurdle for farms to leap over is doing the exact opposite of encouraging growth.

Respectfully

Wendy Hanwell
37 School Street
Warner, NH

Greetings Planning Board,

I am writing this letter to voice my opposition to the proposed Amendment C being considered at this week's board meeting. As a resident and not a farmer with any interest in pursuing Agritourism on my property but who could be impacted in many of the same ways proponents of this change claim would be detrimental to themselves and this town (e.g. increased traffic, road costs, noise, etc.) I do so with the knowledge that one of the only reasons we as a State have been able to preserve much of our natural beauty and charm is because of tourism. Just as we protect our National Parks, Preserves, and Landmarks while capitalizing on their natural resources; our farms and their produce are no less important to invoking the same sense of nostalgia, heritage, and wonder to visitors and residents alike. We don't have massive lakes, beaches, or mountain ranges in Warner that traditionally attract tourists but our farmers are trying to create something just as beautiful and memorable for our visitors while preserving their lands and a way of life for all to enjoy and benefit from. People come for the experience, the beauty, the history but they also stay for the coffee rolls, shops, and whatever else our town can offer. Agritourism could be a win win for taxpayers, small businesses, and farmers if given the chance. Done respectfully in the spirit of harmony and giving back to our community Agritourism can improve our lives without jeopardizing the character and charm we all stay here for. There are certainly other options and uses for the land in this town we could employ to adapt to the times and generate revenue but I've seen that unfold before in many towns south of us including my home town and it has changed those communities forever in ways I don't think any Warner resident wants to see happen here. I will also caution that times are a changin once again. As a direct result of the pandemic businesses worldwide have seen how they can continue to benefit from remote workers long after the pandemic has passed. This new trend will open up a whole new set of geography independent housing and building opportunities that will inevitably come looking for a place like Warner should we fail to protect our farm land.

I am also opposing this change based on the distinct impression in just my short time living here in Warner that there are reasons other than safety and heading off potential issues with neighbors or the town for which this ordinance is being introduced. I haven't seen many proponents of this amendment calling for regulation of just weddings, live music, noise ordinances, altering the look and character of properties, or parking in part I suspect because these could apply to everyone equally and in doing so impact the activities they feel entitled to do without permit or permission now. I am deeply disturbed by some of the comments made publicly on Facebook about the unlikelihood of places like the Lavender Farm receiving a fair shake, not because they don't have the ability to comply or don't have the right to a permit, instead because a few influential parties are willing to manipulate the truth and narrative to take advantage of this ordinance for reasons other than those proposed in discussions on this topic. Our freedoms die when justice is perverted by the few at the expense of the many and to see people insinuating that this is occurring right now in our town gives Farmers valid concern for the future of farming in Warner under this proposed amendment. Whether this is true or not it should be considered as a potential risk of making this activity as a whole an exception instead of a right. Now while I support the integrity of our town officials and this board who work to diligently serve our best interests, no one is infallible or immune to those who would manipulate the truth for the purpose of denying justice. Our Farmers are trying to continue a proud tradition of this town and to preserve its character while sharing something beautiful and memorable for all of us. I feel the potential long term benefits for the entire town are worth giving them the benefit of the doubt and protecting their rights under NH law from those who would use an ordinance like this in a manner not in the spirit of equitable rights.

I would say to the proponents of Amendment C and concerned board members that there are more reasonable and less harmful ordinances that should be considered before explicitly prohibiting all Agritourism except at the mercy and possibly prejudice of those who oppose this opportunity before it has ever been given a chance to succeed. The NH Agritoursim laws are not a means to circumvent our local commerce requirements, town ordinances, or private landowner rights but rather a way to give these small farms a fair and fighting chance in a dying profession that we rely on to maintain the landscape around us. The constraints and rules set forth by the Department of Agriculture and State of NH are designed to give towns, farmers, and residents a chance to adapt and adjust to what fits best for us so we can fully understand the benefits and detractions before passing judgement or creating drastic changes over night that will set the tone of progress for years to come. Let the farms be judged and regulated based on what they do and not what others claim they plan to do.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter and I hope our community can come together to reach an amicable compromise that will look not just to the short term but to the town we leave behind for generations to come.

Sincerely your concerned citizen,

Ryan Hadley

Poverty Plains Rd. Warner, NH

Good evening. We're sure that there will be a lot of discussion tonight so we will keep our comments brief.

We are Nick and Kate Clark, we live on 278 Kearsarge Mountain Road. As residents of Warner, we would like to note the state has already issued guidance, direction, and law on the matter of agritourism and we would ask, in the strongest possible terms, that the town would simply follow the statutes that the state has already put in place and not try to add to the burden of the hardworking farmers in Warner. Town government should not be used as a cudgel in a dispute between neighbors.

Thank you,
Nick and Kate

I am opposed to any restrictions put on our local farms.
Thank you

Sean Bohman

Ladies & Gentlemen

I am writing in support of the agritourism rules as they are currently stated.

I believe the issues being stated by disgruntled neighbors at one farm (who has followed all the appropriate rules and regulations) is a flagrant misuse of our local government. To make sweeping changes will impact all of our local farmers as well as our local businesses who thrive on the extra foot traffic brought to town by what any/all of these farms have to offer.

I implore you to dismiss this dispute or suggested changes based solely on the complaints of a few and instead focus on the greater good for our farmers, their families and our local businesses and instead find ways to enjoy everything our community has to offer.

Amy Witmer
9 Old Lull Trace
Warner, NH

1/15/21

Warner Planning Board
PO Box 265
Warner NH 03278

Dear Warner Planning Board,

This Letter is in regard to the proposed zoning change that seeks to limit, and regulate Agro-Tourism in Warner.

Aside from the obvious potential harm this would do to our friends in The Warner Farming & Sugaring Communities, other businesses including The Local would be adversely affected.

Like most businesses in Warner, The Local relies on out-of-town business. We have spent almost 8 years building The Local. Our Partnerships w/ the farms in town are a huge part of that. Our biggest difficulty has always been luring people downtown from Exit 9. The draw of local farms, along w/ our museums, covered bridges, etc., entices people to make that trek. All of these entities divert business our way directly & indirectly. Reciprocally, we do the same for them. Any proposed legislation that makes it more difficult for Warner farms to do business makes it more difficult for all of us to do business.

Basically, the proposed legislation would benefit a few residents while being detrimental to nearly every business in Warner, and potentially affecting hundreds of Warner residents. In my opinion, in this particular case, the well-being of the many outweighs the wants of the few. The collateral damage is unacceptable.

Sincerely,
Bill Meadows – The Local

Good morning.

I'm emailing you in lieu of the upcoming meeting, tonight, regarding a "special" requirement to acquire town approval for events at owner's properties defined under the RSA for agritourism. I guess my main concern with this is why would there be any pushback to an industry that brings millions into an economy wrecked for the last 12 months by a global pandemic?

In 2017 alone, 136 farms generated 4.0 million in income which in a small town like Warner means visitors parlaying their stops with a stopover by Main Street for coffee or lunch...or a piece of pizza at Charlie Mac's. I can only imagine Jim Michell Park would enjoy the influx of patrons congregating after an afternoon picking lavender, buying farm fresh vegetables, or learning about Maple syrup production at one of our local farms. The communal sense of Warner has always been a draw for me – our family moved here 14 years ago and we've always enjoyed visiting places in the area like Beech Hill or Gould Hill -- at no point in these visits did I ever leave with anything but gratitude for the hard work that goes into them and an appreciation for the fact that they were willing to share with us the literal fruits of their labor.

This is why it's so regrettable that a select few continue to drum up challenges to folks attempting to mirror the success (that's legal in this state by the way) by blindly throwing "proverbial darts at a board" claiming concern over these farms and the business they want to operate. I think if we're transparent in what this is truly about we can assess that what is being attempted is an outright attack on a **specific address** by minimal amounts of people with steadfast resentment of what has been accomplished there – if these concerns were founded in concrete facts that warrant a discussion of the requirement being introduced tonight, I would entertain it but that's not the case. My family and many others support agritourism in NH and any Warner farm doing so as well. I enjoy the small businesses and farms we have in this town and would be ashamed if the unwarranted attempts to stop them were validated by this measure.....and I hope you feel the same!

On behalf of the Daniels Family @ 158 West Main Street we do not support this and hope it will meet the appropriate fate and be discarded!

With respect,
Mike Daniels

My name is Jim Zablocki and I live on Pumpkin Hill Rd in Warner. First, I would like to say that I have worked in the agriculture and horticulture field for over 45 years. I have worked with large scale farming operations all the way down to small family farms on a local, regional, national and international basis. I, probably better than most, understand and appreciate the challenges that any size farm faces today. Carol and I support the proposed Amendment C for the following reasons. Farms need latitude to enhance their offerings through agritourism activities and rural district residents need assurances and leadership on what effect such activities will have on the integrity and character of the rural district. Amendment C acknowledges the state of NH's definition of agritourism and, with the state of NH's RSA 674:32 b, goes a step further in giving and allowing local authorities the tools they need to ensure no one property or group is given preferential treatment over another. It's normal for businesses to come to the ZBA or PB to talk about their operations' impacts on the neighborhood. That's what Amendment C does—have all businesses play by the same rules. Amendment C offers a chance for all residents of a rural district to move forward with plans that accommodate and respect the integrity and character of the district.

Jim & Carol Zablocki
430 Pumpkin Hill Rd
Warner, NH 03278
603 456-3534
jzablocki@Gro-UP.com
czablocki@tds.net

1/20/2021

To the Planning Board:

I doubt the abutters of Kearsarge Gore Farm, Lavender Fields, or Yankee Farmers Market want any of those farms to turn into another Gould Hill Farm, which is the loudest and most congested spot in Hopkinton every fall. I also doubt any of them want these or any other farms to turn into another Meadowbrook. I know I certainly don't - and I'm not an abutter to any of them.

Yet, this amendment appears to give wide latitude to the planning board to pick and choose which farms they think are appropriate for the town, and I'm especially disturbed by the fact that this amendment appears to have been submitted purely for the purposes of targeting one particular business. The Biagottis are members of the US Lavender Growers Association and have invested thousands of dollars into their crops, so one has to wonder: if they're not going to be allowed to be a farm, what can they be? I know one abutter last year was incensed that there were cars parking at the farm near her property - yet none were trespassing on her property, nor were there cars anywhere near her house. They were parked legally, quietly picking lavender at a farm, and she was annoyed because she could see them. This entire issue arose strictly from a farm doing business as a FARM - not as a B&B, not as an event venue, not as anything else other than a FARM. And if the abutters to a lavender farm can decide the farm needs to cease operation, what does that say about other you-pick farms in our town like BlueMoon?

I do understand that agritourism has a wide definition, but the state has already defined it - and I would hate for us to be cutting off our nose to save our face. Please reject this amendment.

Thank you,

Matt Esenwine
163 Pumpkin Hill Rd.

Matt Forrest Esenwine
www.MattForrest.com

Jennifer Courser
163 Connors Mill Rd.
Warner, NH 03278

January 20, 2021

Warner Planning Board Re: Amendment C: Agritourism

Dear Chairman Frost and members of the Warner Planning Board, As a Warner farmer, I find the proposed amendment on agritourism to be overreaching in its requirement to gain a 'special exception' for all agritourism. We have a long history of farming and agritourism in this town, that continues today. To suddenly, and arbitrarily, add this proposal unless there is past proof of wrongdoing is completely unwarranted. Unless there is a particular problem that has already occurred with agritourism specifically (not something dreamt up as a "what if" after all these years, and not something related to the primary farming operation) why would we indiscriminately add a hurdle to business owners now? This amendment is attempting to fix a problem that does not exist.

Sincerely, Jennifer Courser

Hello All,

I am writing today to express my brief opinion on the issue regarding the constraints being presented that could potentially effect our Warner Farms. We as a town should be supporting our farms by allowing them to easily make an income through all of the products, services and events they can provide. As a resident, my town is made all the richer by having everything our farms have to offer. As a real estate agent who specializes in Warner and the Kearsarge, Sunapee and Concord regions it is a major reason why people choose to purchase homes in our town and region. Please bear this in mind as you deliberate.

My Best,
Rachel de Thomas

