

SECTION 18 - SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS

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18.4 Criteria for Evaluating a Special Exception:

The Commission, in approving a special exception after applying these Regulations in harmony with their general intent, may stipulate such restrictions or conditions to protect or promote the rights of individuals, property values and the environment in the area, the public health, safety or welfare, sound planning and zoning principles, improved land use, site planning and land development or better overall neighborhood compatibility. Such restrictions may include, without limitation, the components of the site plan and layout, distribution of and relationship between uses and structures, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, parking, open space, landscaping, screening, signs, lighting, building design, architectural treatment and massing and the proper relationship between the taxable values of real property in the area.

1) Protect or promote the rights of individuals, property values and the environment in the area.

This project does nothing but infringe on the rights of the individuals located in the quiet neighborhoods closest to the proposed project. It will not increase property values; it will cause them to be decreased. Therefore, it does not meet the requirement of meeting the proper relationship between the taxable values of real property in the area. This project is nothing more than a huge seasonal, transitional Mobile Home Trailer Park which is not ascetically pleasing to the neighborhood or Preston in that location.

2) Environment:

Due to numerous complaints from the local homeowners, it was made evident to the Inland and Wetlands Commission, of the total lack of caring about the environment and wildlife by Blue Water, whom obviously did not do due diligence in its research on Avery Pond or the surrounding land's environmental and wildlife effects. Numerous concessions had to be made to the Inland and Wetlands commission due to our opposition. One such concession is a 100-foot buffer zone to protect wetlands and the pond, causing them to reduce their proposed 302 campsites down to 280. During the hearing process, their lawyer had the audacity to lecture the Commission that the environment wasn't their concern, STRESSED that it was not addressed in their regulations and not under their purview. That is proof that they will not be good neighbors or an asset to Preston. With that attitude, how can you trust them to maintain the park and its special catch basins for run off?

3) Improved Land use:

This project does not meet the requirement of improved land use, squeezing 280 large campers into less than now 65 acres does not improve the land use. It will over stress it due to the numbers of people, vehicles, campfires, activities being held on the site. The property is still surrounded by wetlands and a stream that has native migrating species

coming up to spawn in Avery Pond and Amos Lake. The Agricultural Commission voiced their opposition to this park and stated that this parcel of land is considered prime farmland by them and the State of Ct.

4) Better overall neighborhood compatibility:

Would somebody please explain to me, how a seasonal Luxury Camper Park is compatible with waterfront homes and local neighborhoods, with homes assessed in the six-figure range? I don't think so. This eyesore is not compatible with the local neighborhoods, the surrounding farmlands, or the rural portrait of Preston. Especially one this size and placed in that location, a busy, noisy highway, the main route thru Preston.

5) Vehicular and pedestrian circulation

This project will add to increased vehicular traffic issues as the current road design does not have the width to allow oversized (35-40 ft) Campers and towed vehicles to safely maneuver to make the turn off Rt. 2 into the Campground without causing a blockage on the road, especially if there was an influx of Campers coming in for the weekend or leaving the site. Pedestrian circulation is a safety problem. There are NO sidewalks in this area, only narrow shoulders to walk on. Rt. 2 and Rt.164 are noted for high traffic volume and presents a danger to anyone walking or riding bicycles on those shoulders. Accidents waiting to happen.

6) Parking

According to the plans, Blue Camp states they would have 5-6 parking spaces available on site for campers to use when signing in. This is totally undersized to handle the predicted turnover of campers coming and going without affecting the traffic patterns on Rt.2 and 164.

7) Open Space:

What open space? With ⁸⁰200 Campsites and the campgrounds plans for activity areas, swimming pool, waterpark, campground support buildings, bathhouses etc. The only open spaces are the wetlands areas and Rt.2.

8) Lighting:

Lighting is a concern for the surrounding neighborhoods. Supposedly Blue Camp states they will use low density lighting in the park. The local neighborhood is already affected by lights from Foxwoods Casino. The camp's low lighting and camper's campsite lighting together is going to intensify the light source and will be seen through the trees and reflected off Avery Pond.

9) Architectural treatment and massing:

The Blue Camp plans call for support buildings, they will be built for functionality not for being ascetically pleasing to look at or to be compatible to the neighborhood. 208 large and small camper sites etc. are now being squeezed into an area of less than 65 acres, due a hundred-foot buffer zone from Avery Pond and wetlands. This now promotes a very high density of campsites per acre (approximately 17/acre) and should be considered **MASSING** on the acreage.

10 Proper relationship between the taxable values of real property in the area.

Blue Camp states this campground will increase the neighborhoods home values. They, to my knowledge, have not had real estate assessors come into the homes to accurately assess the property values at this current time. If you investigate the tax assessments on record, all those homes, are assessed in the 6-figure range. There is no way a noisy, unsightly, glorified seasonal transitional mobile home park is going to add to any homeowner's property value. Would you want this to happen to your neighborhood?

The Commission shall consider and evaluate each application for a special exception using, at a minimum, the following criteria:

a) Site Design

i. Overall design, architectural treatment and aesthetic character shall be in harmony with the surrounding area. Consideration shall be given to the following:

The design of the proposed use(s), building(s) or development, the relationship between the buildings and the land, the relationships between buildings or structures, the overall physical appearance of the property, building or development and its subsequent compatibility with surrounding development and the neighborhood.

Blue Camp's Campground fails to meet all these requirements, this campground in this area will be a detraction and not in any way is in HARMONY WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA. It is too large and in no way attractive to look at.

b) Appropriateness of Location or Use:

i. The use shall preserve the integrity and character of the neighborhood, adjacent uses, and current zoning district. Consideration shall be given to the size, location, use and height of buildings, nature and extent of landscaping, location of driveways, parking and loading areas.

This project area is zoned commercial and could allow a campground. However, this project will not preserve the integrity and character of the neighborhood. This project does not consider nature in any way even with their proposed landscape designs. It has the potential to seriously effect the wildlife and fisheries of the area around the park.

The location of the driveway presents a potential serious traffic congestion point. The proposed driveway is located roughly 600 ft from the intersection of Rt. 2 and 164. Campers coming from I 95 and going east on Rt.2, will be entering the park with NO Wide Turn Lane, the right turn lane for Rt.164 will be blocked by campers turning into the park. This will cause left turning drivers to go into the Rt. 2 traffic lane then cut back into the right-hand lane to turn to enter Rt.164. All of this in a very short distance with the potential to block the Rt. 2 lane if the light changes.

Campers coming from the west, need to go through the intersection to get to the area of the entrance road. Depending on traffic flow going west, campers will have to block the far-left east lane of Rt. 2 to enter, leaving only one lane to go east. If there is a period of influx into the campground, this could cause a backup into the intersection blocking access and egress onto Rt. 164.

The proposed registry parking lot will be small, 5-6 parking spaces. There is no mention of the entrance road into the park being widened to accommodate these Luxury Campers coming and going. Only 5-6 parking spots being available again will add to the potential backup of campers going back into the road.

Loading areas will also cause more congestion coming and going from the park. Depending on the Blue Water plans for some type of Camp store etc. Trucks and delivery vehicles will be delivering supplies which adds to the traffic problem.

The use and project shall be compatible with adjacent established uses and the neighborhood.

This project is NOT compatible with the adjacent established uses and neighborhoods. The immediate area has a grass farm across the street, a Middle School, family neighborhoods and open space farmland. This parcel has been deemed Prime Farmland by the State of Ct. & the Preston Agricultural Commission. The Campground is not compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

The project and its use(s) shall not degrade or decrease the value of the surrounding properties. Surrounding properties shall continue to have an ability to consistently develop with the prevailing zoning district and applicable regulations.

This project does not meet this requirement. It will degrade and decrease home property values. If this project is approved, it remains to be seen what long-term effects it will have on home building and agricultural use.

ii. Adjacent and feeder street(s) shall have the ability to handle peak traffic loads and shall not cause traffic hazards. The use and the extent, nature and arrangement of parking facilities, entrances and exits shall not create or further aggravate vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety problems.

This project wholly does not meet this requirement. The adjacent and feeder streets do not have the ability to handle any more increased traffic flow. Especially an influx of numbers of large luxury campers (35-40 ft) coming and going. Blue Camp's presented on file traffic study is totally under stated, inaccurate, and totally inadequate. Blue Camp admitted in testimony, that they looked at traffic in the Rt. 2 and 164 intersection area in early May and for only for a day or two. This totally missed the increased beach traffic coming and going in the summer beach season on Rt. 2 and 164.

Blue Camp did not consider the effect of campers coming from Rt. 12 and Rt. 395 through Poquetanuck village to get to the campground. They did not consider the building of the Mohegan Sun's complex on the State Hospital property in the coming future. This project, on completion, will significantly affect traffic.

Foxwoods recently announced, they are having a Grey Wolf Water Park Resort built on their property, starting this year, with an estimated 600,000 visitors per year coming to that resort. That breaks down to an additional average traffic flow of 1400 cars per day, let alone trucks and busses that will be servicing the resort.

Under these circumstances Blue Camp Campground being built at this location, with their current arrangement of parking facilities, entrances and exits, seriously create, and further aggravate vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety problems.

iii. The obstruction of light or air shall be reviewed as relates to impact on scenic views and solar access.

This project, at its current projected size, does not meet this regulation. There is nothing scenic about an oversized, luxury camper campground in a rural town surrounded by agricultural land and family neighborhoods. It is impossible that this large campground will not compromise the light and air in our neighborhoods (campfire smoke and lighting from the camp sites).

The use(s) shall not create excessive and unreasonable noise that is different from what currently exists within the neighborhood. Consideration shall be given to light levels, smoke, odor, gas, dust, or vibration in noxious or offensive quantities, and the distance between offensive processes and adjacent properties. The proposed use will not adversely affect environmental quality.

A project of this magnitude will create excessive and unreasonable noise that is different from what currently exists within the neighborhood. Campgrounds are notorious for being noisy with a projected 1,700 campers (6 people/camper vehicle

as stated by Blue Camp) activities, entertainment programs etc. going on from morning to night. By nature, they are noisy and should not be allowed to be developed near a well-established residential neighborhood of homes worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

It is extremely difficult for a campground this large and located extremely close to residential neighborhoods, to regulate light levels, smoke, odor, gas, dust, or vibration in noxious or offensive quantities and not affect the environment. The campground design and layout have minimal distance between offensive processes and adjacent properties. The proposed use will adversely affect environmental quality of the area even with a 100 ft. buffer zone from wetlands and Avery Pond.

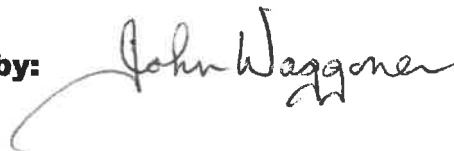
iv. Consideration shall be given to protecting unusual topography, walls, habitat areas, and trees, or other unique vegetation on the site. A landscaping plan shall be provided showing mature trees, shrubs, and noninvasive species.

The original design and construction plan where not done with due diligence. If the citizens of Preston had not stepped up and challenged Blue Water and their attorney, this whole project would have destroyed the environment, wildlife, and fisheries in the area on and around the site. Blue Camp's attorney has consistently spoke down towards the citizens that brought up these offenses outlined in Zoning and Inland and Wetlands regulations. He consistently objected to our challenges, showing their total disregard on these important issues. Their attorney continually lectured the Commissioners on what their jobs were and lectured them on their regulations. This was all due to our challenges, which glowingly showed their contempt for environmental and wildlife issues. I suspect he will do the same to your commission.

The way these people presented themselves to all of us was demeaning and enforced our feelings about them being all about money and their development and to hell with the neighbors, the environment, and the town of Preston. The only thing we will get from them is more headaches. Blue Camp's only offering is their stated \$238,602 of taxes paid to the town. They are another UTOPIA, only this time with loads of money. Remember, they have ZERO experience building a Campground from ground up. Their adversity to the environment and wildlife is on record. This should be considered a warning. This proposal is all about and only benefits Blue Camp, and Foxwoods.

The welfare of the affected citizens and the betterment of the town should overwhelmingly trump the amount of taxes to be collected. Please put the concerns of the hundreds of citizens that signed a petition against Blue Camp's project and all the taxpaying citizens that will have their quiet neighborhoods, quality of life and property values detrimentally affected by Blue Camp's Campground if allowed to be built at this site.

Submitted by:



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