

John J Mitchell

South Windsor Fairgrounds at Rye Street Park Narrative

(Formerly known as the Barton Property)

Appl. 15-35P, Town of South Windsor Fairgrounds at Rye Street Park – request for a special exception to Table 3.1.1A and site plan of development to create a multi-use open area for potential uses such as a debris storage, recreational fields, and fairground use, on property located on the westerly side of Brookfield Street and northerly side of Troy Road, RR zone

Size and Condition of Property

The Town purchased the sixty-seven acre property in 1997. The property consists of two parcels. The southern parcel consists primarily of a mature white pine-tamarack forest. Historically, the property was farmed into the late 1960s and was then planted as a tree plantation. No subsequent thinning of the trees occurred, resulting in a very densely populated stand of trees. This acted to the detriment of the entire stand, resulting in diminished leaf crowns and no understory. The economic value of the stand is very limited due to the development of multiple tree stems making the trees unsuitable for lumber. The size of the parcel is roughly 55 acres with approximately 26 acres of it flat and forested. Currently, six acres has been cleared and is being used as a mitigation site for re-located tiger beetles.

The northern parcel consists of approximately 12 acres and is a highly productive hardwood forest. There will be minimal clearing within that area.

Proposed Uses

The 20 acres of the Barton property has the potential for multipurpose uses:

- Debris Storage in the event we experience another significant storm;
- Large events can be accommodated such as the Wapping Fair;
- Paws in the Park;
- Strawberry Festival;
- Apple Festival;
- South Windsor Flyers Club;
- Cricket;
- Recreational activities, both passive and active, will have generous space to use. The area could be an ideal location for a full-size Cricket Field;
- The Farmers' Market could ideally be located on the property.

Proposed Improvements

The proposal is to clear approximately 16 acres of the southern parcel and seed the area with an appropriate grass mix. This cleared area would measure approximately 750 feet by 700 feet and be available for multiple uses.

The plan includes separate locations for ingress and egress. Access and traffic patterns into and around the site have been reviewed. An access drive into the site can easily be accommodated along the Brookfield Street frontage. Staff proposes a secondary access ~~(primarily for emergency vehicle access) out to Troy Road to the west.~~ As this will still be primarily an exit, there will be times with the Town's approval, such as Town Manager or his or her designee, the Director of Parks & Recreation, the Superintendent of Parks or his or her designee.

Examples: Wapping Fair, Paws in the Park, Doodle Bug, farmer leasing the barn, South Windsor's Flyers Club, festivals, Tiger Beetle field maintenance, or any other function that may require access to the field and not having to use the main fairgrounds lawn as a roadway.

This access will remain gated and locked. The existing road will be slightly improved from its current condition to handle a little more traffic flow and large trucks for events. This will not be an entrance or exit for regular patrons of any fairs or festivals. We will continue to use the current entrance and exit off of Brookfield Street.

The submitted site plan shows:

- The clearing area limits, with a 100 foot non-disturbance buffer adjacent to the residential homes along Troy Road
- The proposed parking area for the Wapping Fair
- The area that will accommodate the Fair facilities
- The proposed travel pattern within the site, and access and exit points
- The area available that is suitable for a Cricket Pitch Field

Area 1 - Parking area to be stabilized and seeded (A portion of the area to be seeded with reinforced grass.)

Area 2 - Fair/Open Recreation Area - stabilized and seeded with drought tolerant mix

No changes are proposed for the remaining open area to the west currently used as the existing Tiger Beetle habitat.