

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Certified copy of portion of proceedings, Meeting of October 28, 2025

RESOLUTION NO. 25-158

RESOLUTION OF THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MAKING THE REQUIRED FINDINGS TO DENY THE APPEAL, CERTIFY COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT, AND DENYING THE STUMPF APPEAL RECORD NO. PLN-2025-18885-MOD01-APPEAL; APN 500-011-024-000.

WHEREAS, Ridgefield Events provided an application and evidence in support of approving a Conditional Use Permit Modification to allow an increase in attendance, number of events, and overnight stays associated with a special events venue; and

WHEREAS, on September 4, 2025, the Humboldt County Planning Commission held a duly-noticed public hearing, and reviewed, considered, and discussed the application for the Conditional Use Permit Modification, and reviewed and considered all evidence and testimony presented at the hearing, and approved the modification request; and

WHEREAS, on September 15th, 2025, Kenneth Stumpf ("Appellant") filed a timely appeal in accordance with Humboldt County Code Section 312-13 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, October 28th, 2025, the Board of Supervisors held a *de-novo* public hearing and reviewed, considered, discussed the application and appeal of the project, and reviewed and considered all public testimony and evidence presented at the hearing.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT:

- 1. FINDING:** **Project Description:** A Modification to a previously approved Conditional Use Permit (PLN-2024-18885) that authorized a seasonal special event venue (primarily weddings) between mid-April to mid-October, with a maximum of 120 guests per event and a maximum of 30 events per year. The Modification will allow up to 14 guests directly associated with the event to stay overnight in the existing residence and up to 30 events and 150 attendees.

- EVIDENCE:** a) Project File: PLN-2025-18885-MOD1 including:
- Site Plan prepared by Points West Surveying Co. Received January 16, 2024.
 - Revised Operations Plan for Ridgefield Events received June 12, 2025, and Original Operations Plan received January 16, 2024.

2. FINDING: **CEQA:** The requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act have been met. The Humboldt County Planning Commission has considered the project and finds the proposed project is exempt from environmental review pursuant to Section 15301 *Existing Facilities* and Section 15304 *Minor Alterations to Land* of the State CEQA Guidelines.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The Class 1 exemption applies to the operation, permitting, repair, maintenance or minor alteration of existing public and private structures or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of the former use. Alteration of the site, ground disturbance, and new construction will be very limited. Minor improvements to interior and exterior features to comply with ADA and health & safety requirements are anticipated. Existing grassy areas onsite be utilized as parking areas during events and one existing driveway encroachment along the private driveway from the intersection of Fickle Hill Road will be paved to comply with requirements set by the Land Use Division of Public Works.
 - b) The Class 4 exemption applies to minor or temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment. The project proposes use of the property for a total of up to 30 events per year during a 6-month period (middle of April through middle of October). It is reasonable to view the use as “temporary” given the frequency and limited duration of the activity seeking a permit.
 - c) The project can be disqualified from using a Categorical Exemption if any of the exceptions in Section 15300.2 apply. However, none of these exceptions apply to the proposed project.

FINDINGS FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT MODIFICATION

3. FINDING: The proposed development is in conformance with all applicable policies and standards in the Humboldt County General Plan 2017.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The property is planned both Residential Estates specifying a

parcel size of 2.5 – 5 acres and Timberland according to the Humboldt County WebGIS. Events would occur in the portion planned Timberland. This designation is utilized to classify land that is primarily suitable for the growing, harvesting and production of timber. Timber-related visitor serving uses are compatible in this designation as long as the use does not change the character of the principal use.

- b) The rental of space for weddings and similar special events is a use that is considered supplemental and temporary. The frequency and range of months targeted for events demonstrate that the use is limited and seasonal and will therefore not conflict with timber operations. Because the property owner signed a conservation easement with the City of Arcata, timber operations would be minimal as the land is adjacent to the Arcata Community Forest and is used for recreational purposes.
- c) The restriction imposed through the operations plan and permit conditions place limits on the number, size, and duration of events minimizing potential conflicts with the primary use of the land.
- d) Measures will be taken to protect open areas on the subject parcel. The parking area will be irrigated and mowed on a regular basis during the event period and aerated in November to ensure soils are not compacted. Timberland will not be converted as the existing terrace is being utilized and no new structures are proposed. The only improvement proposed is surfacing at the driveway encroachment(s).
- e) The proposed project will have no net effect on housing densities. The parcel was not included in the 2019 County Housing Inventory. The purpose of the proposed modification is for changes to an existing permitted special events venue.
- f) Per review of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS) which hosts the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) in February 2024, a total of two (2) unique species were identified as having the possibility of occurrence on Site the western lily (*Lilium occidentale*) and the American

peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). The proposed project is for the use of a maintained open space (dirt and gravel roads and mowed grass/pasture areas) as an events space for small weddings of up to 150 guests between the months of the middle of April through the middle of October. No ground disturbance is proposed. Review of the Humboldt County WebGIS (WebGIS) tool shows no Streamside Management Area or Wetland Area (SMAWO) on Site as defined by Humboldt County Code (HCC) Section 314-61.

- g) The subject parcel is located within areas of low and high instability and outside of any Alquist-Priolo fault hazard area. There are no mapped historic landslides. The Mad River Fault Zone runs east of the residence and on the eastern portion of the subject parcel. No new construction is authorized by this permit. There are no mapped flood zones on the subject parcel. The subject parcel is located within an area of high fire hazard severity. The parcel is in the State Responsibility Area and the Arcata Fire Protection District. According to the Operations Plan, there is a fire-truck turnaround space on the subject parcel and there is 30,000-gallons of water storage. The Arcata FPD received a project referral and recommended approval of the project.
- h) The project was referred to the Northwest Information Center, Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, Blue Lake Rancheria and the Wiyot Tribe. Comments were received from NWIC and the Blue Lake Rancheria. The Blue Lake Rancheria requested inclusion of the standard inadvertent discovery protocol, which is included as a condition of approval for the proposed project.

4. FINDING: The subject parcel is zoned Timber Production Zone (TPZ). The proposed development is consistent with the purposes of the TPZ.

EVIDENCE: a) A Conditional Use Permit (CUP) is required for special events in accordance with §314-62.1 *Special Events and Attractions*. A Conditional Use Permit has already been approved and effectuated for the use of the property as a seasonal venue for special events (primarily weddings) between mid-April to mid-October. The modification will allow a minor increase

(from 120 to 150) as well as to allow for guests of the events to stay on the property in the existing residence. Events are expected to occur for elopements from Monday through Thursday (typically between 2-20 guests max) and weddings on Friday through Sunday (typically between 30-120 guests). Hours of operations will be 9:30am to 9:30pm, with guests on site generally from 1pm to 9:30pm. It is reasonable to view the use as "temporary" given the frequency and limited duration of the activity seeking a permit.

- 5. FINDING:** The proposed development conforms with all applicable standards and requirements under HCC 312-17.1.3.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) All sets backs of structures within Timber Production Zone (TPZ) are met and exceeded with current proposed site plan (Attachment 1C).
 - b) HCC Section 314-109.1.2.9 *Parking Spaces for Uses Not Specified* Parking requirements necessitate the need for adequate parking. An average of two people per vehicle is assumed to determine parking demand. Based on a special event with 150 people, 75 parking spaces would be required. The site plan shows 81 dedicated parking spaces in a grassy area in the southern portion of the parcel (Attachment 1C). Overflow parking east of the event space is more than adequate to accommodate more vehicle parking.
 - c) Approval of overnight stays does not constitute as a Short-Term Rental under Humboldt County Code Short Term Rental Ordinance as the property functions as a commercial entity under the approved Conditional Use permit and not as a residential unit which would be subject to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. The residence is not available to rent other than as a special event venue.

- 6. FINDING:** The Project and the conditions under which it may be operated or maintained will not be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare or materially injurious to properties or improvements in the vicinity.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) The project has included the installation of a commercial Onsite Wastewater Treatment System which has been

approved by the Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health (EH-SEPTA-24-000097).

- b) The proposal involves the establishment of a special events venue for weddings and similar events. The project conditions of approval are designed to ensure that neighboring landowners and occupants are kept informed of events and that the events are conducted at such a frequency and fashion to minimize the disturbance of nearby residents.
- c) Conditions of the project also require submittal of a monitoring report to the Department for a period of up to three (3) years. This will allow County staff to verify the effectiveness of the conditions of approval and operation standards and restrictions and allow for refinement and adaptive management as needed.

7. FINDING: The Modification to allow overnight stays would decrease the number of possible guests, large, amplified events and traffic to and from the site on any weekend when a overnight event is scheduled.

EVIDENCE: a) The overnight event format would impose limitations including one amplified event, and the other days would be limited to the maximum of 14 guests at the house.

- b) Under the existing permit there could be up to 3 amplified events per weekend. This would involve more service vehicle traffic to serve 3 different events, more guests and guest related traffic and amplified noise on three different days during the weekend. The net result is the overnight stay format will reduce the amount of activity and noise at the site on the weekends when they are scheduled.

8. FINDING: The Use of the house for overnight stays is a form and Transient Occupancy and is thus required to pay Transient Occupancy Tax in the same manner as other transient lodging facilities.

EVIDENCE: Using the Existing residential facilities on site to allow wedding participants to stay on site while engaging in their wedding event is a form of Transient Occupancy.

Lodging facilities including hotels, motels, and Short Term Rentals are all subject to payment of a Transient Occupancy Tax to offset the costs of maintaining services benefitting visitors to Humboldt County.

9. **FINDING:** A sign at the entry drive to this location provides guidance for out-of-town visitors to the site to correctly identify the correct driveway and is necessary for the public convenience and safety. The existing site conforms to the requirements of the sign.

EVIDENCE: The location of the subject sign is obscured by trees and accessed by a tree lined entry. A sign identifying the site is needed to direct visitors to the correct driveway.

Approval of a sign at this location would normally require a Special Permit, but it is being approved as part of a Conditional Use Permit which meets or exceeds the requirements of a Special Permit.

The existing sign is smaller than allowed in subsection 87.2.6.3 of the Zoning Ordinance Chapter addressing signs.

10. **FINDING:** The proposed development does not reduce the residential density for any parcel below that utilized by the Department of Housing and Community Development in determining compliance with housing element law.

EVIDENCE: a) The parcel was not included in the housing inventory of Humboldt County's 2019 Housing Element.

FINDINGS FOR APPEAL

11. **FINDING:** The fact that the Planning Commission did not allow for members of the public to speak for more than three minutes or to speak more than once is not reason to grant the appeal.

EVIDENCE: a) Humboldt County Planning Commission adheres to the *HUMBOLDT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION RULES, CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS* guidelines approved by Humboldt County Board of Supervisor October 25, 2022, and the

meeting of September 4, 2025, directly followed these adopted guidelines. These guidelines state that an applicant's presentation is limited to 15 minutes, members of the public are limited to 3 minutes, and an applicant may then have three minutes "or such other time limited or extended in the discretion of the Chair, to respond to previous testimony or questions from the Commission." While the guidelines allow for the Chair to authorize additional time for testimony at any time, it is not required that they do so nor is it typical. The Chair is tasked with efficiently managing the meeting such that all items on the agenda can be heard.

12. FINDING: The appellant's contention that the Planning Commission did not perform due diligence is not correct.

EVIDENCE: a) The appellants stated that the Commissioners were not prepared because the meeting started late, one commissioner was sick, and one commissioner stated he wished they had stayed home with their spouse. None of these demonstrate that the commissioners were unprepared. The commissioner who was sick had intended to attend remotely and came in person to ensure a quorum, and the commissioner who stated they wished they had stayed home with their spouse was expressing his frustration with a 2-2 vote on a different project.

b) All information regarding PLN-18885-MOD01 was distributed to the Planning Commission on Friday, August 29th, 2025, for review per County Code 247.4.

c) Humboldt County Planning Commission adheres to the *HUMBOLDT COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION RULES, CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS* guidelines approved by Humboldt County Board of Supervisor October 25, 2022, and these guidelines were followed during the September 4, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.

13. FINDING: The appellants are incorrect in their argument that impacts of increased traffic on Fickle Hill were never considered.

EVIDENCE: a) The access for the event was considered by the Planning Commission and conditions of approval of the original permit,

which carry forward to the modification, require traffic control at the intersection of the driveway and Fickle Hill Road. Comments from the County Public Works Department which were included in the Planning Commission documents for consideration for the original permit stated that primary concerns are impacts to traffic on Fickle Hill Road resulting from event related to congestion; road geometrics; and vehicles parking along the County Road in a manner that encroaches into the travel lanes. Public Works stated that the goal of their review is to reduce congestion and to provide unobstructed travel lanes in both directions on Fickle Hill Road. The staff report for the modification that was presented to the Planning Commission referenced the applicant's information that was also included in the Commission documents, that indicated that the modification would reduce traffic by allowing overnight stays and thereby reducing the potential number of weekend special events. Neither the Public Works Department of the Arcata Fire Protection District expressed concern regarding the potential traffic associated with the modification.

14. FINDING: There is no evidence that there has an increase in the number of under-the-influence drivers that depart from the venue.

EVDIENCE: a) There was no evidence presented to show that there has been an increase in driving under-the-influence cases associated with the special events during the Planning Commission Hearing. The permit holder stated during the Planning Commission Hearing on September 4th, that any driver is allowed to leave their vehicle on the property overnight and retrieve it the next day, if there is concern that unsafe operation of a motor vehicle may occur.

15. FINDING: There is no evidence that there would be detrimental impacts on the local water table due to the increased consumption of water associated with more guests, more events, and overnight stays.

EVIDENCE: a) The Department of Environmental Health has confirmed that the current well system on site is appropriate to serve the residence and complies with the DEH Land Use Program. Based on the number of guests and service days in use, the

well system is not under the regulation of the California Department of Drinking Water (SWRCB, California Health and Safety Code Section 11627), but rather that of Humboldt County Department of Environmental Health.

- b) All event food preparation and dishwashing are completed offsite as per the operations plan.
- c) All drinking water associated with the events is provided from off-site sources per the operations plan.
- d) Water associated with overnight stays would utilize the on-site well; however, as this would be limited to 14 guests the use of the well for this purpose would be consistent with typical residential well usage.
- e) Water to facilitate wastewater associated with the onsite septic system would come from the on-site well. Per the design of the treatment system in accordance with Department of Environmental Health standards, this would require approximately 750 gallons per event day for 150 guests. At a maximum of 30 events, this would be a maximum of 22,5000 gallons per year from the well to support the events (not counting the overnight stays). A typical single-family residence uses approximately 150,000 gallons of water per year.

16. FINDING: The appellant is incorrect that the discontinuance of portable toilets will impact local water quality in groundwater and local springs used as water sources in the neighborhood.

- EVIDENCE:**
- a) Per the Division of Environmental Health, the event venue replaced the residential septic tank under permit EH-SEPT-25-000024. The septic tank was replaced in 2025, and the leach field was in working condition at that time of inspection. Division of Environmental Health standards ensure that the permitted wastewater treatment system will not impact local water quality.
 - b) The Permit holder installed a commercial Onsite Wastewater Treatment System which has been approved by the Humboldt

County Department of Environmental Health (EH-SEPTA-24-000097). The ADA restrooms were finalized by the Humboldt County Building Department on October 6, 2025 (BLD-2024-60661).

17. FINDING: There is no evidence to suggest that there is an increased risk of igniting a catastrophic forest fire initiated by a careless guest or employee of the venue.

EVIDENCE:

- a) The Arcata Fire Protection District's referral response on January 22, 2024, approved the project.
- b) The parcel is in the State Responsibility Area and the Arcata Fire Protection District. Per the project site plan and operations plan, there is adequate space for emergency vehicle turnaround space and there is 30,000-gallons of water storage dedicated to fire suppression onsite.
- c) The operators are on-site during all special events to manage the events.

18. FINDING: The appellant is incorrect that the Planning Commission should have considered the potential loss of property value due to having to list "Noise Pollution" as a known defect on any future California Real Estate documents or contracts related to the sale of our property.

- a) The potential loss of property value is not a required finding for the approval or denial of a permit under County Code.

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the above findings and evidence, the Board of Supervisors does hereby:

- a. Deny the Appeal of PLN-18885MOD01 the Modification of Conditional Use Permit PLN-18885 on APN 500-011-024-000.
- b. Approve the modification under PLN-18885MOD01, subject to the recommended conditions of approval.

The foregoing Resolution is hereby passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors on October 28, 2025, by the following vote:

Dated: _____



Supervisor Michelle Bushnell, Chair
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

Adopted on motion by Supervisor Wilson, seconded by Supervisor Arroyo, and the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors -- Bushnell, Wilson, Madrone, Bohn, Arroyo

NAYS: Supervisors --

ABSENT: Supervisors --

ABSTAIN: Supervisors --

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)

County of Humboldt)

I, Kaleigh Maffei, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, County of Humboldt, State of California, do hereby certify the foregoing to be a full, true, and correct copy of the original made in the above-entitled matter by said Board of Supervisors at a meeting held in Eureka, California as the same now appears of record in my Office.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set
my hand and affixed the Seal of said Board of
Supervisors.



By Nikki Turner
Deputy Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of
the County of Humboldt, State of California

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL
(PLN-2024-18885)**

**APPROVAL OF THE CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT IS CONDITIONED ON THE FOLLOWING
TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

A. General Conditions

1. This permit is valid for five years from the date of original approval. Prior to expiration of the permit, the applicant must apply for a permit renewal if continued operation is desired. If an application for a renewal is not applied for and approved, the permit is deemed expired.
2. The project shall be conducted in accordance with the Project site plan and both the original and revised operations plan.
3. Caterers shall have access to potable water at events and access to approved handwashing and toilet facilities.
4. The conditions contained in the Department of Public Works memo dated January 29, 2024 (included within Attachment 4), are included as conditions of approval. Prior to performing any work on public improvements, contact the Land Use Division of the Department of Public Works.
5. Water for handwashing, dishwashing, and/or drinking must follow potability requirements in accordance with the California Drinking Water Act.
6. The applicant is required to pay for permit processing on a time and material basis as set forth in the schedule of fees and charges as adopted by ordinance of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. The Department will provide a bill to the applicant after the decision. Any and all outstanding Planning fees to cover the processing of the application to decision by the Hearing Officer shall be paid to the Humboldt County Planning Division, 3015 "H" Street, Eureka.
7. Weekend packages/overnight stays shall include only a single day with amplified music or speech.
8. Guests are limited to 150 per event.
9. There shall be no more than 30 events with amplified music and/or speech.
10. For overnight stays the short-term rental noise standards shall apply during the evening hours.

11. Applicant shall provide contact information to everyone who has commented at the hearing of September 4th, 2025, or otherwise provided comments.
12. The Operator shall collect Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) for overnight stays with an accounting of the number of nights and TOT paid provided to the Planning and Building Department as part of the annual report.

B. Ongoing Requirements/Development Restrictions Which Must be Satisfied for the Life of the Project:

1. All parking must be located on the project site. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that all parking is contained on site.
2. The Permit Holder/operator shall collect three (3) sound measurements along the western and southern property lines. The sound measurements shall be taken during each event at the same location. The sound measurements for each event at each location shall be presented to the Planning and Building Department in an annual report.
3. All amplified music and speakers shall be directed inward from the nearest property lines.
4. The applicant shall provide adequate trash receptacles and shall be responsible for cleanup and proper disposal of any litter created by each event. Containers for disposal of recyclable or compostable items shall be provided.
5. Any exterior lighting associated with the event shall be shielded and directed so as not to extend beyond the boundaries of the parcel.
6. Should the Humboldt County Planning Division verify violation of the terms and conditions of this permit, and verify subsequent violation of the same provision, this will be treated as a continuation of that violation.
7. Events with amplified music shall not exceed 80 decibels along the western property line. In the event that two or more noise complaints are received by the County in any 12-month period, any future events with amplified music must have a noise monitor onsite on the western property boundary and noise cannot exceed 80 decibels at the nearest property line.