



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MEETING MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Meeting on April 26, 2021

This meeting was held remotely due to COVID-19 mandates and precautions.

These minutes are subject to the approval of the FHA at their next meeting.

Present: Ross Carley, Michael Holmes, Renata Adler, Brook Clark, Andrew Philbin

Absent: Melissa Beylouni, Terry Sagedy, Walt Motyka

Public Attendance: none

Also Present: Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:11 p.m.

Public Participation: None

Acceptance of Minutes:

Chairman Ross Carley asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the Special Meeting held March 29, 2021. Mike Holmes entertained. Brook Clark seconded and all were in favor.

Chairman's Report:

FHA Ordinance Discussion:

Chairman Carley opened the floor for discussion on the FHA ordinance.

Brook began the discussion questioning the Authorities' role in the process of amending the Master Plan. She questioned why the Authority did not have the opportunity to review the recommendations made by the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee in 2019. Ross responded that the duties of the Authority are to implement the master plan. Ross then put forward Item 4, under Powers and duties in the Code Book for consideration and asked members if they agreed the FHA should be involved in lease negotiations. Brook agreed that it made sense. Andrew Philbin asked what the adaptive reuse zone had to do with the ordinance. Ross explained that the ordinance was set-up by the State (at the time the property was purchased) for the Town. He further explained that the ordinance committee is meeting right now. Ross then asked members if they would like to add that the Authority coordinate with Economic and Community Development and the Land Use departments when the town is approached by someone with an interest in the campus. Andrew questioned how the ordinance is expected to function. It documents the job of the Authority, but provides no means of how it is to be done. He expressed that he felt in reality, the ordinance should be entirely redone. Ross agreed that it appears to be like a patchwork quilt with other departments having taken pieces of the campus duties. Ross add that the First Selectman does want the FHA to be a part of the process. Andrew continued explaining that the process appears to be working backwards. Plans should go to the FHA first for review, but it appears to be going to the FHA at the end for a seal of approval that is actually not required. Brook again questioned why the Authority was not provided the opportunity to review the Master Plan. Ross explained that the Planning and Zoning Commission officially reviews the Master Plan to update the zoning regulations. The Chairman continued to explain that the Town Charter supersedes the Code Book. Kim

Chiappetta, (Fairfield Hills staff member and FHA clerk), agreed that she understood the same. Ross said he wants to petition having the FHA added back into the Charter to get a budget again, however it was explained to him that they do not have to be in the Charter to get a budget. Renata Adler asked what had to be done to get the FHA back in the Charter. Ross explained that they could write a letter to the First Selectman. Brook noted it would be beneficial to have the full board in a meeting to continue this discussion. Renata added that a meeting with the First Selectman would make it clear that the FHA still exists. Mike Holmes expressed that he felt the group is basically ignored and agreed with Brook questioning what their purpose is. After further discussion, Ross asked if the group agreed to call a special meeting inviting the First Selectman. Brook asked when members can meet in person. Kim said that meetings can be held in the Council Chambers if socially distanced. Ross will reach out to the First Selectman's office to schedule a meeting.

Member Updates:

Ross told members that the Town has received proposals from developers interested in developing up to two buildings on the campus.

Ross recommended approaching the town with a proposal to make the area behind Norwalk Hall an event field. Mike said that this should be mentioned to the First Selectman when he attends the meeting. Ross noted that Parks & Rec is in agreement with having a separate event field to help keep the soccer field clear. Ross asked Kim to add this point to the next meeting agenda.

Staff Update:

EDA Grant:

Kim updated members that the design phase of the sanitary sewer replacement is expected to be completed sometime in May. Ross noted the importance of updating the sewer as the campus develops.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Renata motioned to adjourn, Brook seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.

A recording of the meeting can be found using the link below, or contact Kimberly.Chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov.