



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Special Meeting on July 12, 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, Roger Cyr

Absent: none

Public Participation: Laura Lerman, Kinga Walsh

Also Present: Pat Llodra, George Benson, Rusty Malik, Lereine Frampton, Rich Frampton, Amy Mangold, Carla Krone, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 pm

Public Participation:

Ross Carley began by informing the group that the meeting was restricted to only one hour and that he would allow public participation, but would appreciate everyone being brief.

Kinga Walsh asked for clarification of the specific language that was discussed as being used in the Master Plan. She asked specifically where this information was documented and how `did it drive the opinions of FHA members.

Laura Lerman asked everyone to remember that volunteers from Newtown Ambulance did not receive any special treatment regarding the construction of their building and had to adhere to the interpretations of the Master Plan.

Business:

Ross explained to Authority members that there are 3 ways the Community Center design can be recommended to Planning and Zoning: 1) accept the design plan as is, 2) not accept the design plan, or 3) accept the design plan with conditions.

Andrew Willie clarified that the Authority can only make recommendations to higher-level officials, and that he wanted to ensure everyone understood that these officials can accepted the FHA's recommendation or not.

Roger Cyr was asked to answer Kinga's question. Roger explained that he found 20 different places in the documentation that referred to maintaining the architectural style of campus. Documents from 2013 speak to how the Master Plan was originally created. There were 26 meetings, and 45 community groups involved in the documentation. The Town of Newtown created the Master Plan, and the FHA was charged with enforcing. George reminded that there are no design guidelines, and the Master Plan is open to interpretation. The plan is not specific.

George informed everyone that he was a member of the committee who wrote the amendment in 2013. The original documentation was written with the concept of using existing buildings. The Zoning regulations also reference compatibility with the rest of the campus, and Planning and Zoning will be mostly referencing these regulations. George further expressed that this has been the opinion of Land Use for the past 12 years. He gave an example of the existing structure Cochran House and not wanting to replicate any of its designs in the Community Center. He concluded informing everyone that the very first building design presented was more modern, and that this design is much more compatible..

Renata expressed that she felt there was a basic question that was not being asked which is does this mean a decision has to be made now or never. If a decision does not have to be made at this time, she doesn't understand why this is being done so hastily now. Phil Clark agreed adding that it may be wiser to post-pone construction to March of 2018, but if a delay means the project will not happen then we must address the design now. George reminded everyone that we are facing a financial issue. He further explained that the Canaan basement is now being filled without structural fill due to water. Phil asked what happens if this soil sits over the winter. Would it have to be refilled either way? Phil pointed out that whether it's September 2017 or March 2018, there is the need to refill. Phil added that it is not the fault of FHA that the project has taken 4 years. The project is scheduled for about 4 months. Rusty explained to the group that the construction plan is to put in the basement and steel before the winter conditions. The group then discussed why the FHA had not been brought into the process sooner.

Ross asked that FHA members put personal preferences aside and consider the design in comparison to the Fairfield Hills campus. He reiterated the 3 options, and explained that on Zoning Board of Appeals they often approve with recommendations.

Roger added that the documents he read are old and that many buildings have been demolished since that time. He believes that at the time the documents were drafted the town wanted to maintain the look of the campus, but now building are dilapidated and can no longer fulfill what was expressed in the Master Plan. The opening dialog of the Master Plan was to maintain the feel of the campus. George informed the group that the Master Plan also states that after 5 years the buildings need to be demolished.

Andrew added that the final campus will only have Stratford Hall, Newtown Hall and Woodbury hall remaining. The group had a brief discussion regarding some of the design details of the building. Ross informed Authority members that design details like the ones discussed are left up to Planning & Zoning. George agreed and added that the FHA should be looking at the general look to see if it will fit in with the campus. Ross asked if the Design Review Board would also be involved in the process, and George clarified that they are only involved for commercial buildings. Fairfield Hills is not zoned as a design district; it is an adaptive re-use zone.

Ross informed Authority members that we would read through the 3 recommendation options and take a vote with each. George explained to members it is protocol to have these recommendations written in advance and that the FHA can change wording as they see fit. Phil expressed that the design is great and he would like to see small adjustments to best fit the feel of the campus. Jim Bernardi asked if all Authority members have to agree as majority to the conditions, or can it be based a majority vote. It was clarified that the final recommendation will be based upon a majority vote.

Jim read the first recommendation as follows:

**Application Referral from Fairfield Hills Authority
July 12, 2017**

BE IT RESOLVED by the Fairfield Hills Authority that the application by the Town of Newtown Board of Selectmen to construct a community center at Fairfield Hills.

SHALL BE SENT to the Planning and Zoning Commission with a positive referral based upon an application by the Board of Selectmen, as designated on the plans titled “Proposed Newtown Community Center, Newtown, CT – Planning and Zoning Commission” dated 6.14.2017, prepared for The Town of Newtown, Connecticut by TO Design LLC.

Be it further resolved that the reason for the application is to construct a community center contained in the approved Master Plan.

Ross put forward a motion to accept the positive resolution with no contingencies. The Authority took a vote.

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| Renata Adler | NAY | | Jim Bernardi | AYE |
| Ross Carley | NAY | | Phil Clark | NAY |
| Roger Cyr | AYE | | Terry Sagedy | AYE |
| Andrew Willie | AYE | | | |

The positive resolution with no contingencies was approved by a 4 to 3 approval.

Adjournment:

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

*Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*