



June 1, 2020

Greg Lord & Planning and Zoning Commissioners  
Marion County Planning and Zoning Commission  
Sent via electronic mail: greg@homestoranches.com, Planning@marioncountyfl.org

Reference: Blitch Plantation, Ltd Proposed Amendment and Applications

Dear Mr. Lord & Planning and Zoning Commissioners,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Horse Farms Forever, I write you to **STRONGLY OPPOSE** the Comprehensive Plan Amendment No. 2020-L05, the Rezoning Application No. 200507Z, and the Special Use Permit Application No. 200508SU (collectively, the Applications) requested by Blitch Plantation, Ltd.

Horse Farms Forever believes that horses, horse farms and the equine industry create the character and culture that make Ocala/Marion County unique and special. For there to be horses and horse farms, there must be farmland. The County Commission wisely recognized this by creating the Farmland Preservation Area in the Comprehensive Plan. The mission of Horse Farms Forever is to protect this 'sense of place' that horses and the Farmland Preservation Area bring to the community.

The Applications propose an ATV racetrack, 40-space RV park, motorcycle/ATV sales and repair facility, wedding and event venue, paintball facility, and other uses in the quaint rural community of Flemington, which is inside the Farmland Preservation Area. As a quick internet search will confirm, these proposed uses have a long history of destroying rural communities, significantly reducing the quality of life of the neighbors, and negatively impacting the environment and property values.

While you may have people speak in favor of the proposed activities of racing ATVs and motorcycles, I would remind you of the description of consultants in Ken Blanchard's 1985 book *Leadership and the One Minute Manager*: "Consultants are like seagulls, they fly in, make a lot of noise, dump on everyone, then fly out leaving you to clean-up the mess and deal with the disruption." Ask yourself, are those speaking in favor of the proposed activities being respectful of the Flemington community and protective of the Farmland Preservation Area ... or are they like seagulls ... flocking in to make a lot of noise, dump on everyone, then leaving the community to clean-up the mess and deal with the disruption?

As the proposed uses in the Applications not only corrupt the integrity of the rural community surrounding Flemington and the Farmland Preservation Area, they fail to meet even the County's minimum requirements for completeness and consideration, much less approval. In

addition to these technical failings, the Applications are flawed by the fact that the proposed uses are “*per se*” incompatible with the surrounding land uses.

The staff analysis states that the Special Use Permit will not adversely affect the public interest and is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Just watch this “test run” video taken on the Blitch Plantation property on May 16, 2020, and see if you agree this activity is compatible with the purpose of the Farmland Preservation Area as set forth in the Comprehensive Plan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJ-lzB24Ccl>

Next, if you lived in the rural community surrounding Flemington, inside the protection offered by the Farmland Preservation Area, watch this video of the same group and see if this activity would adversely affect your public interest?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=laSf4FqFZ0E>

For the reasons noted above, we respectfully urge the Planning and Zoning Commission to deny the Applications.

Sincerely,



President

Cc: Mounir Bouyounes  
Marion County Administrator  
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