

My name is Darrell Markijohn. I am a Trustee on the Zoar Community Association (ZCA) Board of Trustees, and have been since 2001. ZCA manages Zoar Village and Fort Laurens in Tuscarawas County through a Management Contract with the Ohio Historical Connection (OHC). Much of Zoar and Fort Laurens is owned by the State of Ohio and subject to the stewardship of OHC.

Since as early as 2001, ZCA has sponsored military living history events at Zoar and Fort Laurens. The events take place over a single weekend and involve historical reenactors from all over the country. These military reenactments involve a military camp, historical battles, and civilian activities. The events present a teaching platform for local school students and the general public through the art of living history. The events are extremely popular with reenactors as well as students and the general public.

Living history events strive to create authentic military camps to show the general public and students how historical soldiers lived and drilled. Military historians camp in small, flame retardant, canvas A-framed tents. Each tent is set up on a linear company street. The tents are placed two feet from each other. A cooking fire is set up in the street adjacent to each of the unit's companies. At the end of the company street is a command tent, generally a wall tent where the unit officer and his staff are located. Each of the individuals on the company street are accountable to their unit commander at the end of the street.

Setting up a camp, and following the standard military rules for establishing company streets, is part of the fabric of the living history. The reenactors strive for authenticity, and their camp layouts are by the book. While some of the tents are actually occupied for the weekend, many of them are not, and are simply used as props to maintain the appearance of a proper military company street.

These military living history events are extremely important to ZCA's financial stability. ZCA is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of Zoar Village and Fort Laurens. The living history event that takes place at Zoar, every other year, is one of the single highest grossing events in the year it takes place. The living history event at Fort Laurens that takes place every year is the single highest grossing event. The funds raised at both events are instrumental to ZCA's fundamental mission to preserve and maintain Zoar and Fort Laurens.

In 2017, the Tuscarawas County Health Director contacted ZCA demanding that it secure a temporary camping permit for its living history event in Zoar. We were told that our event was designated as a temporary camp site, and the military tents were deemed camping units and subject to Ohio Administrative Code Sections 3701-26, Subsections 1-6. Those regulations required that there had to be a minimum of 15 feet of space between each camping unit (tent), significant space between any tent and a fire pit, and required ZCA to secure a permit and pay a permit fee.

These rules completely disrupted the nature of the living history and placed a financial burden upon ZCA. The spacing required completely ruined the efforts to establish a period correct military camp since the tents are arranged in a line and well with the 15 feet restrictions. Each company street has a single cooking fire. Yet, under the regulations, that cooking fire had to be placed so far away, that it would be almost impracticable.

Finally, the licensing fee and the time that it took for the camp inspection was burdensome. Indeed, in 2017, partly due to a reduction in revenue, the licensing fee (\$400) was nearly 10% of the total intake.

At ZCA, we can appreciate the State's concern over temporary commercial campgrounds that fail to secure proper licensing. That takes away revenues from properly licensed commercial

campgrounds. Our once-a-year military living history events however are not remotely similar to the temporary campgrounds that the General Assembly attempted to regulate. We do not charge a camping fee. While individual participants do pay an admission fee, not all of them camp. The fees paid by participants are considered donations to ZCA and used to fund our non-profit preservation mission.

We also fully appreciate the State's concern over safety and health. However, we note that Ohio Revised Code §3729.05 and Ohio Administrative Code Section 3701-26 exempt county fairs and motor sport parks. We wholly agree that those entities should be exempt from this legislation. However, the participants at the military historical events hosted at Zoar and Fort Laurens are just as safe if not more so since they are subject to internal safety rules that include regulations involving campsites. At a military living history, each individual down to a private and/or civilian is accountable to follow these safety rules through an established military chain of command to somebody within the organization they belong. Exempting historical reenactments therefore under these circumstances, will not sacrifice health or safety in any regards.

Ohio Revised Code §3729.05 and Ohio Administrative Code Sections 3701.26, Subsections 1-6 are good laws. However, as it pertains to historical reenactments, they have had unintended consequences that do not promote health and safety. These laws create financial and systemic burdens on non-for-profit organizations that sponsor weekend historical events. We therefore ask that the proposed amendment be passed.