



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MEETING MINUTES

**The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Meeting on April 25, 2022
in Council Chambers at the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown CT 06470**

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

Present: Ross Carley, Melissa Beylouni, Jim Landy, Michael Holmes, Brook Clark, Andrew Philbin

Absent: Terry Sagedy, Renata Adler

Public Attendance: Mary Wilson – Protect the Pollinators

Also Present: Christal Preszler – Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Chairman Ross Carley began by thanking Authority members for their time spent attending meetings.

Public Participation: Chairman Carley recognized Mary Wilson and invited her to speak to the Authority. Mary Wilson introduced herself as a member of *Protect the Pollinators*. She informed the Authority that *Protect the Pollinators* is a 501c3 that began 7 years ago. Their purpose is to get land owners, both municipal and private, to become part of the *Pollinator Pathway* where only native plants are planted and pesticides are not used. This year the group received agreement from the Town of Newtown to not use any pesticides in Tammy's Garden, located at the Municipal Center. *Protect the Pollinators* is now asking that four locations on the campus be designated as part of the *Pollinator Pathway*: 1) Tammy's Garden, 2) the Fruit Trail, 3) West Meadow (near the fruit trail), and 4) High Meadow. Mary then shared samples of signage that would be installed at each location. Christal told members that Mary Wilson and Sarah Mideleer have already met with her and the George Benson regarding the signage. She recommended that the Authority work with Land Use to come up with an acceptable number of signs. Mary further explained that the First Selectman had done a proclamation in 2019 in support of the *Pollinator Pathway* sponsored by *Protect the Pollinators*. (See attached.) Brook Clark expressed her appreciation of the pathway and the signage. She then noted that the Fruit Trail is not 100% native. Mary explained that when most land owners sign up to join the *Pollinator Pathway* they do not usually have 100% native plantings but are encouraged to ensure all new plantings go-forward are native. Ross asked about the streetscapes plantings. Christal explained that the streetscape was designed in 2015 and the landscape architect at the time was not asked to use natives.

Ross asked for a motion to designate the four locations as part of the *Pollinator Pathway* and for the Authority to approve the signage at the advice of Land Use.

Brook Clark motioned to designate the prior mentioned locations for the *Pollinator Pathway* and to work with Land Use department regarding the signage. Melissa Beylouni seconded. Andrew Philbin abstained. All other members in favor. Motion was passed.

Acceptance of Minutes:

Ross asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the meetings held on March 28, 2021. Mike Holmes entertained and Brook Clark seconded and all were in favor.

Chairman's Report:

Ross told the Authority that the only item there was to report on is the mixed use project. He updated members that Christal and Kim are gathering financials that will be presented in a Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and Legislative Council meeting. Ross asked members to ensure they have a clear understanding of the project and expressed his belief that this project will enhance the campus and be good for the town. Jim Landy asked if senior housing was included in affordable housing portion of the development. Christal answered that it has not been determined if it will be senior housing or all ages. She further explained that the developer is willing to work with the town and wants to do what the town wants. Jim then asked about transportation for senior housing. Christal explained that establishing transportation is difficult. The town had been looking at many options prior to the pandemic including connecting to the Heart bus system that has a dial-a-ride, and TransLoc which is like an Uber for buses. Christal continued to explain that the i-84 project in Danbury shows the possibility of coming up with other modes of transportation which included an option of a spur coming through Newtown to Southbury. Jim expressed concerns with busing and traffic. Ross noted the benefit of a bus stop on the campus for apartment tenants who may not have transportation. Andrew said often private developers of senior living properties have their own bus. Christal explained that this is often true for locations like Maplewood or Church Hill Village where the higher costs provide funds for the transportation. In the case of the proposed mixed-use project, the affordable units do not provide the funds necessary for transportation. Christal then highlighted that the proposed project still needs to get through the State Historic designation process. Andrew asked when and if developers will present to the FHA. Ross explained that the proposed project is still in negotiation and is not at a point where it can be presented. Andrew asked about how the buildings would look. Christal explained that the building exteriors would look the same as required by the historic designation that is necessary to fund the project. There will be exceptions for any ADA or safety requirements. The group then discussed the process for selecting the developer and how go-forward the FHA should be included in campus projects.

Member Updates:

None.

Staff Update:

Christal provided update on the proposed gathering space. Kim has submitted the request to accept the grant funds through the town's process. Brook has been also working on some things related to the project. She then told members that she and Kim will be walking the campus to identify trees for replacement. Once these trees have been mapped, they will put out an RFP.

Ross asked for an update on the sewer project. Kim explained that the work is currently being done by the 2nd Governor's Horse Guard property and has been slowly transitioning onto the campus. Fred Hurley is coordinating the project with a water line project so that any necessary paving is done once. She has been working with Fred to minimize the impact the project has on campus including events and sports.

Ross asked for an update on securing the buildings. Christal answered that additional money has been requested to help secure the buildings. She then informed the group that there is a close out State DEEP report regarding remediation of soil that was done when the Town purchased the property from the State. There may also be some ground water testing done, so funds are being requested from the town.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Andrew motioned to adjourn, Jim seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.

A recording of the meeting is available by contacting Kimberly.Chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov.

TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Office of the First Selectman

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, pollinators are in decline primarily due to land development and fragmentation, flowerless landscapes, and a lawn culture that requires excessive fertilizers and chemicals and that offers no benefit to bees and other wildlife, and

WHEREAS, pollinator species such as bees, butterflies, birds and others are vital to maintaining healthy and diverse ecosystems, and

WHEREAS, pollinators support native plants in providing food and shelter for other wildlife, preventing erosion, keeping our waterways clean, and proving the air that we breathe, and

WHEREAS, pollination by several bee species is responsible for the food we eat, and

WHEREAS, five bees species are threatened or of special concern in Connecticut and a downward trend is seen in all bee and butterfly populations, and

WHEREAS, the use of pesticides is often excessive and inappropriate, and

WHEREAS, Newtown is cognizant of the need for safe and healthy landscapes for its residents and habitat for important pollinators, and

WHEREAS, recent scientific research supports the benefit of restoring and reconnecting small isolated patches of habitat;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, I, Daniel C. Rosenthal, First Selectman of Newtown, do hereby recognize and lend my support for the Newtown Pollinator Pathway that is sponsored by Protect Our Pollinators with support of the Newtown Conservation Commission, Newtown Forest Association, Newtown Environmental Action Group, The Garden Club of Newtown, Newtown Horticultural Club, Town and Country Garden Club, and the community of Newtown. I encourage Newtown landowners to take cognizance of this initiative and to participate, as means allow, in creating safe yards and properties that can provide nutrient-rich floral resources and habitat for our threatened pollinators.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand and caused the Seal of the Town of Newtown to be affixed this seventh day of April 2019.

Daniel C. Rosenthal, First Selectman