



Town of Natick, Massachusetts
Department of Community and Economic Development
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James Freas, AICP
Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 5, 2020
TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: James Freas, Director of Community & Economic Development
RE: Temporary Expansion of Licensed Premises for Lookout Farm
Meeting Date: June 8, 2020

Governor Baker's COVID-19 Order 35, issued on Monday, June 1, 2020, allows Natick's Select Board, acting as the Local Licensing Authority (LLA) for alcohol related licenses, to permit alcohol service in outdoor dining areas in an expedited process. Lookout Farm is seeking changes to its permitted outdoor dining area for alcohol service per this order. The Public Safety Officer Lt Lauzon and Board of Health staff have reviewed the proposal and conducted site visits. Both have indicated their support for the proposal. The applicant is seeking temporary approval from the Board of Selectmen under the Governor's Order 35. Lookout Farm may seek to make this change to their operations permanent; doing so will require an application consistent with the normal procedures. Attached is a letter and supporting images showing the proposed operational plans.

Staff supports approval of this application at this time because:

1. Lookout Farm was previously approved for the taproom and associated outdoor service areas;
2. Staff have already reviewed their current proposal; and
3. The proposal is temporary and the operator has agreed to make changes as necessary while this temporary permit is in effect.

The Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC) issued an advisory June 1, 2020, concurrently with the Governor's Order 35, further detailing the waivers to the normal licensing process for extension of premises licenses for outdoor service of alcohol. That advisory states:

Pursuant to the Governor's Order, on application from a licensee that serves alcohol for on-premises consumption, the LLA may alter the description of the licensee's licensed premises to expand for outdoor seating that the LLA deems "reasonable and proper." The LLA does not need to comply with M.G.L. c. 138, § 15A, and therefore does not need to provide advance notice to abutters or hold a public hearing on the application.

Further, approval of these licenses by the ABCC is not required so the permitted activity may begin immediately upon approval by the LLA.

Lookout Farm's proposal for temporary seating is consistent with the current COVID 19 requirements issued by the state for restaurant re-opening. These requirements include spacing of tables, seating capacity limits, use of disposable menus, cleaning and hygiene guides, and others.



James Freas <jfreas@natickma.org>

FW: Lookout Farm

James Freas <jfreas@natickma.org>
To: James Freas <jfreas@natickma.org>

Fri, Jun 5, 2020 at 3:34 PM

From: Jay Mofenson <jmofenson@lookoutfarm.com>
Sent: Monday, May 18, 2020 12:19 PM
To: ddonovan@natickma.org; selectmen@natickma.org
Cc: Laura Neville <lneville@lookoutfarm.com>
Subject: Lookout Farm

Good afternoon,

I hope everyone remains healthy and safe. I had the opportunity to address the EDC last week and it was suggested that I put my thoughts and operational plans together to share with the Board. I request that I be added to your agenda for next Monday night to speak about our future and to answer questions. I am also available to briefly address you during the Citizen Concern portion of tonight's meeting if you think that would be of benefit. I will make an effort to contact both Brian Louzan and Jim White and invite them to the farm this week for a site visit.

Because of the pandemic, Lookout Farm is at a crossroads.

Taking the obvious need for social distancing into account and our limited indoor square footage, we cannot profitably operate the taproom even when we are allowed to re-open. Therefore, we have elected to keep the Lookout Farm taproom closed for the foreseeable future. Similar to the taproom, the Barnyard Play Area along with the Peach Pit will also remain closed.

Regardless of world events, the farm requires a level of continuous care and maintenance to simply maintain the basic orchard operation. Farm operation expenses run approximately \$200,000 a month and revenue is at a trickle. Our team has been working tirelessly to re-envision and recalibrate our farm operation to stay viable in the "new normal" that we collectively find ourselves in. We believe that the following operational adjustments provide us with the best opportunity to generate the essential revenue needed to continue to sustain farm operations.

For the months of June, July, August (and potentially September and October as well), our intent is to consolidate our farm food and beverage operations to the outdoor area adjacent to the U-barn. (See translucent orange area). By consolidating to this location, we believe that our ability to move service outdoors will provide us with our best chance to continue to operate by leveraging our physical space to create a safe and relaxing outdoor environment for our guests.

The translucent orange area connects to a contained walking path within the orchard seen on the second Google map. Guests would be permitted to enter the path with a LOF beer/cider in hand and complete the loop back to the U-barn. Similar to the U-barn area, the walking path is also physically enclosed and will be monitored by three LOF staff members during operation. The path is designed to flow in one direction to prevent guests from crossing one another.

Providing guests with the opportunity to enjoy both fresh air and physical activity within an agricultural setting is consistent with our other agri-tourism activities. We believe that these operational pivots further enhance the farm experience and short of residential development, is our best chance to generate the essential revenue needed to survive. Our team is confident that we can successfully adapt to the "new normal" and create a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience for our guests.

Some operational highlights include:

- An on-line reservation system to help manage the flow of guests.
- Once parked, guests enter at the small yellow arrow on the first picture provided.
- The brick walkway will be marked with X's every six plus feet (starting at the red "x" to indicate waiting spots to be used as needed for guests leading up to the LOF staff greeter. Signage will be located at each waiting location to summarize the, "Be courteous, be kind" rules.
- Guests will be seated at reserved tables by an LOF staff member after the staff member ensures that the table has been properly sanitized.
- Backpack disinfectant sprayers will be used to disinfect each table prior to use by the next group of guests.
- Food and Beverage service will be electronically ordered and delivered to the guest tables in order to limit the amount of guest movement from their table area.
- Note that all guests will be required to wear a face covering when walking in public areas but may remove them to eat/drink.
- Note that all staff are required to wear both gloves and masks for the entirety of their shift.
- Also note that employees will be temp checked before the start of each shift.
- All guest movement will follow a one way traffic flow pattern to be clearly defined.

Google maps and additional operational notes:

- The blue lines around the U-barn area indicate fencing/containment. The entirety of the area is enclosed. Note that the connecting walking path is also contained although not noted in blue on the picture.
- The solid yellow area measures 3,600 square feet and is currently permitted for the service of beer/cider. The seating capacity in this area is for 120 people which equates to 30 square feet per person.
- The Taproom and patio seating capacity combined (not shown on either picture) is permitted for 214 guests and starting in September, the Peach pit is approved for alcohol service for a total of 120 occupants, also at 30 square feet per person.
- Our total combined maximum seating capacity equates to 454.
- The translucent orange seating area measures 40,000 square feet.
- We are confident that we can safely and efficiently manage a consolidated guest capacity not to exceed 400 people within the translucent orange area.
- This allows for 100 square feet of space per guest which is over three times the amount of square footage previously provided per guest pre-pandemic.
- We will also be spacing tables to achieve a 15 foot diameter from table end to table end. Doing so effectively provides 2 1/2 times the amount of recommended physical space between separate parties.
- The yellow arrows within the orange area indicate the one way flow pattern for guest movement.
- Lookout Farm has some amazing pit sunsets. For the summer months, when lighting conditions are cooperative, we would like to remain open until 15 minutes past sunset. This would allow guests enough time to enjoy the big sky and

enable our staff to close. -We would also like the flexibility to be open seven days a week starting at noon.

Lookout Farm and the town of Natick have a symbiotic relationship and shared interest in maintaining the farm as an operational agricultural property. Farming since 1651, Lookout Farm is a very special part of our shared community and with your support, I believe we have a solid plan to redefine ourselves for a successful future.

Sincerely,

Jay Mofenson





Above picture is to provide orientation. The yellow arrow indicates Pleasant Street entrance and roadway to below location.



Perimeter

817 ft

Area

40,745 ft²

