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Planning Director Ford,

As a nearby resident to the property in the above application, I am writing to request a broader notification of neighboring properties and postponement of the scheduled August 4th Public hearing.

According to Planner Michael Kein, notifications were only sent out to properties within 300' of the subject property. This does not even begin to cover the properties affected by noise and other issues caused by Mr. Davies facility. **I request that notifications be sent out to all neighboring properties within 1000' of Mr. Davies property.** When Mr. Davies filed the initial CUP request last year, the notifications were eventually sent out to properties within 1000' to give all neighbor the opportunity to comment.

Additionally, because the time to the Public Hearing is so short, **I further request that the Public Hearing be postponed** so that the further notifications can be sent out and that nearby neighbors have an opportunity to make a decision on whether they want to comment on the application.

Sincerely,

Dave White
2066 Fickle Hill Rd.
Arcata, CA 95521

707-499-0461
davewhite@sbcglobal.net

Dear Supervisor Wilson and Commissioner Ford,

I am emailing you to request a delay in the hearing regarding Ridgefield Events, Conditional Use Permit Modification that is currently scheduled for September 4, 2025 until a later date.

The first I heard of this matter was in mid-August when I received the first notification for a hearing planned for August 21st, but then moved back two weeks to September 4th. My wife and I are adjacent property owners to the South (APN 500-011-023) of the subject parcel as well as owners of APN 500-011-022. We were originally supportive of the original CUP. However, after nearly two seasons during which weddings and events have been undertaken next door we are 100% opposed to any proposed modifications and have a number of reasons why we have done a 180 degree about face.

While the parties seeking this modification have been planning for this and working on it since before June 12, 2025 when they opened the new file, we have only recently been able to start to develop our responses to this proposed modification. We believe this modification has such significant impacts on our own family and property, as well as the neighborhood, and all those who travel Fickle Hill Rd. that I am requesting some additional time to develop our response. For example, I am submitting a Public Records Request to California Highway Patrol, who patrols Fickle Hill Rd., to determine the number of accidents and whether alcohol (potentially DUIs) were involved in traffic incidents on Fickle Hill Rd. since April 2024; unfortunately, I do not believe that I will have the results of this request by September 4th as an officer has to review all the potential incidents individually. I am particularly aware of this situation because in the 43 years we have driven the road, our family has been involved in 4 accidents, three involving alcohol and two resulting in DUI arrests (no, I was not a driver under the influence!). I've also hit a deer one night that popped out of the brush.

In addition, we have only been able to see this past week some of the CUP's supporting documents, including a letter submitted to the Planning Commission staff and Commissioners during the original application process which were both a revelation and a surprise to us.

We are a past supporter of the CUP who after 2 seasons of weddings/events have now seen the results and changed our minds 100%. I want to be certain that I can develop the thorough and appropriate responses that this application warrants and demonstrate to the Planning Commission that this CUP should not be modified to increase the number of events or number of guests.

Fortunately, time is NOT of the essence, as Ridgefield Events calendar for the remaining portion of the 2025 season through mid-October is fully booked, and according to their website they only have 5 open dates left for their 2026 season beginning mid-April of 2026.

Thanks for your consideration of my request for a delay of this hearing.

Respectfully,

Ken Stumpf

2300 Fickle Hill Rd.

Arcata, CA 95521

(707)-822-7737

APNs 500-011-023 and 500-011-022

Michael Kein, Associate Planner

Humboldt County Planning Commission

Re: Ridgefield Events Conditional Use Permit Modifications

Record Number: PIN2025-18885-MOD 01

Sir:

As owners of a property directly across Fickle Hill Road from the site of Ridgefield Events, we write to oppose the modifications proposed to the existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

The current CUP allows for the use of the property at 2242 Fickle Hill Road as a seasonal venue for a maximum of 30 events (primarily weddings) per year with a maximum of 120 guests per event and no overnight stays. However, Applicant's website (ridgefieldweddings.co) appears to offer events throughout the year with as many as 150 guests per event and overnight stays for two participants. The CUP required Applicant to submit a monitoring report to the Planning Department to insure compliance with the conditions of approval. This would allow neighbors to keep apprised of the frequency and fashion of events. We are unaware of any monitoring reports being submitted and, if they do exist, how to access them.

Applicant's request to increase the number of events and the number of guests per event would significantly increase the impact on surrounding properties. Fickle Hill Road is a narrow, winding road with poor paving and obstacles like tree roots impairing the flow of traffic. Increased traffic on Fickle Hill Road would adversely affect property owners already using the road. Also, noise associated with these events would be more persistent than neighbors currently experience. Applicant also wishes to allow 14 "special event" guests to stay overnight on the property without specifying if these "special" events are included in the maximum of 40 events per year or how many "overnights" each special event would involve.

Recently, neighbors have reported a disturbing increase in the noise associated with events at Ridgefield. These reports raise questions about the onsite monitoring of events. Will there be a responsible person on site during the entire duration of the event, including overnight stays? This and other potential violations of the existing CUP have increased neighbors' concerns about the use of this Wildland Urban Interface property to host large gatherings of celebrants.

Our fundamental issue with the proposed modifications to the CUP is that there is currently no method of insuring compliance with the limits it imposes on Ridgefield Events. Until compliance with the current limits can be confirmed, we would oppose any modifications to the existing CUP. We would propose that Ridgefield Events make available to the community a monthly account of the dates of events it hosts and the number of attendees at each event.

Sincerely,

Joann and Eric Olson

I would like to bring to your attention a pattern of Ridgefield Events advertising on their website not in accordance with their approved Conditional Use Permit PLN-2024-18885...

- 1) April of 2024, per letter to County Planning staff and Planning Commissioners stamped “APPROVED APR 4 2024 Humboldt County PLANNING”, owner responded to a question “What about website information?”, noting that the website information [was] corrected to reflect [their] operations plan.
- 2) April of 2025, the County found that the Ridgefield Events website was advertising the event facility as offering overnight lodging and special events with a capacity of up to 300 people, both of which were not consistent with the approved permit. Upon contacting the operator, it was explained that the website was based on an out-of-date business plan which had not been updated to reflect what had been approved in 2024.
- 3) August 23, 2025, the capacity is for 150 (not 120 as in the current CUP) and there’s no statement of their Seasons of Operation, but there’s a whole section explaining Seasonal considerations for all four seasons with pictures of their venue with each season implying year-round weddings. The current CUP doesn’t allow for year round events but allows for a six-month season from mid-April through mid-October.



Welcome

Weddings

Venue Gallery

More Details

Download Our Pricing

Seasonal Considerations For Redwood Celebrations

Season	Temperature	Atmosphere	What To Expect
Spring	60-75°F	Fresh & Ethereal	Morning mist, wildflowers, dramatic light
Summer	65-80°F	Bright & Golden	Longest daylight, natural cooling from trees
Fall	55-70°F	Moody & Magical	Dramatic fog, golden light, crisp air
Winter	45-60°F	Intimate & Dramatic	Misty mornings, potential rain, early sunset

Spring (March-May)



Summer (June-August)



- 4) August 28, 2025, they are advertising as though the PLN-2024-1885-MOD01 has been approved, even though the hearing has not been held.

OUR EXCLUSIVE RIDGEFIELD RETREAT PACKAGE

A Weekend In The Redwoods



Not Just A Day – An Experience

Our *Ridgefield Retreat Package* is for couples who want a complete getaway, rather than just a wedding day. It gives you two nights and three days to connect, celebrate, and truly experience this milestone, all with the redwoods as your backdrop.

Whether it's quiet mornings with coffee beneath the trees, heartfelt toasts at your rehearsal dinner, or dancing under the stars, this is a wedding experience built for more—more time, more connection, and more unforgettable moments.



Your *Weekend* Essentials

• Exclusive Redwood Access

- Venue rental from Friday afternoon through Sunday morning
- Lodging accommodations for up to 14 guests
- Private gated hiking trails in the Redwood forest

Gourmet Culinary Experiences*

- Friday – three-course plated Rehearsal Dinner for 20
- Saturday – breakfast grazing table for 20
- Wedding dinner for up to 75 guests
- Sunday – champagne brunch for 20

Planning & Event Support

- Professional wedding planner
- Event staff for setup, takedown, and day-of coordination
- Tables, chairs, a tent, and bistro lighting

Entertainment & Decor Credits

- \$3,500 floral credit
- \$1,000 dessert credit
- DJ services for your wedding day

Extra Touches

- Bar services for the rehearsal dinner and the wedding day
- Lawn games

----- Forwarded message -----

Date: Thu, Mar 27, 2025 at 9:18 PM

Subject: Ridgefield neighbor

Hi Scott,

We appreciate your direct communication and respect for the needs of the neighborhood and consideration for the impact to the neighbors regarding your event space. I think it's really great you have provided written communication to all neighbors every time there has been a change to the use permit for your event space. I am an event coordinator (Humboldt County's farmers markets) in my day job, so I understand this process and the value of community input. Your communication has been excellent.

We live on Wagon Jack Lane, just down the road, and I personally have no problem with what you have been doing and what you have planned. I love events and love seeing our beautiful and special neighborhood enjoyed by visitors and others in our community. For me, and my young kids, it's fun to sit on our back deck and hear (very faint, hardly discernible and absolutely not disruptive) music in the distance at night. We hear many neighbors playing live music frequently, and we can hear *every* event at Cal Poly and Crabs Ballpark, and those seem much louder than anything I've ever heard from your events given the way sound travels up the hill. We enjoy all of it!

We have never had any issues with vehicle traffic or folks parking on our lane or on our property, and we are practically across the street.

My parents also live on this lane and worry about traffic, but have had no actual impact from your events :)

Keep up the great work and thank you for the good communication.

Sincerely,

Portia Bramble
Wagon Jack Lane, Arcata

8/29/2025

Dear Planning Commission and Planning Staff:

Initially we supported the Ridgefield Events venue as it was presented to us – as neighbors opening their home to a limited number of weddings, emphasis on small elopements. In fact, we became excited to possibly host some wedding attendees in our home on the front of our parcel as we are preparing for a short-term rental in the front of the property then tackling building a little mother-in-law unit in the back for our retirement years.

A year and a half after approval of the original CUP, we've experienced our property being impacted negatively by traffic and noise. We do not support this modification to the existing Conditional Use Permit PLN-2024-18885.

We do not agree with Finding #5 of the “Resolution of the Planning Commission of the County of Humboldt”, Record Number: PLN-2024-18885-MOD1. Following are many reasons why.

Negative impact to our property:

The venue has decreased the tranquility of our parcel.

Due to the proximity of our home next to the driveway, cars pulling into the venue can be seen and heard from our house.



One can hear the music and DJ commentary at the back of our parcel. The reason we were drawn to purchasing this property 25 years ago was because of the back of the property which is surrounded by redwoods and is quiet and serene. We're struggling with the fact that we can hear events into the night. The property is being impacted such that there's a negative impact on its value and desirability.

Original concept for the wedding venue:

Direct quotes from the 'Operations Plan for Ridgefield Events' stamped and dated as received by Humboldt County Planning Jan. 16, 2024:

"We have envisioned Ridgefield Events as a complement to the CE [Conservation Easement gifted to the City of Arcata]. Instead of traditional development, we will instead host events that allow guests to appreciate and celebrate the beauty of the redwood forest, while maintaining the forest for its habitat and aesthetic value."

"Our venue will only be open from mid-April to mid-October as we are operating as an outdoor venue. My wife and I will run the business, there will be no employees.....Our goal over the next 3 years is to grow to 30 combined annual events with the majority being elopements which are smaller and lower impact events. Therefore, we anticipate operating for less than 10% of the year."

The initial proposed venue set forth above is from when the owners lived on site and events were held at what was their home. We supported this venue as presented, but the model has not been followed. They no longer live onsite distancing them from the effect of their business on the neighborhood and they have many employees. The constant booking of events has changed the neighborhood and affected our parcel and likely others. Due to our proximity near the Ridgefield driveway and the sound in the back of our parcel the solitude has been compromised. Even when the sounds are dulled/muffled it's not serene. This is something we didn't have to contend with before...it's not the sound of wind blowing through the trees and wildlife.

Number of events:

The current CUP allows for a couple of weekends a month during the summer and fall to enjoy our parcel without music interspersed with low frequency booming, microphoned DJ's, and cars coming and going in front of and along the northwesterly side of our house.

To put this into context, the current CUP allows up to 30 events between April and October, which if spread out among 30 weeks, allows for approximately 1 event per week. If the events truly are a combination of elopements (2-20 guests) and weddings (30-120 guests) as the current CUP permits, this allows the possibility of keeping a rural, quiet neighborhood. Any more than this is too much.

Capacity:

The request for a jump to 175 guests is overburdensome. By way of example, two people per car is 87 cars - not including all the cars entering and exiting for catering, decorating, employees cleaning up, etc.

Increased capacity equals increased noise. Noise is already an issue under the current CUP.

Fickle Hill road safety issues and impact beyond just the properties neighboring the events:

Fickle Hill Road is a narrow winding road often bounded by a steep slope on one side and a ditch on the other. There are obstacles like tree roots that are pushing up the roadbed and potholes, making it tricky to navigate as a local let alone someone not familiar with the road and possibly tipsy. The current CUP has increased traffic flow, which in turn causes wear and tear on the roadway as well as increased potential for accidents. The permit as it stands tests the limits of the road and community, so allowing more traffic will only worsen the road's condition.

Transparency and accountability:

It's hard for the County or Fickle Hill residents to monitor the number of events being held. We would like a way to see when events are being held and approximate number of attendees like a calendar with blanked out dates and type of event.

In the letter to County Planning staff and Planning Commissioners stamped "APPROVED APR 4 2024 Humboldt County PLANNING", owner responded to a question "What about website information?", noting that the website information [was] corrected to reflect [their] operations plan.

In April of 2025, the County found that the Ridgefield Events website was advertising the event facility as offering overnight lodging and special events with a capacity of up to 300 people, both of which were not consistent with the approved permit. Upon contacting the operator, it was explained that the website was based on an out-of-date business plan which had not been updated to reflect what had been approved in 2024.

In reviewing the website on 8/24/2025, the capacity is for 150 (not 120 as in the current CUP) and there's no statement of their Seasons of Operation, but there's a whole section explaining Seasonal considerations for all four seasons with pictures of their venue with each season implying year-round weddings. The current CUP doesn't allow for year-round events but allows for a six month season from mid-April through mid-October.

At the top of the website, it reads "ONLY 5 2026 DATES LEFT! NOW BOOKING 2027." My question is how many events have been booked, of what type, when? Up until April of this year the website was advertising 300 capacity and overnight lodging.

Compatibility with surrounding neighborhood:

The isolation provided by larger, rural parcels attract people to living on Fickle Hill. This venue began as neighbors opening their home to a limited number of events and now it's looking to become a commercial business on a TPZ, which appears to want to operate year-round.

Conclusion:

The impact to the surrounding homes is starting to seem overburdensome and it's not clear the current CUP has been complied with. We respectfully request this Modification be denied.

If the Planning Commission finds the applicant to be in compliance with the existing permit and elects to approve the modification, we request the following conditions of approval:

- Create a way for the public to see when events are being held and approximate number of attendees like a calendar with blanked out dates and type of event.
- Traffic study of Ridgefield driveways ingress/egress for full season to quantify increase in traffic.
- Engage whole of community downhill not just residences within 1000'.
- Clarify the language in the modified CUP. Do not leave loopholes for year-round events or overnight stays beyond the 6-month season from mid-April to mid-October.
- Clarify if there's an employee on site all night to monitor overnight stays for late night parties.

In Closing, please keep in mind that if the owners of the property have chosen to no longer live onsite, it may be because they no longer have the quiet enjoyment they once had ...and neither does the neighborhood, especially with the proposed modification to the venue.

Sincerely,

Tony and Lorien Sanchez

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Dear John,

I've been up since 3:30 this morning debating whether or not to send you another email regarding a delay. I apologize, but I decided it was important enough to do so.

I spoke with Joanna at California Highway Patrol in Sacramento (916-325-4728) yesterday regarding my request for all information regarding accidents, arrests, and other incidents involving drivers under the influence on Fickle Hill Rd over the last several years. She is responsible for fulfillment of my California Public Records Act request. She assured me that she would work on it as fast as possible, but that it is likely I will not receive the report they are generating in time to review and process the information before the September 3rd deadline for the hearing scheduled for September 4th,

Where as the proposed modification to the CUP involves both an increase in number of events (30 to 40) and guests (120 to 175) that represents a possible increase in traffic down Fickle Hill Rd, Fickle Hill;

and the venue serves alcoholic beverages to many visitors who are unfamiliar with Fickle Hill Rd;

and Fickle Hill Rd is considered by many to be a high risk, windy, poorly maintained two lane rural County road with no shoulders, and many other risk factors;

Therefore, why would the County Planning Commission not want to have the opportunity to be presented with CHP data that may clarify the riskiness of many potentially under the influence drivers exiting the Ridgefield venue as late as 9:30-10pm at night following each event?

Please reconsider delaying the September 4th CUP Modification hearing until we can gather and process all pertinent information regarding this matter. I believe it is in the public interest to do so.

Respectfully,

Ken Stumpf
2300 Fickle Hill Rd.
Arcata, CA 95521
(707)-822-7737

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August 29, 2025

County Of Humboldt Planning and Building Department 3015 H Street, Eureka, CA 95501

Re: Record Number CUP Modification PLN-2024-18885-MOD1

AP# 500-011-007

2242 Fickle Hill Road

Project Title: Ridgefield Events MODIFICATION to Conditional Use Permit for Wedding Events.

Dear Director Ford,

My name is Phylis Geller. I am the property owner and resident of 33 Inga Road, which is located off Fickle Hill Road, adjacent to the City of Arcata. My residence, as well as future investment properties I own situate at 124 and 176 Inga Road, are located approximately 685 feet and due west of the venue area known as the Ridgefield Event Center.

Thanks to Michael J Kein, MBA, Associate Planner, for providing me with appurtenant documents regarding a Modification to the original Permit.

As a close neighbor to the venue (one who can still regularly hear the sounds, ie: noise, from the venue) I respectfully request Notification be mailed to ***all neighboring properties within 1,000 feet of the venue***, as well as request for a ***postponement*** of the scheduled September 4th Public hearing. With the holiday weekend and being uninformed and therefore unaware of these numerous proposed changes, I think this is a reasonable request.

Very Truly,

Phylis J Geller
33 Inga Road,
Arcata, CA 95521