TETON COUNTY, IDAHO | Board of County Commissioners

Written Decision for Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn

Special Use Permit

This is a written decision on the findings for the conditional approval of the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn Special Use Permit, Teton County Land Development Code (LDC) § 4-8, § 3-2, and § 3-6-14; as well as Teton County Comprehensive Plan (A Vision & Framework 2012-2030)

APPLICATION DATE:	June 9, 2026
APPLICANT:	Love Schack Architecture
PROPERTY OWNER:	Mavanee Smallwood
PROJECT NAME:	Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn
PURPOSE OF APPLICATION:	Event Venue
EXISTING ZONING:	LA-35 Lowland Agriculture
SURROUNDING ZONING:	LA-35 Lowland Agriculture
SURROUNDING USE:	Rural residential single-family and agricultural land, commercial nursery and greenhouse
PARCEL & SIZE:	E2NE4 SEC 15 T5N R45E *DEED RESTRICTION SEE PACKET*, RP05N45E150011.

Applicable Standards and Criteria for Application Evaluation:

- Compliance with the LDC Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 General Development Standards
- Compliance with Special Use Standards set forth by the category of use in Chapter 3 of the LDC.

Procedural Background

SUBMISSION AND SCHEDULING: An application for a Special Use Permit was submitted June 9, 2026. The Planning and Building Department held a pre-application conference on April 23, 2026.

HEARING DATE: The application was scheduled for the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) on July 14, 2026

NOTICING: Pursuant to applicable law, the public hearing for the PZC was duly noticed in the Teton Valley News on June 24, 2026 and July 1, 2026. Staff mailed a notification to property owners in the surrounding 300-foot buffer area on June 18, 2026. The staff also posted a notice on the property with information about the public hearing on June 30, 2026.

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT: Staff received two public comments from lot owners in neighboring subdivisions. These addressed concerns regarding: Incompatibility with Zoning and Comprehensive Plan, Adjacent Ag production, Traffic & Access, Wetland & Environmental impact, Noise and Nuisance Impacts, Precedent and Cumulative Impacts & Inadequate Infrastructure.

PZC MEMBERS PRESENT: Collin Hunter, Carl Kohut, James Weber, Wyatt Penfold, Tom Braun, Maggie Martin, Harley Wilcox

STAFF PRESENT: Sharon Fox, Joshua Chase, Dan Leemon

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES: Ms. Smallwood

Mr. Chase reviewed the application for a Special Use Permit for an event center on 80 acres located on W 2500 N just off Hwy 33 in Driggs. The event center is designed with a maximum occupancy of 383 people and includes on-site parking. The majority of the area of adjoining parcels are in agricultural use at this time with two residential subdivisions to the north and west of this parcel. Mr. Chase commented they have received an approved access permit and the event center site plan has been approved by the Fire Marshal. They will need to work with Eastern Idaho Public Health (EIPH) for their requirements on a commercial building septic system and for sanitation requirements for the commercial kitchen. The applicant has not moved forward with the NP evaluation due to the cost until the permit has been through the approval process.

Mavanee Smallwood, applicant, commented they are looking to do the event center so that the community has a place to gather for special events. She commented they will be doing a boundary adjustment with the adjacent property in the future

IN-PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT: Ms. Kellie Bailey, resident of Highland Meadows, expressed concerns with the request because it is not in tune with the uses in the area and does not want to see the ag land used for an event center.
Mr. Fiske Hopkins, resident of Dry Creek Ridge, commented he is the Vice President of the HOA and they do not want to have an event center on the surrounding ag acreage. They are against the use because of the noise and light pollution and would rather see it in the City instead of a commercial use on ag land.
Ms. Nikki Richards from VARD commented they would like to see the application denied because it is a commercial use in an agricultural neighborhood and she did not feel it met with the criteria for approval. She referenced the lack of buffering proposed, the lack of EIPH approval on the waste water treatment, traffic concerns and noise problems.
Ms. Anne Callison, valley resident, requested the Commission deny the application for a commercial operation on ag land. She was concerned with noise, traffic, and the lack of an approval from EIPH for waste water treatment. She was also concerned with the inability of the Sheriff's Department to monitor these types of events.

Mr. Weber read into the record a letter from a nearby resident, Mandra Rockefeller, expressing concerns about traffic, road wear and damage to 2500 N, light and noise pollution and enforcement of the conditions of approval such as operating hours and noise complaints.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Ms. Mavanee Smallwood commented the building is not just a metal building but has been designed by an architect from Love Shack Architects and will have insulation. She felt this was a better use for the land rather than just subdividing it. Ms. Andrea Michael with Love Shack commented the building will be wood frame with a metal roof. Mr. Braden Olsen with Nelson Engineering commented there is no problem with getting an EIPH approval of the septic system as designed. Mr. Weber asked if there was a survey prepared for the boundary adjustment yet. Ms. Smallwood commented it has been surveyed but not yet submitted and it does reflect the location of the proposed event center. Mr. Chase commented the buffering would be for parcel lines that border a residential neighborhood so it is not clear what buffering would be necessary if the boundaries are changed.

COMMISSION DELIBERATION: Mr. Weber was concerned with the lack of buffering and the potential boundary adjustment to reduce the acreage of the parcel.
Mr. Kohut suggested adding a condition for buffering regardless of the distance from close by residential lots. Mr. Wilcox commented he was concerned with more requests for event centers if this one is approved. He believed it would be good for the community but not for a neighbor. Mr. Hunter commented he did not see a problem with an event center on a large parcel if they are willing to provide buffering if it is required.
Mr. Kohut commented he felt requiring a buffer even if the parcel is reduced would resolve some of the concerns.
Mr. Braun was concerned with the scale of the proposal, the parking proposed, concerns for the possible waste water treatment system they will use that has not been approved yet, and felt it did not meet requirements 4-8-E. Specifically the LA-35 zone district is not compatible with an intense use, it is not compatible with the neighborhood, and was concerned with adverse impacts like the traffic, lighting, and noise impacts.
Mr. Penfold commented he was concerned that the parking lot is over an existing ditch and not sufficient for a 400 person event center. He commented that is it not possible for anyone to make a living in ag 3 production in that area and he would rather see an event center than a subdivision.
Mr. Wilcox asked if they are required to have paved parking. Mr. Chase stated they are not required to pave the parking area. Mr. Wilcox did not want to see a paved parking lot. He felt a plan for mitigation could work if they had traffic impact information that could be used for a solution. He wanted to give the applicant a chance to resolve the concerns prior to the next hearing through conditions on an approval.
Mr. Kohut commented he would like to see Type B buffering around the property with the exception of the east side regardless of the requirements. Ms. Martin wanted to see buffering around the building and around the parking area as well. Mr. Weber was concerned with the volume of traffic on W 2500 N and was surprised that Public Works did not express concerns. He was also concerned with the neighbors' comments and noted they would rather see a residential subdivision than an event center.

Mr. Weber wanted to see a buffer requirement if the application is approved. Mr. Wilcox felt conditions could be added to deal with the concerns that require a large expenditure rather than requiring they be resolved before making a decision.
Mr. Braun did not feel the conditions could make the application work or adequately address the concerns.

PZC RECOMMENDATION

MOVER: Carl Kohut
SECONDER: Maggie Martin
Having reviewed the application materials for the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn SUP, as well as the additional material provided by 4 PZC 7/14/2026 staff and other agencies; I hereby move to recommend APPROVAL to the Teton County Board of County Commissioners, having found that the application meets the criteria found in the Teton County Land Development Code Section 4-8 and Section 3-2 with the recommended conditions in the staff report.

AYES (5): Wyatt Penfold, Carl Kohut, Harley Wilcox, Maggie Martin, and Collin Hunter
NAYS: (2): James Weber, Tom Braun
Adopted (5 to 2)

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BOCC) DECISION

HEARING DATE: The item was scheduled for the Teton County Board of County Commissioners ("BoCC" or "Board") on October 13, 2026.

NOTICING: Pursuant to applicable law, the public hearing for the Board of County Commissioners was duly noticed in the Teton Valley News on September 23 & 30, 2026. Staff mailed a notification to property owners in the surrounding 300-foot buffer area on September 18, 2026. Staff also posted a notice on the property on September 29, 2026 with information about the October 13, 2026, public hearing.

BoCC COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Brad Wolfe, Ron James, Dan Powers.

STAFF PRESENT: Joshua Chase

APPLICANT REPRESENTATIVES: Mavanee Smallwood

Planning Administrator Joshua Chase presented the staff report for the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn SUP. The Board asked why the traffic study was based on 200 people versus the 383 stated in the application. Mr. Chase responded that the applicant could address that.

Mavanee Smallwood, the applicant, presented her narrative for the project. She anticipates 4-5 events per month during spring-fall, and 1-2 in the winter months. She anticipates most events will be 150-200 people

IN PERSON PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kelli McAllister spoke in opposition to the application. She does not believe the use is appropriate in the rural County. She is concerned about the light pollution, the septic, and water quality issues.

Don Callison spoke against the SUP. He asked the Commissioners to honor the core values of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the alignment with compatible uses.

Jeff White spoke in regards to the process. He disagreed that his comments were not submitted in a timely manner. The Board allowed Mr. White to read his email into the record. The email is now attached.

Niki Richards spoke against that SUP. She pointed out that the P&Z Commission attached 14 conditions of approval, suggesting the application doesn't meet criteria in the LDC and Comp Plan.

Ida Hansen spoke neutrally on the application. She would like the Barn SUP approved with limitations on light and operating hours.

Ann Callison spoke in opposition to the SUP. She believed Jeff White and Niki Richards hit the relevant points.

Jessica Calderwood spoke in support of the SUP. She believes there is a need for another special event venue.

Sami Volcansek spoke in favor of the SUP. As a wedding planner, she would love another event center.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL:

It is not the applicant's intent to hold events every day of the year. She thinks this is less impact than a subdivision.

BOARD DELIBERATION:

The Board asked about the issues brought up with regard to publishing the applications in a timely enough manner for the public to have time to comment. The Board discussed adding additional conditions to include setting the number of events/year and the number of persons per event. Commissioner Powers wanted to focus the conversation on whether it is an appropriate use for this area. He expressed concern about the intersection of 2500 N and Hwy 33 and the wastewater system that would be required. He suggested that the applicant propose limitations on the number and size of events.

MOVER: Commissioner Wolfe made a motion, *Having found the application for the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn SUP, can comply with the requirements of Teton County Land Development Code Section 4-8 and Section 3-2 for a Special Use Permit; I hereby move to APPROVE the Special Use Permit with certain conditions [specified below].*

AYES (3): Brad Wolfe, Ron James, and Dan Powers Adopted (3 to 0)

Reasoning and Analysis

The Board of County Commissioners, having found that the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn Special Use Permit application;

- Complies with the LDC Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 General Development Standards; and complies with Special Use Standards set forth by the category of use in Chapter 3 of the LDC;
- The County and other service providers will be able to provide sufficient public facilities and services, including schools, roads, recreation facilities, wastewater treatment, water supply and storm water facilities, police, fire and emergency medical services, while maintaining sufficient levels of service to existing development;
- The use is compatible with adjacent uses in terms of location, scale, site design, hours of operation and operating characteristics OR that adverse impacts resulting from the proposed use in the affected area will be effectively mitigated or offset.

Conclusions

Therefore, having given due consideration to the application and materials presented, and to the criteria of approval called out in the staff report, the Teton County Board of County Commissioners hereby approves this application, because it satisfied LDC Chapters 4 & 5, along with the special use standards set forth in LDC § 3-6-7, subject to the conditions specified below.

In accordance with these findings and conclusions, the Board hereby APPROVES the application for the Smallwood Ridgeline Ranch Event Barn with the following CONDITIONS:

1. Maintain a minimum of 5 acres on this site in any future boundary line adjustment.
2. Hours of operation shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 am to 10:00 pm daily.
3. Lighting: Outdoor lighting, current and future, shall comply with the Outdoor Lighting provisions of the LDC, Section 4-8. Teton County Dark Sky Ordinance should also be enforced. All lighting and illumination of outdoor facilities shall be turned off no later than 10:00 pm.
4. The special event facility shall comply with all requirements of the local fire district, the state health department, and other public agencies exercising jurisdiction over the establishment or operation.
5. Onsite Inspection: The Fire District, Public Health District, and Teton County Planning Department shall be permitted to perform inspections as in any other business. The planning administrator may determine that there is a need for an inspection to verify ongoing compliance. *All standards of Section 4-8 (Special Use Permits) and Section 3-6-14 (Special Event Facility) must be in compliance at all times to maintain the SUP.*
6. There shall be no overnight lodging at any special event Facility.

7. A Type B Buffer per Chapter 5, Section 7 must be established **within 100' of building and parking on the south, west and north sides of development**.
8. Commercial events are prohibited on Sunday and/or Monday each week.
9. Events shall be limited to a maximum of 250 guests, except that up to two events per year can have a maximum number of 383 guests, corresponding the design occupancy of the proposed building. These two larger annually permitted events, which also meet the descriptions of LDC Section 3-10-2, shall require a Temporary Use Permit.
10. The project owner shall apply dust control on W2500 N from Hwy 33 to the entrance of the event facility, and on the parking area of the facility, once per year.
11. All vehicular parking shall be provided entirely on-site in compliance with LDC section 5-6-3(F).
12. All surface parking areas must be landscaped, and provided entirely onsite in accordance with relevant sections of Teton County LDC Chapter 5, Section 6, Driveways, Parking, and Access.
13. Provide verification of final approval of the wastewater treatment system, from EIPH and/or Idaho DEQ, prior to use of the structure for any event.
14. The special event facility shall comply with all requirements of the local fire district, the state health department, and other public agencies exercising jurisdiction over the establishment or operation. These agencies shall be permitted to perform inspections as in any other business.
15. Overnight lodging at any Special Event Facility is prohibited.

Recommendations from the Traffic Impact Study submitted with the application are also made as conditions of approval and are as follows:

16. Coordinate with the Teton County Planning & Zoning Department and Road & Bridge Department on the Special Use Permit and on approval of the W 2500 N access connection.
17. Coordinate with ITD District 6 regarding the W 2500 N / Hwy 33 junction. An existing Hwy 33 left-turn lane (approximately 15-vehicle storage) serves the arriving surge and minimizes impact to Hwy 33 through-traffic.
18. Verify intersection sight distance at the W 2500 N site access in accordance with AASHTO and Teton County standards; the proposed 24-foot two-way gravel drive provides adequate width for simultaneous entering and exiting movements.
19. Evaluate left- and right-turn lane (or widened-shoulder / taper) treatments at the access for the concentrated event arrival surge, and provide them if warranted by County standards for the design event.
20. Manage the arrival and departure surge with on-site staff or traffic control and clear directional signage, including the proposed permanent entry sign and temporary event signage along W 2500 N, and maintain accurate online/GPS location information as proposed.

21. Complete the committed dust mitigation — annual magnesium chloride application in the parking area (prior to June 30 each year) and, in coordination with the County Roads Department, on W 2500 N.

22. Where feasible, schedule events to minimize overlap with the weekday afternoon/evening commuter peak, consistent with the venue's predominantly evening and weekend operation.

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Brad Wolfe, Date
Chair of Teton County Board of County Commissioners

NOTICE OF APPLICABLE RIGHTS

Applicants have a right to request an appeal per Teton County §LDC 4-15. Applicant also has the right to request a regulatory taking analysis of this decision pursuant to Idaho Code § 67- 8003. Further, under Idaho Code § 67-6535 and Idaho Rule of Civil Procedure 84, an applicant or affected person has the right to seek review of this decision.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this _____ day of October, 2026, I served a true and correct copy of the foregoing document upon the following:

Andrea Michael, [email redacted]	[ ] Mailing [ ] Hand Delivery [ ] Fax [x] E-Mail [ ] Overnight Mail [ ] Courthouse Box

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County Clerk