

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Cochise County Planning and Zoning Commission  
**FROM:** Robert Kirschmann, Planner II  
**SUBJECT:** SU23-08 (Slaughterhouse)  
**DATE:** March 30, 2023, for the April 12, 2023 Meeting

**APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL USE**

The Applicant, Mr. Joshua Koehn, requests a Special Use Authorization to expand an existing meat packing business to include an onsite slaughterhouse. An 1,100 square foot building and onsite holding pens are proposed.

The project is located on a portion of a 15 acre parcel located at 1144 N Pinto Lane in Cochise AZ. The property is also identified as Assessor Parcel Number 118-01-004G.



**I. DESCRIPTION OF SUBJECT PARCEL AND SURROUNDING USES**

**Site Size:** 15 Acres total, less than 1 acre for Special Use  
**APN:** 118-01-004G  
**Zoning:** RU-4 (Rural, 4-acres minimum parcel)  
**Growth Area:** Category D  
**Plan Designation:** Agriculture and/or greenspace  
**Area Plan:** MSSVCP  
**Existing Uses:** Meat processing and agricultural pivots  
**Proposed Uses:** Same, with 1,100 square foot slaughtering building and outside pens.

**Surrounding Zoning and Uses**

Relation to Subject Parcel	Zoning District	Use of Property
North	RU-4	Agricultural pivots
South	RU-4	Agricultural pivots
East	RU-4	Agricultural pivots
West	RU-4	Agricultural pivots

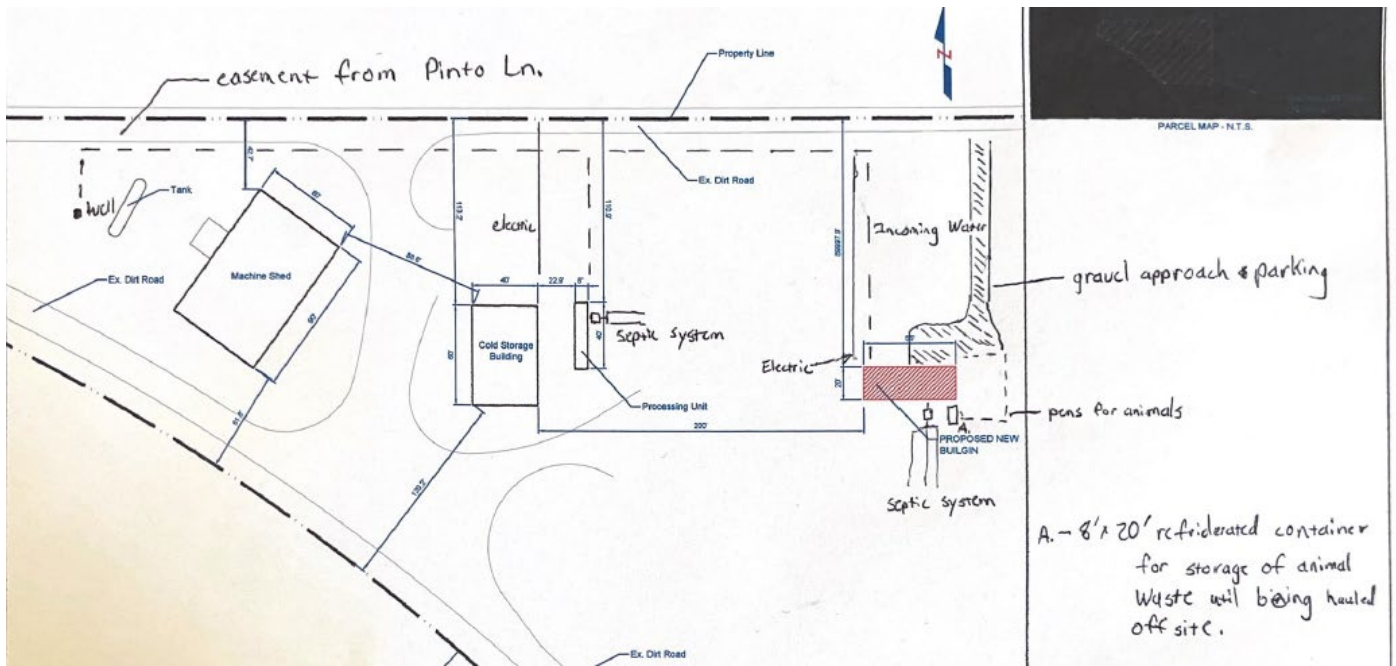
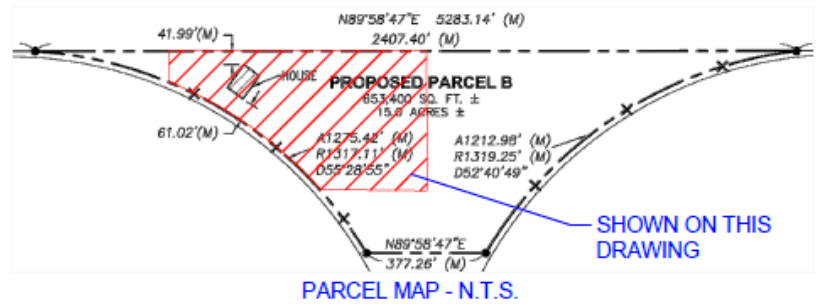
**II. SITE HISTORY**

- 2021 2,400 square foot warehouse with walk-in freezer for meat packing
- 2021 Food establishment permit
- 2020 320 square foot meat packing building
- 2020 Septic Permit

**III. REQUEST DESCRIPTION**

The Applicant, Mr. Joshua Koehn, requests a Special Use Authorization to expand an existing meat packing business to include an onsite slaughterhouse. An 1,100 square foot building and onsite holding pens are proposed.

The site has an existing permitted meat packing facility. Today the animals are slaughtered off premises and then packaged here. Due to long delays and short supply of area slaughterhouses the applicant is requesting to be able to be a full processing slaughterhouse.



Section 603.15 allows for custom butchering/meat curing/processing with a minimum of a 100 foot setback by right. The applicant obtained all required permits to operate the business under this classification which is defined as:

*The cutting, curing, and processing of meat, to include on-site butchering, operating under the Arizona Department of Agriculture slaughter license for more than 45-head and not to exceed 150-head of cattle and more than 45-head and not to exceed 160-head of sheep, goats, or swine and also for not more than two-hundred-fifty turkeys, or not more than an equivalent number of birds of all species with four-birds of other species being deemed the equivalent of one-turkey in one-calendar year.*

The Applicant is requesting to expand the business to include a slaughterhouse which is allowed with a special use authorization pursuant to Section 607.42. The zoning regulations define slaughterhouse as: – *A facility for the slaughtering, refining, processing, storage, and distribution of animals and animal byproducts.*

Any remaining by products will be kept refrigerated until hauled offsite a rendering facility, landfill or other approved disposal site.

**IV. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS – COMPLIANCE WITH SPECIAL USE FACTORS**

Section 1716.02 of the Zoning Regulations provides a list of ten factors to evaluate Special Use applications. Staff uses these factors to help determine the suitability of a given Special Use request, whether to recommend approval for a Special Use Authorization and to determine what Conditions and/or Modifications may be needed.

With the information provided, nine (9) factors apply to this request. The project, as submitted, fully complies with nine (9) of the factors and with the requested modifications the remaining factor.

**1. Compliance with Duly Adopted Plans: Complies**



The project site is located in Category D, Rural. These areas are specifically not designated as rural residential because of sparse population, larger lot size, and grazing. It can also include areas that have developed or undeveloped recreational resources. This area meets all of that criteria.

The Economic Development Element states *Goal 1. Support the preservation and expansion of the Cochise County’s tourism, technology, **agriculture**, security, **renewable energy**, and transportation sectors...*

*Provide for a continuation of traditional rural ways of life, such as **farming, ranching, and other agricultural-related activities**, and provide for diverse and viable economic and development opportunities that are consistent with the character of Cochise County’s rural areas .*

The proposed project is located in a rural, sparsely populated area and located between four pivots. The proposed building and use are small in scale and is compatible with the Goals and Policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

**2. Compliance with the Zoning District Purpose Statement: Complies**

RU (Rural) Zoning Districts are established to achieve the following purposes:

601.01 To preserve the character of areas designated as "Rural" in the Cochise County Comprehensive Plan;

601.02 To encourage those types of non-residential and non-agricultural activities which serve local needs or provide a service and are compatible with rural living;

601.03 To preserve the agricultural character of those portions of the County capable of resource production;

601.04 To provide space for people, minimize traffic congestion, and preserve the existing rural environment of unincorporated areas of the County situated outside of existing communities;

601.05 To provide recreational support services that are compatible with rural living;

601.06 To protect the quality of the natural environment as it relates to safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of the people in Cochise County; and

601.07 To allow consideration of some more intense non-residential uses as Special Uses that are inappropriate in more densely populated urban/suburban areas that may under some circumstances be appropriate in rural areas if designed to be sensitive to the general character of rural districts and natural environment and harmonious and in scale with existing development near the proposed site and in conformance with Section 601.06.

The proposed structure and use is consistent and compatible with the rural zoning district, specifically 601.01 and 03. The proposed structure is compatible in size as similar surrounding properties and the use provides a local service while remaining compatible with the rural living.



**3. Development along Major Streets: Not applicable**

This factor seeks to minimize road cuts that create unsafe traffic conflicts, hazardous traffic congestion and obstruct the functioning of arterials. The property takes access from a private easement off of Pinto Lane.

**4. Traffic Circulation Factors: Complies**

Specifically, this factor stipulates that the Special Use Authorization request should not result in the use of any residential street for non-residential through traffic. The application states that the property owner will be processing their own animals at this location and that this will actually reduce traffic

leaving the site that would have previously been taken to an off-site facility. Engineering did not express any concerns on the proposed use.

**5. Adequate Services and Infrastructure: Complies**

The site has an existing well and electric by SSVEC. A commercial septic system has been installed to handle waste discharge. Animal by products will be stored in refrigerated units until picked up by an animal rendering company or otherwise properly disposed of.

**6. Significant Site Development Standards: Complies**

**Site Plan:**

Less than 1 acre of the 15 acres will be dedicated to the Special Use. The site plan depicts a 1,100 square foot building and animal pens. The driveway will have gravel for dust control.

**Setbacks:**

The site plan shows the structure and animal pens will be in excess of 100 feet from all property lines. Only, 20 feet is required.

**Lot Coverage:**

The residential Land Use district restricts lot coverage to a maximum of 25%. As proposed, less than 1% is proposed to be covered with impervious surfaces.

**Height:**

The RU-4 allows for a height of up to 30 feet. Fencing shall be less than eight (8) feet. The applicant will demonstrate compliance at the permit stage.

**Lighting:**

All lighting required shall be shown on the non-residential permit application and will be required to be fully shielded and comply with the Outdoor Lighting Regulations.

**Landscaping:** No landscaping or screening is required by code.

**7. Public Input: Complies**

The applicant mailed letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the property prior to application submittal.

The Planning Department mailed letters to the same property owners within 1,000 feet of the subject property, published a legal ad in the *Sierra Vista Herald*, and posted a legal notice on the property. To date, staff has received one (1) letter in support and none in opposition.

**8. Hazardous Materials: Complies**

The Applicant states that the use of hazardous materials is not anticipated on site.



**9. Off-Site Impacts: Complies**

Major off-site impacts could include temporary construction traffic, dust, and long-term dust, noise, and visual impacts. The project is small in scale, support by the neighbors and no significant impacts are anticipated.

**10. Water Conservation: Complies**

The applicant is estimating approximately 90,000 gallons of water used per year. The applicant will make efforts to conserve water utilizing low flow fixtures to the greatest extent possible.

**V. WAIVERS**

None requested.

**VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

This request is for a Special Use authorization to approve a slaughterhouse.

**Factors in Favor of Approving the Special Use**

1. The project complies nine of the nine criteria used to evaluate special use requests; and
2. *This project will provide the diversity of business discussed within the Comprehensive Plan by providing support of entrepreneurship of a different type of business in the County.*
3. *The Comprehensive Plan states: ...entrepreneurship is essential and should be encouraged as part of an economy-based land use policy. Supporting small businesses will not only spur diversified income opportunities and ensure economic competitiveness but will also foster resilience in the face of economic challenges such as natural disasters. This business adds to that diversity.*
4. *The Economic Development Element states Goal 1. Support the preservation and expansion of the Cochise County’s tourism, technology, **agriculture**, security, **renewable energy**, and transportation sectors... Provide for a continuation of traditional rural ways of life, such as **farming, ranching, and other agricultural-related activities**, and provide for diverse and viable economic and development opportunities that are consistent with the character of Cochise County's rural areas.*
5. The request is consistent and compatible with the Zoning District purpose statement.
6. One letter of support was received.

**Factors Against Approving the Special Use**

1. None identified.

**VII. RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the factors in favor of approval, staff recommends **conditional approval** of the Special Use request.

1. Animal by-products will be stored in refrigerated units until picked up by an animal rendering company or otherwise properly disposed of.

**Sample Motion:**

*Chair, I move to approve Docket SU23-08 (Slaughterhouse), on parcel 118-01-004G ; the Factors of Approval constituting Findings of Fact.*