

May 1, 2026

To: Kittitas County Community Development
Attn: Zack Torrance-Smith, Staff Planner

From: Richard Rawlings
860 Alford Rd.
Ellensburg, WA 98926

RE: Jentges Conditional Use Permit (CU-26-00001)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Condition Use Permit; File No. CU-26-0001 (Jentges Property). We in no way wish to insult or demoralize the Jentges as people and as our neighbors. We applaud their goals to help people in need of therapy, comfort, and betterment.

We would likely not object to the Applicant's pursuit of a **Small-Scale Event Facility** under an Administrative Condition Use Permit available with the prescriptive conditions of **17.08.490** and **17.15.0060.2 Footnotes (44)**: *Use shall not exceed 10,000 square feet and no more than eight events shall occur within a calendar year.* However, these prescriptive conditions are apparently too restrictive for the proposed use of the property by the Applicants, and they have chosen to apply for a CU permit with a hearing. We therefore request specific conditions be attached to the Condition Use Permit should it be approved by the County.

We are concerned not only with the immediate impacts of the Applicant's proposal, but also with the use of the property under an approved CU permit by the next owner of the Applicant's property, as well as any diminution of value to our property. Without permit conditions, the next owner may increase the proposed intensity of use, increasing the impacts to our enjoyment of our property.

We see this proposal as a service-business use of the property; the invitation to the public to engage in a variety of activities, for a fee or not, potentially including, but not limited to:

Fundraising Events
Fundraising Appreciation Events
Corporate Retreats

Petting Zoo
School Field Trips
Riding Lessons
Animal Husbandry Lessons
Gardening Parties/Lessons
Birthday Parties
Weddings
Seminars
Art Instruction
Graduation Events

(All in an open-air setting)

Sights and Sounds of Concern:

Cheering
Applause
Amplified Public Address
Amplified Music
Groups of Children (happy and not God love them)
Commercial Refuse Bin(s) Servicing
Car Motors and Doors (including accelerating after leaving the driveway to be at 50 mph)
Visual Disturbance
Alcohol?
Lighting/Glare

Safety Concerns:

Daily or peak trips entering/exiting a 50 mph two lane road are unknown based on the available application materials. The CU application shows two driveways that are 100' apart on Allford Road, one existing and one new. Our driveway to Alford Rd. serves two homes and is within 250' feet of the recently installed driveway at the Applicant's property.

We understand Public Works has provided comments to the file on 5/30, but those are not posted at is time so we cannot respond to those. In a call to Public Works they identified a variance and/or conditional access permit for commercial use will be required for the non-agricultural uses proposed (our phrasing), as well as a traffic memo addressing traffic volumes, times, sight distances etc. at some point prior to CU approval.

Flood Concerns:

Public Works has been drafting an updated flood map which we understand will expand the flood plain south of Alford Rd. affecting both the Applicant's property and ours (currently not in a flood plain). These maps have not been issued and will take several months if not years to clear the FEMA map amendment process. The significance of this to the application is unknown to us.

Sensitive Areas Concerns:

According to the County maps, the Applicant's property is likely severely constrained by wetlands. Have wetlands been classified and appropriate buffers assigned? There has been clearing of downed trees and brush in preparation for sod or seeded lawn in and within feet of standing water on the property.

Direct Impacts:

Our home is less than 100' from the proposed open-air event area, horse arena and the "riding academy", and pasture uses that presumably will be for on-saddle riding by guests. We understand that the yoga meadow activities will be directed by a nonresident instructor/practitioner.

We are also within 225' of the "Barn" described in the Narrative as animal occupied. We are concerned that this 2,000-sf building may be used in the future for large group occupancy unless conditioned otherwise by the CU Permit.

Parking for 25 cars is apparently proposed. This would indicate at least 25 and perhaps as many as 75 people could be on the Applicant's property at any given time.

Surrounding Context:

The area surrounding the Applicant's and our properties for thousands of acres is grazing land, with little to no human sounds. I don't think there are any other businesses, event facilities, or other public accommodation properties other than two fall season u-pick pumpkin fields within 5 miles. There are no substantial hay cultivation farms within miles. In this "neighborhood" there is literally only the sound of cows and nature, with an occasional car or airplane in the distance. It is eerily, but comfortably, quiet. This peaceful environment is OUR therapy, relaxation, meditation, and quite personal rejuvenation.

We do not expect a noise free life, and except that all our neighbors may at some time have family reunions, birthday parties, graduation parties, summer picnics, etc. But every day, every week, or every month is a very different animal.

We met briefly with the Applicants on the 29th of April to discuss their proposal and hear more about their intent and plans. We suggested the Applicant prepare an operational program detailing hour of use, days of use, maximum occupancies, types of use, etc. that could be the foundation of permit conditions that mitigate the immediate impacts as well as to curb expansion of the use by future owners. We would like to have agreed upon conditions prior to the Staff Report and have a positive, consensual position at the public hearing. We invite the Applicant to further engage in this effort.

Thank you for your consideration,

RRawlings

Richard Rawlings
860 Alford Rd.