



270 Beauty Hill Road Barrington, NH 03826
603-923-1168 www.WEecoCenter.com

Barrington Planning Board
Attn: Ms. Marcia Gasses
333 Calef Highway
PO Box 660
Barrington, NH 03825

February 21, 2020

Re: Wildlife Encounters
270 Beauty Hill Road
Tax Map 249 Lot 32
Tax Map 250 Lot 133
FES #1808

Dear Ms. Gasses:

I am pleased to submit this letter, plans and Conditional Use Permit Application for property owned by DWSx2 Holdings, LLC which acquired the property located at the above noted address effective January 22, 2020, and tenant business entity Wildlife Encounters, LLC. This is an Educational Institution & Site Plan review application. The 2 parcels are zoned Neighborhood Residential and the two lots combined are approximately 77 acres. We are providing 32 parking spaces. 20 are in the gravel parking area and 12 are grassed-in overflow & multi-use space between the gravel driveway and the edge of the educational pasture.

The intent of this project is to restore and preserve a significant historic farm property and open space on Beauty Hill in a manner that enhances and promotes the community character, natural resources and agricultural nature of the farm property and the Barrington community. Proposed with an eye to minimal development impact on the 77 acres, approval of this application would support the restoration and development of the road-side acreage too that consistent with the appearance and character of a rural residence and working farm property - featuring a beautiful barn and support structures with grazing farm animals visible to neighbors and Beauty Hill Road travelers.

Much of the wooded and back-lot areas of the property we envision would be managed and experienced with minimal disturbance, featuring vast uplands, modest wetlands, small ponds and vernal pools, groomed and developed educational spaces, walking trails and farm roads, reclaimed field space and more. Much of the open space is intended to be designated as a native wildlife and endangered species protected area electively by the Ecology Center. Additionally, the property will be submitted as a candidate to become a National Wildlife Federation (NWF) Certified Wildlife Habitat.

Wildlife Encounters, LLC is a community education organization that for 16 years has and continues to be based on a more densely developed 0.46 acre residentially/commercially zoned parcel on Charles Street in neighboring Rochester. It has, does and will continue to operate for the foreseeable future with the blessing and support of the City of Rochester on that property as a NH State Fish & Game permitted, USDA licensed and inspected wildlife facility (closed to the public) which offers educational services that are outreach in nature through the delivery of educational presentations and exhibits usually featuring a selection of small dependent, non-releasable Ambassador Animals.

Sustaining and protecting the health and wellness of biodiversity, soil, open space and natural resources, while managing use in a way that benefits community, the environment and wildlife populations is one of society's greatest modern challenges - and one our organization is committed to teaching about and advocating for.

As critical to acknowledge and address we feel, is the multigenerational and progressive decline in physical, mental and emotional health and wellness of an increasing percentage of our family, friends and neighbors, which studies show results in part from a lack of education about and engagement of the natural world and natural processes of ecology and life on Earth.

As we like to say:

“let’s turn a little screen time into green time so we can re-connect with nature, and human nature!”

We envision the development of the Wildlife Encounters Ecology Center & Farm School. As a community-centric business, our discrete nature-based operations would provide local and regional residents, schools, organizations, businesses and visitors to Barrington an opportunity to safely experience the beauty and atmosphere of a rural farm property. To learn about animals, science, food, ecology, health & wellness, stress management and more – while appreciating, connecting with and experiencing the diversity of habitats, animals and the ecology of the property we have to offer during scheduled or enrolled event/activity experiences.

Educational Services envision include but are not limited to:

- Farm Tours and Regenerative agriculture classes.
- Classes supporting mental, physical and emotional wellness education & practices.
- Stay-for-a-Day / Weekend experiences
- Volunteer & Internship / Apprentice Programs cooperatively with UNH, etc.
- Guided nature / habitat trail walks including Owl Prowls, Water & Soil testing tours, Outdoor Education, Hunter Education & Experiences, supervised snowshoeing, ice skating & other winter activities
- Community & Business Events such as conservation organization meetings, small corporate events, Chamber gatherings, Science conferences, etc.
- Private scheduled events such as Birthday Parties, family reunions, ...
- Guest Speakers & Fundraising events, host community clean-up groups, etc.
- Hosting Home-School Groups, Summer Camp & School Field Trip visits as capacity allows.
- Hosting Wildlife Rehabilitation Classes and other special interest gatherings.
- School Break Day Camp Programs

Approval of this application will allow our educational institution to transition from the existing outreach-only business model to one that also offers onsite educational experiences on the Beauty Hill property. This major expansion effort for our organization supports several of the Economic Opportunities identified in the 2019 – 2029 Barrington Economic Development Plan.

- As identified in the BEDP, *“The Economic Development chapter recognizes the emphasis that the Master Plan Vision places on balancing future growth and development with protecting Barrington’s abundant natural resources”*. An Educational Institution in this location would uniquely be leveraging many of the economic strengths of the Barrington community such as natural resources, rural character and un-developed land to benefit the community and children, without placing a significant additional demand on Town Services such as housing, schools, etc.

- In support of protecting the Assets and Economic Strengths of the Barrington Community, this proposed use and site plan would directly support the natural resources and rural character while attracting visitors.
- The proposed use and site plan would protect a large amount of undeveloped land.
- As an existing member of the GBCC, the proposed use and site plan would contribute to promoting the area and a strong business community.
- As an educational institution, we would guide and inspire community members to become involved with protecting our health and natural resources.
- Finally, the proposed use and supporting site plan, though educational in nature would additionally offer activities that provide excellent guided wellness and recreational activities for children and families.
- Diversification of tax basis was identified as one of the sought objectives in the Master Plan, and as a successful business we would contribute positively to the tax base directly as well as attracting economic activity to other area businesses.
- The potential addition of signage on the 125 corridor, Route 4 and Route 9 informing travelers to the presence of such an Educational Institution as the Wildlife Encounters Ecology Center could be an economic opportunity to improve the image and visibility of the town as a conservation minded community.
- As mentioned in our CUP Application, the proposed use and site plan could include the hosting of certain special events or a small community festival on the vast property- such as a farmer's market to support local agriculture, which was another identified economic opportunity in the BEDP.
- The Town of Barrington and Wildlife Encounters clearly have many common concerns, goals and objectives and the proposed use presents an excellent opportunity for the town to once again seize an additional opportunity to promote collaboration between the Town and private business for mutual and common benefit.

Our fortunate proposed location is accessible from 3 different major travel routes (Route 9 via Young, Route 4 via Merry Hill or Hall Roads and Route 125 directly). When considering the fact that vehicular traffic to the Ecology Center would be appointment/event only in nature, of relatively low volume, not generate consistent traffic flow, can be timed during non-peak opportunities and can be diffused from our location in multiple directions, we envision having a minimal impact of road infrastructure or traffic patterns.

This will be a year-round residence and educational facility with activities and hours controlled by appointment, enrollment or invitation.

Sincerely,
Wildlife Encounters, LLC
Derek Small
Director