



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Special Meeting on July 10, 2017 in the meeting room at the Cyrenius Booth Library, 25 Main St, Newtown CT 06470

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

Present: Ross Carley, Phil Clark, Terry Sagedy, Renata Adler, Andrew Willie, Jim Bernardi

Absent: Roger Cyr

Public Participation: Laura Lerman, Ken Lerman, Lereine Frampton, Rich Frampton, Amy Mangold, Carla Krone, Kinga Walsh

Also Present: Pat Llodra, George Benson, Rusty Malik, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:01.

Business:

Community Center Design group presentation:

Ross welcomed everyone and turned the floor over to Rusty Malik.

Rusty identified the future location of the Community Center and reviewed buildings schedule to be demolished. He explained the reason for the change in location was due to underground water and other concerns that would impact the cost of the building. It had been found through the Canaan basement excavation process that there was very little ground water in that area, with the exception of one small corner. Currently material being removed are being crushed and analyzed for re-use. The project is also trying to accomplish having a town green where events could occur. The green area will continue across from existing green in front of NYA. The location change also allows the Community Center entrance to be directly across from the Municipal Center entrance.

Rusty explained to the audience that the project is composed of 2 elements, the Senior Center and the Community Center. The Senior Center will be located on the southwest corner of the building, and will allow for necessary dedicated parking away from the NYA. There will also be more handicapped accessible parking. He continued to explain the allotted parking and the care taken to ensure it will not be necessary for any vehicle to back onto Simpson St. There will be raised paver cross walks to slow down traffic and identify cross walk areas. The back corner of the patio will connect the Community Center to the trails. The aquatic center and multi-use spaces will allow flow out to patio space. The purpose of the design is to make 1 large multi-generational use building. Rusty clarified for the group that the goal is to capture requirements that are in budget, but consider and prepare for aspects that are not currently in budget so that they can be easily installed at a later time. He provided the example of running wiring during construction so that an amphitheater can be installed in the future.

He explained that the architectural team considered the Master Plan and its requirements. Other buildings on campus were studied, as well as buildings on the University of Virginia campus. He gave the Student Union on the University of Virginia campus as an example of combining traditional components and modern components. The Fairfield Hills campus inventory of saved architectural elements were considered in the Community Center design. There are stairs that have been salvaged and they are trying to see how they can be used. He continued to provide examples of other saved elements and provided explanations as to why they could not be utilized due to extensive refurbishing needs.

Rusty reminded the group that much of existing architecture is going to be demolished, so only buildings that would be remaining were considered. He further explained the balance of meeting various groups' needs and requests while staying in budget. An example provided was the request for seniors to have a canopy extended out to the road to provide cover from harsh weather. Cupolas each have a specific function. An example provided was to bring light into the art room. In regards to roofing, Rusty explained that 60% of the roofs are sloped and there is a need to have some flat roofing to contain rooftop equipment.

Overall the design is intended to be inviting. A symmetrical design was a challenge with so many needs being addressed. The color palates were selected to match existing buildings. The design allows flexibility on the inside to consider constantly changing programs. Finally there was a need to focus on energy efficiency and ease of maintenance.

At the conclusion of Rusty's presentation, Ross opened to the floor at 7:31 p.m. for questions.

Public Participation:

Laura Lerman of 55 Main St. spoke to the group informing that she recently took a tour of the beautiful buildings in Newtown. She identified the Newtown Volunteer Ambulance building as one, and expressed that in the future when commercial buildings are brought to the Fairfield Hills campus they should tell a story. Mrs. Lerman expressed that she did not feel the building fits in with the town's design.

Ken Lerman also of 55 Main St informed the audience that he was involved in the design of the Newtown Volunteer Ambulance garage. The original design was a single floor building, but a second floor was added and significant changes were made to ensure the structure matched to the campus architecture. He then expressed how displeased he is with the proposed roofline and pointed out that the doors and windows are not consistent with other buildings on the campus. Mr. Lerman asked if it were possible to add light with multi-paned windows such as those in the sunrooms of some of the existing buildings. He provided an example of how he recently visited a Vietnamese restaurant and how the various dishes and tastes blended well, but if these same dishes were combined in a blender would not be as appealing. To him this building is equivalent of taking various designs and putting them in a blender.

Lereine Frampton expressed that she liked the idea of using windows similar to the existing sunrooms on campus; however, if money is spent on arches and keystones for each window there would be almost no money left for the inside of the buildings.

Pat Llodra thanked the Fairfield Hills Authority for holding the special meeting and expressed her hopes for a resolution for a shared project. She expressed that timing is critical to get the permitted project and to get the foundation in the ground. She added that she wants to get the design right but in a timely fashion. She informed the audience that she has owned 3 homes, all of

which were built in the 1800's, but put her personal preference aside and considered the common good.

We must consider the function of the building to dictate style. The large buildings on campus were offices or dormitories. The Community Center design requires larger open spaces with a connection to the past and a step into future. The first discussions for having a community center began 20 years ago. All point of views are welcomed, but we need to come to a point in time when the design stage is completed. The Board of Selectmen has come to the FHA to obtain their perspective.

Amy Mangold spoke next informing the group that she has similar opinions to Ms. Llodra, and that she was speaking tonight as a resident. She began by stating that many have been dedicated to these plans for the Community Center. This building will be the hub of the campus. Ms. Mangold added that we are not planning to build a garage, office spaces, or an institution. We are not trying to replicate building from 1940's. There is a need to think through the purpose and design of the buildings. We need to make a decision that might be a risk. She provided an example of when the Fun Space was being designed for Dickenson Park. The original Fun Space was well loved, but had become dilapidated beyond repair. Many residents wanted to build the same playground again, but there were also many who wanted something newer. With this said, the best was done to incorporate the old and new and today everyone is happy with the outcome.

Carla Krone informed the audience that she had read the Fairfield Hills guidelines, and feels the architecture does compliment the campus. She explained that upon review of community centers across the country, most are a single floor. If floors were added to the building to reflect other buildings on campus then space will be taken away with stairs and elevators. The atmosphere should be welcoming. Everyone needs to remember why the Community Center is being built and ensure it is inviting. In her research, she found many people do not like the old rundown buildings and want to forget about the old designs. She expressed concerns that only a few people would deny the entire community. Function must be considered over form. Any additional costs to the exterior will take away from the function of the interior. Two members of the FHA asked for clarification on the studies that had been done, and Carla explained that there were no official studies. Ms. Krone recommended to the Authority to simply perform searches on the internet of community centers to study designs. She explained that if the deadline isn't met, the constructions costs will increase by 6%. The group had a brief discussion regarding the language used and where it was documented.

Kinga Walsh informed the group that she was attending as an individual, not as Advisory Committee Member. She expressed that no matter what is done, we all need to take a step back and see why we are here. We are here because of the tragedy, and because of a generous gift of 10 million dollars from GE and an extra 5 million from tax payers. The budget is now more the 50% greater than it was in the past. We must be cognizant of the money, and although there was a slip in the process we need to remember the time sensitivity. Ms. Walsh explained that she tends to be traditional, but considering what is trying to be achieved and although she would like to see extravagance, she needed to consider the budget. It is not possible to obtain anymore funding, so function that was collected in direct response to the surveys cannot be lost. The Advisory Committee is trying to meet all of the requests collected in the survey results. Ms. Walsh expressed that she is not exactly sure how things will play out, but we need to find a path forward. She was informed by Caldwell & Walsh that if construction does not begin in September there will be a 6% increase in cost.

The FHA portion of the meeting was called to order at 8:11 p.m.

George Benson discussed with Authority members that the Fairfield Hills Master plan must be amended to add the Community Center building onto the Master Plan. He further explained that this is protocol for all buildings added to the campus. The amendment refers to the building location, not design. Ross clarified that the FHA is already aware of the site location change as it related to the demolition plan of the Canaan basement.

Per George's request, Kim Chiappetta read the amendment to the Fairfield Hills Master plan.

**Amendment to Fairfield Hills Master Plan
July 10, 2017**

BE IT RESOLVED by that the Fairfield Hills Authority that the application by the Town of Newtown Board of Selectmen to modify the Fairfield Hills Master Plan in accordance with Section 6.03.230 of the Town of Newtown zoning regulations.

SHALL BE REFERRED to the Planning and Zoning Commission Based upon an application by the Board of Selectmen, the Fairfield Hills Master Plan is modified as follows as indicated on a certain map entitled "Fairfield Hills–Master Plan" dated April 2007, and the Fairfield Hills Master Plan update, May 2013.

1. That the Town of Newtown will construct a Community Center at the location of the former Canaan House as designated on the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Map dated, April 2, 2015.

Be it further resolved that the reason for the amendment is to modify of the site of the Community Center contained in the approved Master Plan.

Ross asked for a motion to accept the amendment to the Fairfield Hills Master. Jim Bernardi moved to accept. Renata Adler seconded and all were in favor.

George then informed the group that an approved site plan is required before the former Canaan basement location can be filled. This approval would include parking.

Ross reminded the group that all other buildings on campus were required to make changes to their design to adhere to the Master Plan. This included a kiosk being built by an Eagle Scout.

There is a need to approve the site plan without approving anything else. It will not be possible to move forward with filling the former Canaan basement location without site plan approval.

Members discussed that the Fairfield Hills Authority can only provide a referral, and that the final approvals are made by Land Use and then Planning and Zoning

The group then had a discussion regarding concerns with adequate parking. George explained that the Fairfield Hills campus has areas of shared parking that could be used. Phil made a recommendation to widen the driveway, comparing to NYA being narrow. George explained that NYA meets the Zoning regulations.

Phil asked if this approval would include the land scape plan, and George replied that this is not necessary at this time.

The group discussed other aspects of the design. George explained that the Fire Marshal and all other required groups have reviewed the preliminary plans. There will be another review before moving forward to Planning & Zoning.

It was explained that the entire design plan must be approved by August 3rd.

Ross asked if anyone had concerns with how the site plan was formulated. Phil asked a few more questions regarding the plan, and George provided explanations. Phil questioned if construction managers have confirmed if on budget. George said not yet, and explained that any drastic changes would require a return to P&Z for approval.

Per George's request, Kim read Site Plan Referral modification.

**Site Plan Referral Fairfield Hills Master Plan
July 12, 2017**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Fairfield Hills Authority that the application by the Town of Newtown Board of Selectmen to modify the Fairfield Hills Master Plan in accordance with Section 6.03.220 of the Town of Newtown zoning regulations.

SHALL BE REFERRED to the Planning and Zoning Commission, Based upon an application by the Board of Selectmen, the Fairfield Hills Master Plan is modified as follows as indicated on a certain Site Plan entitled "Newtown Community Center" Fairfield Hills, Newtown CT, sheet #L-1.0, prepared by TO Design LLC, dated 4/4/17.

Be it further resolved that the reason for the amendment is to modify the site of the Community Center contained in the approved Master Plan.

The group discussed the building size and that it was in compliance with Master Plans requirements. George added that the building is also in compliance with state traffic compliance permit. Ross asked if there were additions would it still need to meet the Master Plans required 50,000 square feet. George explained that the Master Plan would have to be amended via formal processes.

Ross asked for a motion to accept the site amendment as read by Kim. Jim moved to accept. Andrew Willie seconded and all were in favor.

George will draft a resolution that is a referral to the Planning & Zoning commission which can give either a negative or positive referral. The concerns can be added to the resolution and it will be forwarded to P & Z for review. He informed the group that upon his review, that the Zoning regulations are the only document that matters in the final decisions. The Master Plan is referenced by Planning & Zoning in making their decision.

Based upon questions from the Authority, George explained that building design guidelines had never been done for the Fairfield Hills Master Plan, and clarified that the original intent of the Master Plan had to do more with reuse of the existing structures.

Phil expressed that the inside of the building met functional needs, but questioned what function has to do with the aesthetics of the outside of the building.

Ross said that he wanted to be fair to all members of the FHA and delay a decision until the next regular meeting. Ross asked for a motion as to whether they should continue discussions on the elevations, or postpone until the next FHA meeting. Phil provided a high-level explanation of the architectural process and expressed that the FHA needs to provide feedback to the Rusty Malik sooner so that he can make adjustments if necessary. He added that the building was beautiful, but the responsibility of the FHA is to ensure the structure conforms to the campus. Delaying the construction will add costs and delays due to winter conditions. Ross agreed that the decision is time sensitive, but still does not want to make a hasty decision.

Ross opened floor to comments. The group again discussed the possibility of changes to the roofline. Ross emphasized the need for curb appeal. The group concluded that certain aspects of the roofline would not be visible from a ground level perspective. Rusty added that there were different roofline concepts, but Caldwell Walsh asked them to be simplified due to costs. Terry expressed that he personally likes the building design, but his past vote was based upon the interpreted requirements of the Master Plan. There was questions over the language in describing the requirements. Ross referred to the information presented by Herb Rosenthal in the Board of Selectmen meeting on Thursday, July 6th, and informed the group that Kim could email it to the group.

The group concluded that in the interest of time it is necessary to have a second special meeting as soon as possible to finalize the FHA recommendation, and that meeting would be held Wednesday, July 12th 7 p.m.

Ross asked for a motion to accept a meeting being held on Wednesday, July 12th. Jim made the motion. Andrew seconded and all were in favor.

Ross asked everyone to please review the plan and be prepared for next meeting.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Ross asked for a motion to adjourn. Jim made a motion to adjourn, Phil seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*