

Requested by: Department of Land Use and Growth Management	Ordinance No. 2021 - _____ Subject: Commercial Wedding Business Page 1 of 6
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ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County support economic development in its many diverse forms in accordance with the St. Mary’s Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance and development regulations; and

WHEREAS, Commercial Weddings are a type of economic activity which provides the location where a wedding ceremony and associated activities such as rehearsal, ceremony, reception, and party take place for compensation; and

WHEREAS, Commercial Weddings are conducted in a variety of settings including places of public assembly, fire district social halls, and farms; and

WHEREAS, Commercial Weddings in general have characteristics that warrant a new use type in the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, Commercial Weddings on farms are not inherent to farming and have been disruptive to homeowners in agricultural areas, making it appropriate that the request to establish a Commercial Wedding Business on a farm be subject to review and decision by the Board of Appeals as a Conditional Use;

NOW THEREFORE the Commissioners of St. Marys County find that it is in the best interests of the residents of St. Mary’s County that the Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance be amended to include a new use category for Commercial Weddings;

IT IS RESOLVED by the Commissioners of St. Mary’s County that:

SECTION I. To amend Article 5, Regulation of Uses Chapter 50 Use Classifications, Schedule 50.4 Use Classifications, Use Types and Location within Zoning Districts, by adding new use type 46A, Commercial Weddings.

46A	Use Type	Use Intensity	RPD	RSC	RCL	RL-T	RL	RM	RH	RNC	RMX	VMX	TMX	CMX	MXH	MXM	MXL	LCI	I	OBP	CM	CAC	AICUZ
Commercial Weddings	H	C	C	C	C	C	-	-	-	P A	P A	P A	P A	P A	P A	P A	P A	-	-	C	C	RCA LDA IDA	-

SECTION II. To amend Chapter 51 Use Regulations and Standards, 51.3. Specific Regulations and Standards, by adding new use type 46A, Commercial Weddings.

46A. Commercial Weddings

a. General Standards

- (1) Site plan approval is required.
- (2) For a commercial wedding business in a zoning district where commercial wedding businesses are a permitted or accessory use:
 - (a) The owner of an existing building in which commercial weddings have been held prior to the effective date of this ordinance must apply for zoning authorization and a change of use review to continue to use the location for commercial weddings.
 - (b) The owner of an existing building that intends to begin holding commercial weddings in that building as a permitted or accessory use must apply for zoning authorization and a change of use review.
 - (c) Development of property for a commercial wedding business in a zoning district where commercial wedding businesses are a permitted use requires a major site plan.
- (3) A commercial wedding may not be held in a nonconforming building.
- (4) A commercial wedding is not eligible for approval as a temporary use.
- (5) A commercial wedding business may use a tent or membrane structure subject to the provisions of the St. Mary's County Building Code for membrane structures and tents, which are International Building Code Sections 3102 Membrane Structures and 3103 Temporary Structures.
- (6) A private road that is used to access a commercial wedding business must comply with the private road standards in the St. Mary's County Subdivision Ordinance Section 30.14, Private Roads. The type to be used from Table 30.14.6. Private Road Standards is commercial, two-way.
 - (a) Speed limit signs on the private road:
 1. A 20 mph speed limit sign must be posted on the private road 100 feet from the intersection of the private road and the public road.

2. A 20 mph speed limit sign must be posted on the private road 50 feet from the intersection of the driveway of the commercial wedding business with the private road.
3. 20 mph speed limit signs along the private road must be spaced no more than 300 feet apart in both directions.
4. The dimension of a speed limit sign is 18 inches by 24 inches. The height of a speed limit sign is 5 feet measured from ground surface to the bottom of the sign.

b. Conditional uses.

- (1) Locations in zoning districts where a commercial wedding business is allowed as a conditional use must obtain conditional use approval from the Board of Appeals.
- (2) Major site plan is required.
- (3) Commercial wedding businesses that have been operating on a farm as a temporary use prior to the effective date of this ordinance must obtain Conditional Use approval from the Board of Appeals to continue to operate.
 - (a) The owner of a commercial wedding business operating as a temporary use can continue to operate according to the restrictions of a temporary use permit for six months after the effective date of this Ordinance.
 - (b) The property where the commercial wedding business is located may not exceed the maximum number of 20 days of temporary use events per year.
 - (c) The owner of a commercial wedding business must submit a concept site plan to the Technical Evaluation Committee within six months following the effective date of this Ordinance in order for the commercial wedding business to continue to operate while seeking conditional use approval from the Board of Appeals.
 - (d) A commercial wedding business that has been operating as a temporary use must obtain a certificate of use and occupancy within one year of the effective date of this ordinance.

- (4) The applicant for a conditional use must provide written notice to all property owners within 1,000 feet from the boundaries of the property where the commercial wedding use is proposed of the application for a conditional use.
- (5) To limit impacts of noise from a commercial wedding:
 - (a) A noise suppression plan prepared by an acoustical engineer or other qualified person or firm experienced in the field of environmental noise assessment, soundproofing, and abatement is required.
 1. The noise suppression plan must include:
 - a. A scaled site map which shows the exact location of buildings; tents; outdoor dining, refreshment bar, dancing areas, smoking areas; the location of a deejay (disc jockey, DJ) or musicians; portable generator location; and parking area.
 - b. The site map must show all properties within 1,000 feet of the boundary of the property boundary of the commercial wedding business.
 - c. A detailed description of the noise-suppression equipment and materials that will be used on the site, including those for inside buildings or tents and those to be used outdoors.
 - d. Sound modeling to consider potential noise impacts on nearby properties.
 - (b) Noise includes:
 1. Sounds from all activities associated with the commercial wedding, including a rehearsal, ceremony, reception, and party;
 2. Shouting, laughing, singing;
 3. Sounds by workers preparing the location for a commercial wedding and cleaning up after a wedding;
 4. The sound of a garbage truck;
 5. Sounds from vehicles leaving the commercial wedding location after the wedding, including those of guests and workers. Vehicle noise includes the closing of car doors, starting engines, and driving, and radios or sound producing devices. The sounding of the horn or signaling device, except as a danger warning, is prohibited.
 6. The sound modeling will show that the noise from commercial weddings will not exceed 65 decibels between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m.;

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and 55 decibels from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m., measured at the property line of the property where the commercial weddings are held.

- (c) All vehicles attending or serving the commercial wedding must have exited the property where the commercial wedding is held no later than 10:00 pm.

SECTION III. To amend Chapter 203 of the Code of St. Mary’s County, Maryland, regarding building construction codes, by adopting the 2018 International Building Code sections 3102 Membrane Structures and 3103 Temporary Structures.

SECTION IV. To amend Chapter 90, Definitions by adding definitions of commercial wedding business (wedding, commercial), farm, and vineyard:

Farm: A farm is a plot of land, including structures and buildings, devoted in part to cultivation of crops and may include livestock, dairy, poultry, fruit, vegetables, bees, aquaculture, or silviculture. A vineyard is a type of farm. The term farm includes agricultural industry, animal husbandry, crop production and horticulture, equestrian facilities, distillery, winery, and farm brewery.

Vineyard: A farm where grapevines are planted, grown, raised or cultivated.

Wedding, commercial: A commercial wedding business is a business that provides a location for compensation where a wedding takes place. In addition to the location for the exchange of vows ceremony, other wedding activities that take place on the premises of a commercial wedding business may include a rehearsal, reception, and party. A commercial wedding business can include celebrations for wedding anniversaries or vow renewals.

SECTION V. This Ordinance shall be effective upon the date written below.

Those voting Aye: _____
Those voting Nay: _____
Those Abstaining: _____
Date of Adoption: _____
Effective Date: _____

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ATTEST:

COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MARY'S COUNTY

Rebecca B. Bridgett
County Administrator

James R. Guy, Commissioner President

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

Eric Colvin, Commissioner

David A. Weiskopf
County Attorney

Michael L. Hewitt, Commissioner

Todd B. Morgan, Commissioner

John E. O'Connor, Commissioner