

Anael Dominguez (Administration)

From: Jennifer Rivera (Administration)
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 10:43 AM
To: Philana Nowak
Cc: Katie G. Ahmed (Planning); Kaitlyn Elliott (Planning); Anael Dominguez (Administration)
Subject: RE: Please distribute as necessary for the permit request for Flowery Branch Winery & Vineyard

Your public comment was received and will be forwarded to the Board of Commissioners for their review.

Thank you.

Jennifer Rivera
Board of Commissioners Clerk
Hall County Government
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From: Philana Nowak [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 20, 2026 10:29 AM
To: Jennifer Rivera (Administration) <jrivera@hallcounty.org>
Subject: Please distribute as necessary for the permit request for Flowery Branch Winery & Vineyard

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Dear Hall County Commissioners,

Although I am a resident of Gwinnett County, I live directly on the Hall County border and conduct much of my daily life in Hall County. I shop, dine, and run errands here because it is more convenient than traveling within Gwinnett. Our daughter plays volleyball for Lanier Volleyball Club, practicing in Hall County (Westminster Presbyterian and Element Church), so during those practice hours I am supporting Hall County businesses. Our family vehicle was purchased here (Jim Shorkey Kia), and we regularly patronize local merchants and restaurants. In many ways, Hall County is where we live our lives and choose to spend our dollars.

We are strong supporters of small business, and that appreciation began when we moved to Georgia eight years ago and discovered downtown Flowery Branch. Over the years, we have become loyal

customers of many local establishments—Moonie's, Prime Pickins, Consign & Design, Lakeside Market, Liberty Candy Company, Whole Being Café, Sample Pleasures Antiques, and Antebellum, where we have celebrated anniversaries. We have watched the downtown evolve and now enjoy Caroline's on Main. We attend the Farmers Market regularly and enjoy live music at Branch House Tavern. As time has passed some of these businesses are no longer there, but the small businesses are the heartbeat of the community, and their success and legacy strengthens the character and economy of Hall County.

It is for this reason that I write in strong support of granting the special event permit for Flowery Branch Winery and Vineyard.

The winery has quickly become a favorite destination precisely because of the atmosphere it provides—peaceful, welcoming, and community-oriented. It is not a bar, nor a venue associated with disruptive behavior. It is a place primarily enjoyed by women, couples, and friends who come to relax, socialize, and enjoy a pleasant evening. I have attended events with live music, and they have been tasteful, not loud, and always respectful of the surrounding community. Events typically conclude by the expected time, no later than 8:30 pm, with limited exceptions on major holidays. Recently, I attended a paint-and-sip event and was home before 9:00 p.m.

The concern that this establishment would be disruptive or harm property values does not reflect reality. In fact, well-run wineries and similar venues tend to enhance the appeal of an area by providing desirable local entertainment and gathering spaces. By contrast, large-scale residential development has had a far greater impact on traffic, infrastructure, schools, and quality of life. I currently live near Spout Springs and Highway 124, where a large apartment complex is under construction. The increased congestion and strain on local resources has already affected our daily lives and property values. I would much rather see thoughtful, low-impact development like a winery than dense residential construction that brings hundreds of vehicles to roads that are already overburdened.

I also ask you to consider the positive economic impact wineries have had in communities such as Dahlonega and Ellijay. When visitors come to these wineries, they also shop in local stores, dine in local restaurants, and explore the surrounding towns. The benefit extends well beyond the winery itself and strengthens the entire local economy. Flowery Branch has the opportunity to enjoy similar benefits.

Change is inevitable in any growing community, and with growth come choices. Granting a special event permit to a responsible, community-minded business is a modest and reasonable accommodation—one that supports small business, local tourism, and quality of life. In balance, an occasional special event is far less disruptive than large-scale residential development that permanently alters traffic patterns and community resources.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to approve the special event permit for Flowery Branch Winery and Vineyard. It is an asset to the community, a responsible neighbor, and a positive contributor to the local economy and culture.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Philana Nowak

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