

Warwick Advertiser: Transfer of 36 acres at the former prison completed

By: Roger Gavan

1/7/2015

WARWICK — Town of Warwick Historian Dr. Richard Hull described it as an historic moment. "The land," he said, "has been returned to private ownership for the first time in a century."

On Wednesday, Dec. 31, Robert Krahulik, president of the Warwick Valley Local Development Corporation (WVLDC), announced that the sale of 36 acres of land at the Warwick Valley Office and Technology Corporate Park, the former Mid-Orange Correctional Facility, to Tony Abbatine, founder and international director of Frozen Ropes Training Centers, had been completed and the property had been transferred.

Hull explained that the long history of the Mid-Orange Correctional Facility began when Durland farm was sold to the City of New York in 1912. "The City," he said, "sold it to the State in 1929 and it became a reformatory for delinquent youth in 1934. It became a state prison for men in 1977." The parcel, which includes the main prison compound, sold for \$1,775,000. Abbatine had already invested in a complete refurbishment of the indoor recreational building, creating two world class playing fields, a multi-purpose room with kitchen facilities and the latest in sports amenities.

He plans to begin hosting teams in early January at his new facility dubbed "The Yard." Abbatine's ultimate plan is to develop the property into an internationally recognized indoor and outdoor sports training facility and overnight summer camp. He has already begun to re-purpose the prison property's existing recreational building, avocation building, visitors building and approximately 16 housing units to create a year-round sports training center.

Abbatine, who already owns a sports facility in Chester, describes his vision for the property as hosting a wide variety of athletic events, including soccer, lacrosse, football and baseball. "The Yard," he said, "will complement our Chester facility, The Rock Sports Park, and will meet the growing demand for quality sports facilities in the area.

Town of Warwick Supervisor and Warwick Valley Local Development Corporation (WVLDC) Vice President Michael Sweeton is looking forward to working with Abbatine as he develops the prison property, which has been vacant for three years. "As the second and by far the largest commercial venture to locate on site," he said, "we are well on our way to getting the former prison back on the tax rolls and creating job opportunities in our town."

The Warwick Valley Local Development Corporation and the Town of Warwick officially took ownership of the 730-acre property at the former Mid-Orange Correctional Facility last March. The transfer of ownership from the state to the Warwick Valley LDC was the end of a long process that began when Gov. Andrew Cuomo first announced his intention to close the correctional facility in July 2011.

The facility was vacated in October of that same year. Warwick Valley Local Development Corporation paid \$3.5 million for a 150-acre parcel of the former correctional facility property. This portion of the property, which includes existing buildings and shovel ready building sites, is being marketed for economic development under the name Warwick Valley Office and Technology Corporate Park.

Much of the rest of the property will be used for recreational purposes as well as open space. Marketing Following the sale and transfer to Abbatine, more than 100 acres and numerous structures remain available for sale. The location includes 10 shovel ready pad sites of approximately 85,000 square feet each, which have already been approved for subdivision by the Warwick Town Planning Board. The property, which will be geared toward a campus-like corporate park environment, has power, fiber optics, municipal services, and is in close proximity to major highways, as well as one of Orange County's main freight train lines. Marketing and sales for Warwick Valley Office and Technology Corporate Park is being handled by the Orange County Partnership. - See more at:
<http://warwickadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20150107/NEWS01/150109970/Transfer-of-36-acres-at-the-former-prison-completed#sthash.K9raQSo5.dpuf>