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Camp Gabriels prison buyer hopes to open summer camp this year

by Chris Knight, in Gabriels, NY

Mar 05, 2014 — A plan is in the works to turn Camp Gabriels, a former medium-security prison in the Adirondack town of Brighton, into a private group camp and retreat center.



A housing unit at Camp Gabriels. Photo: Chris Knight, courtesy Adirondack Daily Enterprise

The former prison in Franklin County has been closed since 2009. The state put the property up for auction in October; Adam Fine of New York City is in process of buying it. He reportedly wants to get it up and running as a summer camp this year.

Fine submitted the second-highest bid, \$166,000, Camp Gabriels. The highest bid, nearly \$212,000, was from a Brooklyn businessman who was unable to complete the transaction.

The state Office of General Services says Fine's bid was then accepted. OGS officials say they expect the sale to close in the next few weeks.

Fine couldn't be reached for comment on his plan for the property, but an application on file with the Adirondack Park Agency says he plans to convert the former state correctional facility into a private group camp facility. It would be operated year-round and would include an educational facility, a summer camp/school and a retreat.

Brighton Supervisor Peter Shrope is one of several local and state officials who attended a meeting at Camp Gabriels recently with Fine and his lawyer. "For the past six years he's been running a summer camp, and they've been leasing college facilities and public group facilities for the summer camp, and it's become so popular that they're looking to turn the former Camp Gabriels into a summer camp," Shrope said.

Since the prison closed in 2009, there have been several different ideas pitched for the property, including a state veterans' cemetery and a Native American cultural center. Shrope said he's excited about what the prospective owner wants to do.

"I think having a summer camp there would be fantastic," he said. "It will certainly bring people through the area."

Shrope said Fine wants to have a first camp session on the property this summer. Before that can happen, though, the property's buildings and utility systems will need to be evaluated and the owner will need a series of permits, including from the Adirondack Park Agency.

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Reported by Chris Knight Adirondack Correspondent

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