

Robin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road,
November 15, 2010
Board of Selectmen Meeting – Newtown Connecticut

Please enter document into the record and attach to minutes including attachments.

I am here tonight as a taxpayer to say that I am outraged by the double standard with which this board considers the meaning of "fiscal responsibility." The voters elected you and swept the old guard out of office so that the "process" in our town, which has been broken for years, could be reformed. The events of this past week with regard to letters and statements to the press have proven that the "old guard" mentality is still alive in Newtown. Specifically, my issues are:

1. Requesting that the BOE hold back on implementing full day kindergarten so it would not "pre-empt" plans for a closed school. This is just giving a higher value to our town's buildings over our town's children. The BOE, our town's educational experts are the only ones qualified and who have the power, except for the voters, to make that decision.
2. Statements to the press later in the week back-pedaled somewhat and said basically, complete the study, but hold back on implementation. The reason for this being stated as - it wouldn't be fair to the public if decisions were made essentially without asking and discussing it with the public first. A wonderful ideal, if you can get it, however, the statement proves that this board is hypocritical. Decisions are being made right now without public consent or public discussion, such as moving ahead with infrastructure out at FFH which will tap the taxpayers for hundreds of thousands of dollars, BEFORE a review committee made up of taxpayers completes its study. You are talking out of both sides of your mouths. One way is good for the BOE and another is good for the FFH Authority or yourselves, the BOS. So, aren't all the facts needed in this case? Implementation is OK without all the facts if it is at FFHs? Double Standard, if you ask me. You should hold yourself to the same standards that you seem to want to hold the BOE to.
3. Putting Kevin's Community Center into one of the duplexes is an example of this double standard and as it happens, is getting press at the same time. Since the FFHRC report isn't complete and at least one member was quoted as saying that no plan exists for the land surrounding those duplexes which is considerable in size, why go ahead with plans for new work on infrastructure to support KCC in that location. KCC is a worthy organization to have in our town and there are many, many alternate and less expensive sites which should at least be considered. In fact, in last weeks issue of the BEE there was an ad for a former medical building on

Mt. Pleasant Road. I contacted the agent and got some information for you. It is attached. There are many reasons to consider it:

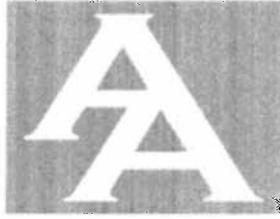
- a) Mt. Pleasant Rd is a centrally located and popular road. Easy access. It also happens to be on the sewer line if I am not mistaken and it is within Newtown.
- b) It is a former medical office so it must be set up to serve patients already and perhaps won't need as much updating.
- c) It is 5,350 sq. ft. allowing for KCC's desired expansion.
- d) It's for sale, so KCC can have the permanent home it desires.
- e) The asking price is \$499K which I am sure can be negotiated in this market and is within the \$500K grant amount.
- f) It is currently vacant, so KCC can start the process immediately and not have to wait for public discussion or voter approval or the building of infrastructure, etc.

This location is also good for Newtown since it will most certainly SAVE the taxpayers the expense of:

- a) planning and implementing the required infrastructure (\$350K CIP)
- b) major renovations to repair damage from being vacant and to accommodate a medical use from a residential use (\$??)
- c) added operational cost to maintain infrastructure that isn't popularly used (\$??) Mt. Pleasant Rd is already maintained and it serves hundreds of families and businesses.

I could go on and on, but you get the idea. This could be a win-win. The town could go ahead with the plan to support KCC AND hold off on any building at FFH until we have "all the details and information." Now that would demonstrate to the public and taxpayers that you, the BOS, is serious about fiscal responsibility within your own authority instead of giving orders to other boards about their spending habits while not controlling your own. Let's all play by the same rules. That's what the public wants and we are watching.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.



ATHERTON ASSOCIATES

COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES
Real Estate for Business and Investment

FOR SALE Great Investment Opportunity



115 Mount Pleasant Road, Newtown, CT 06470

- Total 5359 sq. ft.
- Two Buildings
- Zoned B-2
- Great investment opportunity
- Building 1, 2016 sq. ft.
- Building 2, 3343 sq. ft.

\$499,000

For more information contact:

Bryan K. Atherton

(203) 924-9400 x10

702 Bridgeport Avenue, Suite 301, Shelton, CT 06484 • Fax: 203.924.9401

www.athertoncommercial.com

To: First Selectman Pat Llodra, Selectman Will Rodgers
From: Bill Furrier 
Date: November 15, 2010
Subject: Proposal Considering Housing Reuse in the FFH Master Plan

The proposal to permit housing reuse of existing structures at Fairfield Hills, which will be a catalyst to bringing apartment buildings and very large housing projects into Newtown for the first time, holds the potential to radically alter Newtown, and in potentially disastrous ways. Several town officials, who support housing at Fairfield Hills, have begun promoting only the benefits in the local news media while neglecting to highlight the many drawbacks.

I'm concerned that approving housing for the reuse of FFH buildings will prove to be a slippery slope that will fundamentally change the fabric of our community and begin to transform our town into something less like rural Newtown and more into a little city. Our Realtor has testified before us that the high cost of renovating these buildings dictates that only very large renovation projects can become profitable and only housing projects at that. Given that we have exhausted all of our available money and still have nearly all the structures remaining as attractive nuisances, we must consider the likelihood that once housing is permitted into the master plan, all of those buildings could potentially be converted into large housing projects.

I'm concerned that the propagation of apartment buildings will not be contained within the FFH campus because their permitted use will become precedent for applicability in other locations around town. If large apartment houses become widespread, they will lead to explosive population growth, will strain our resources and threaten that which makes it "Nicer in Newtown." As agents of the community, we must facilitate a public vetting of the pros and cons of housing reuse, including a full consideration of all the consequences that may result, and that's not happening. Instead, urgent calls from the exclusive realtor and some town officials to move on this issue are undermining a fair process of deliberation and public debate.

The fact that FFH is exempt from the Town Charter makes this so critical an issue because large FFH projects can bypass the normal approval processes that provide public scrutiny and insure conformity to established rules and community norms. This is especially important in light of potentially setting established precedent of permitted housing applications. So long as FFH remains exempt from the organic law of our community - the town charter, and so long as all power over FFH remains in the hands of the Board of Selectmen who have such latitude in the absence of the normal checks and balances that the charter provides, then we must consider the extreme case scenario that we Selectmen, or future Selectmen will approve housing uses that could permanently reconfigure established housing precedent.

Indeed, a fair reading of the history of FFH would illustrate a pattern of our leaders repeatedly governing against the will of the people and bears repeating: First, we adopted a master plan that the voters had rejected. Then we established an Authority that operates outside the Town Charter. Then we constructed a Municipal Center that was widely opposed, and that has left us with the legacy of a vacant Edmond Town Hall. Then when the bond money ran out, we simply built a \$3.5 million parking lot without voter approval or authorized funds. With that checkered past, what's so concerning to me is that the skids seem to be greased to push housing through P&Z and into completion while we seem to be truncating public debate for the purpose of once again governing against the will of the people. The public needs to review and debate housing reuse now, not just as part of the master plan review process, but as potentially effecting all of Newtown, and debate must include all the consequences that may result. The community will not view favorably being denied once again this rightful process.

Among the items needing public debate is what impact the quality and style of construction being employed by any housing project will have on the community? Additionally, we need to debate the financial impact that large housing projects will cause; how do we fund the infrastructure needed to support any FFH reuse project such as housing and how much strain will come from the population increases that large housing projects bring? Paying for FFH infrastructure in this economic climate will likely require making difficult cuts to some other part of the budget. We must anticipate that large encroachments into the education budget will result out of necessity to further the agenda of advancing housing projects at FFH. Meanwhile, the addition of hundreds or even thousands of rental units over and above anything forecasted in our Planimetrics Buildout study will overburden our schools and our town services while contributing little to our tax revenue base.

If we allow for housing reuse into the FFH master plan, with the skids greased for it to be carried out without voter consent, there is no doubt in my mind that our ability to hold growth and development in check would then be weakened with potentially disastrous results for our community and the quality of life we say we want to preserve at all costs. This debate must go far beyond the master plan review process because allowing housing into the master plan has the potential to open up Pandora's Box and permit a new kind of residential development town-wide that can result in sweeping changes to our community. Therefore, we need to elevate this to a higher level of review. We need to examine housing reuse at FFH and all its consequences within the context of town-wide long range planning. I request that we add this to our agenda in a meeting soon forthcoming. Housing in FFH needs a great deal more vetting and public debate – the future of Newtown may just be hanging in the balance.

Att. C

E. Patricia Llodra
First Selectman

Newtown Municipal Center
3 Primrose Street
Newtown, Connecticut 06470
Tel. (203) 270-4201
Fax (203) 270-4205
first.selectman@newtown-ct.gov
www.newtown-ct.gov



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

TO: Residents in the Lakeview and Cedarhurst communities

FROM: E. Patricia Llodra, First Selectman

DATE: November 5, 2010

SUBJ: Road repair and reconstruction

.....

This letter is being sent to all residents and property owners on Lakeview Terrace, the private community of Cedarhurst, and to the Lakeview neighborhoods in general to invite these community members to a meeting regarding improvements to Lakeview Terrace. That meeting will be held at the Municipal Center at 7:00 PM on November 23, 2010.

As you know, the access road known as Lakeview Terrace has many challenges and is often in a state of disrepair. The Town provides routine maintenance and plowing to the extent possible, given our limited resources and the status of that road as private, not public. As with all private roads in Newtown, our Town responsibility is to ensure that Lakeview Terrace remains passable for emergency vehicles.

This past spring and summer our town engineering department, Ron Bolmer and Dave Bratz, conducted studies for improving the drainage and surface conditions on Lakeview Terrace. They have now developed plans for such improvements and have calculated potential costs for the repairs. Our long-standing Town policy for the upgrading and major improvements of private roads calls for a partnership with affected property owners and residents. Past practice is that the Town will contribute 50% of the cost, which then has to be matched through the efforts of the private parties who reside or own property in the area. Successful partnerships for road repair have existed for years with other private communities, namely Cedarhurst and Shady Rest.

Please join us at this meeting to learn of the plans for improvement and to discuss the related costs for the project.

To: Mr. Bill Hart, Chair Newtown Board of Education

From: E. Patricia Llodra, Newtown 1st Selectmen

Date: October 18, 2010

Subj: Goals and Space Needs

I note in the 2010-2011 goals for the Board of Education the following:

Evaluate and decide on implementation of full-day kindergarten. Considerations to include:

- a. Educational efficacy of full-day kindergarten*
- b. Impact on Community*
- c. Cost*
- d. Space*

I am most concerned about planning toward implementation of full-day kindergarten given the space needs required for that program expansion. It is particularly troublesome to consider such a change at the very same time that we are considering the possibilities surrounding a projected decline in K-12 student population. As you and I have discussed, one possibility if/when the projected decline does occur is the closing of a school and relocation of those students. Using available space for the purpose of full-day kindergarten reduces the overall options that should be fairly assessed during the space needs study and may, in fact, pre-determine the outcome of such a study.

I am asking that the implementation of full-day kindergarten be put on hold so that options for future actions related to facilities are not pre-empted.

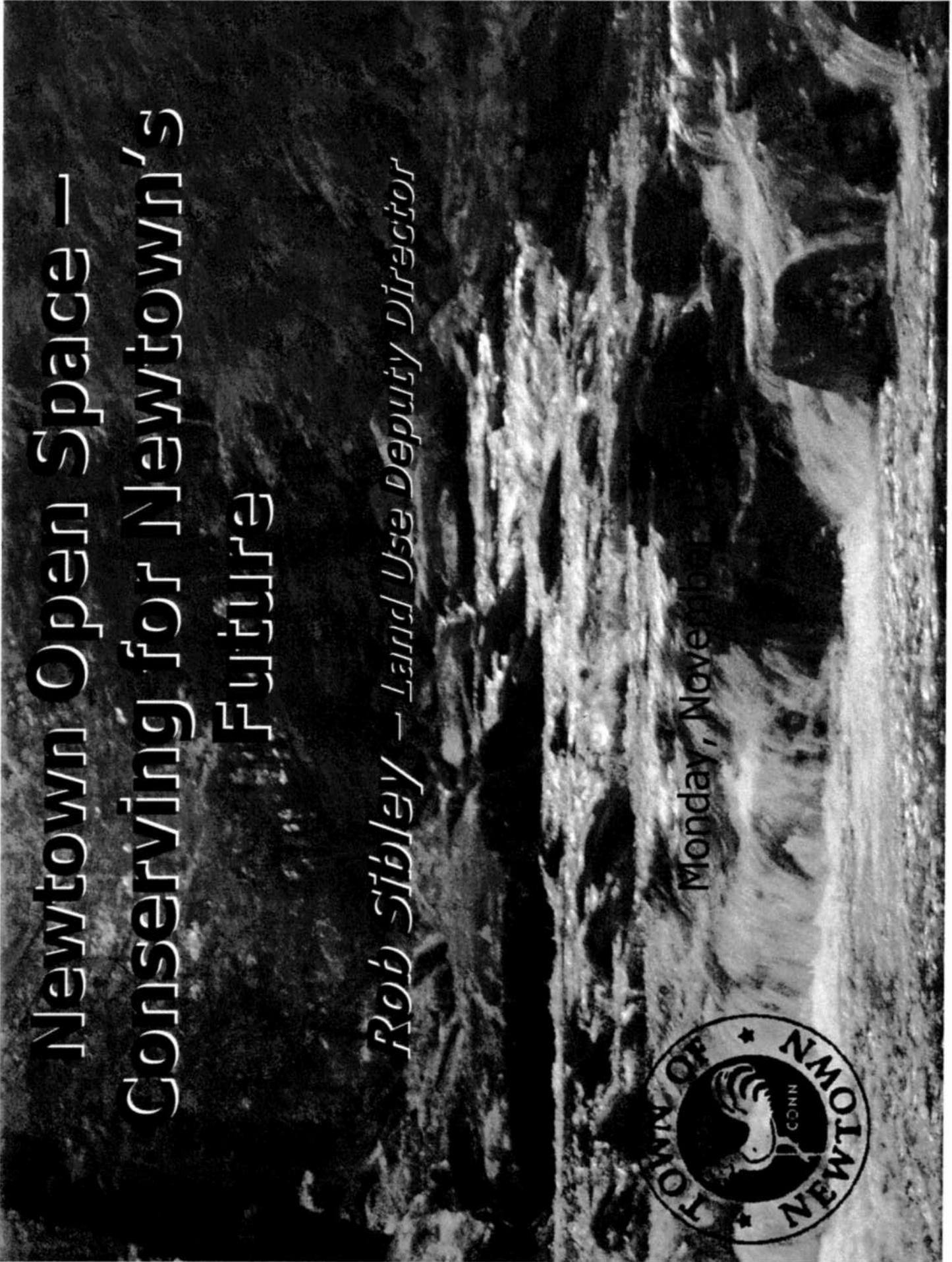
I am prepared to discuss this directly with the Board of Education if you so choose.

C: Dr. Janet Robinson
Members Board of Education

Newtown Open Space – Conserving for Newtown's Future

Rob Sibley – Land Use Deputy Director

Monday, November 15, 2010



The Open Space Mission

Newtown's natural diversity and scenic beauty add immeasurably to the quality of life of its residents.

The Open Space Mission

The town's prosperity and character has always depended upon its natural resources.

- Natural areas and waterways - provide critical wildlife habitat, clean drinking water, and scenic natural beauty.
- Forests and farms - contribute to a healthy and diverse economy.
- Parks and open lands - improve the quality of life and help attract businesses.

The Open Space Mission

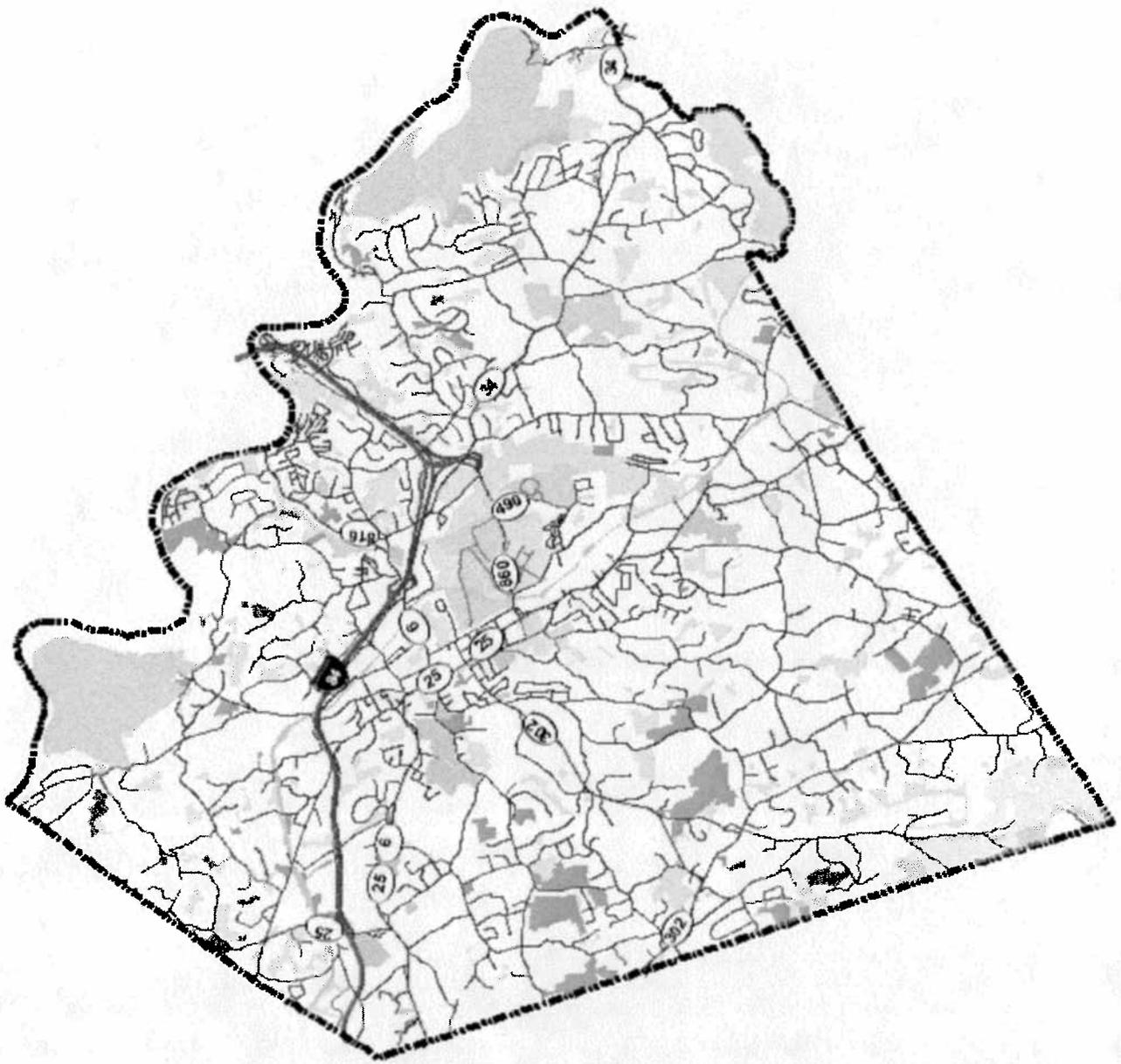
For Newtown to remain an attractive town in which to live, work and conduct business, it is critical that development be balanced with land conservation.

Functional Categories for Open Space

1. Natural Resource Protection Areas - includes animal and vegetative habitat, river corridors, trap rock ridges
2. Outdoor Recreation - plazas, sitting areas, arboretums and trails
3. Resource Management - forests, fisheries, farmland
4. Protection of Public Health and Safety - floodplains, wetlands, unbuildable areas or areas with limitations for development including steep slopes, or high water tables
5. Areas that Shape Community Character or Design - buffer strips, front, back and side yards, urban plazas, greenways, open space dedications related to development
6. Historic or Archeological Sites - historic structures and grounds, historic districts, town greens

Open Space benefits provide a wealth of value for Newtown

- ◆ Scenic Beauty
- ◆ Preserving Biodiversity
- ◆ Protecting Water Quality
- ◆ Providing Passive Recreation
- ◆ Protecting Historical Sites
- ◆ Providing Flood Control
- ◆ Control of Sprawl
- ◆ Protection of Air Quality
- ◆ Ridgeline / View Shed Protection
- ◆ Protection of River Corridors
- ◆ Providing Economic Stability
- ◆ Protection of Local Agriculture
- ◆ Connection of Greenways
- ◆ Protection of Rare Species



Land Partners

- ◆ Land Trusts-
 - ◆ Newtown Forest Association
 - ◆ Mattituck
- ◆ State of Connecticut –
 - ◆ State Parks
 - ◆ State Forests
 - ◆ Centennial Watershed
- ◆ Private organizations –
 - ◆ Fish and Game Clubs
 - ◆ Religious organizations
 - ◆ Newtown Bridle Land Association
- ◆ Private Owners -
 - ◆ Conservation Easements
 - ◆ Farms



- ◆ Utilities –
 - ◆ First Light
 - ◆ Iroquois
 - ◆ Aquarion

Newtown-Owned Open Space Leading into the Current Process

- ◆ Newtown Open Space Advisory Plan, Clark and Associates, 1975
- ◆ Open Space in Newtown 2002, Newtown OS Task Force, Sibley et al.
- ◆ Early Plans - Conservation and Developments, Regional and state planning tools
- ◆ Subdivision Open Space – A goal achieved or an opportunity missed?
- ◆ Into 2002 , over 1350 acres had been protected to date – a good mix of success stories.
- ◆ Stops and Starts – Which task force is on First?
- ◆ No Staff – Several agencies asked to perform OS tasks, no one agent specifically assigned to process

Newtown Open Space Current Process Highlights



Highlights:

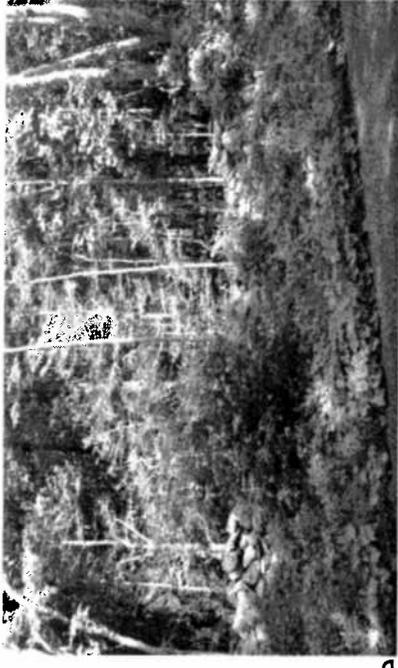
- Open Space Referendum for Bonding – \$10,000,000.00 in 2005 bonded over five years, more bonding planned into current CIP
- Current Holdings - Newtown possesses approximately 1,850 of Open Space
- Geographic Information System – Mapping at a whole new level
- Staff Assigned – Land Use Deputy Director given oversight responsibility
- Commissions Re-assigned - Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions are separated in 2006
- Zoning sharpens regulations – Referrals and requirements are refined
- There are grants? – The town has nearly \$800,000.00 in matching grants for purchase of OS

Highlights Continued;

- Indexing - New databases created to review ownership
- Care & Custody - definitions and stewardship plans created
- New offering reviews – 74 potential offerings reviewed, walked, ranked, databases to track correspondence
- Surveying – Parcels identified for surveying
- Signage – New signage created and boundaries marked
- Parks and Recreation – New relationships formed in care of OS, new trails committee
- Better Communication - BOS, BOF, Legislative Council, Zoning, Conservation

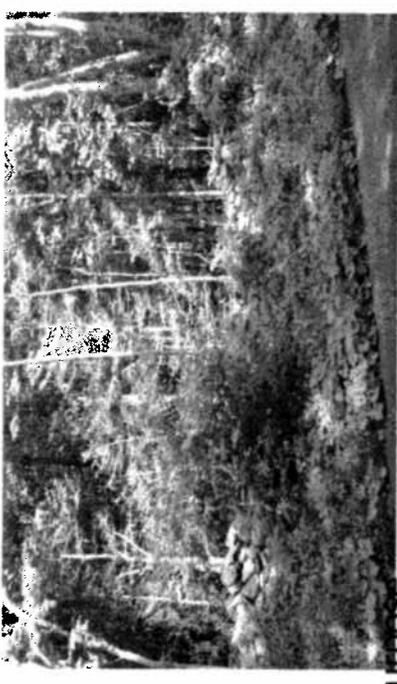
Techniques for Preserving Newtown Open Space

- **Fee Simple** –
 - Outright Purchase of full title to land
 - Owner has full control
 - Allows for permanent protection and full public access
- **Development Rights or Conservation Easements** –
 - Less expensive than fee simple
 - Landowner retains ownership, restriction runs with land
 - Unique to each parcel – Town does have standard language
- **Donation or Bargain Sale** –
 - Land or Easement sold at reduce value
 - Allows for permanent protection and may include full public access
 - Life Estate
- **Planning and Zoning** –
 - Subdivision set aside, 15% of buildable land
 - Conservation Subdivisions
 - Fee in Lieu for OS



Techniques for Preserving Newtown Open Space Continued;

- Tax Programs –
 - 490 program
 - Forestry and Agricultural
 - Open Space – Ordinance needed
 - Abatement/Donation
- Eminent Domain –
 - Right of Government to take private property for a public purpose
 - Must pay just compensation
 - Owner has full control
 - Allows for permanent protection and full public access
- Land Exchange –
 - Exchange of developable land for land of high conservation value
 - Lands must be of equal value

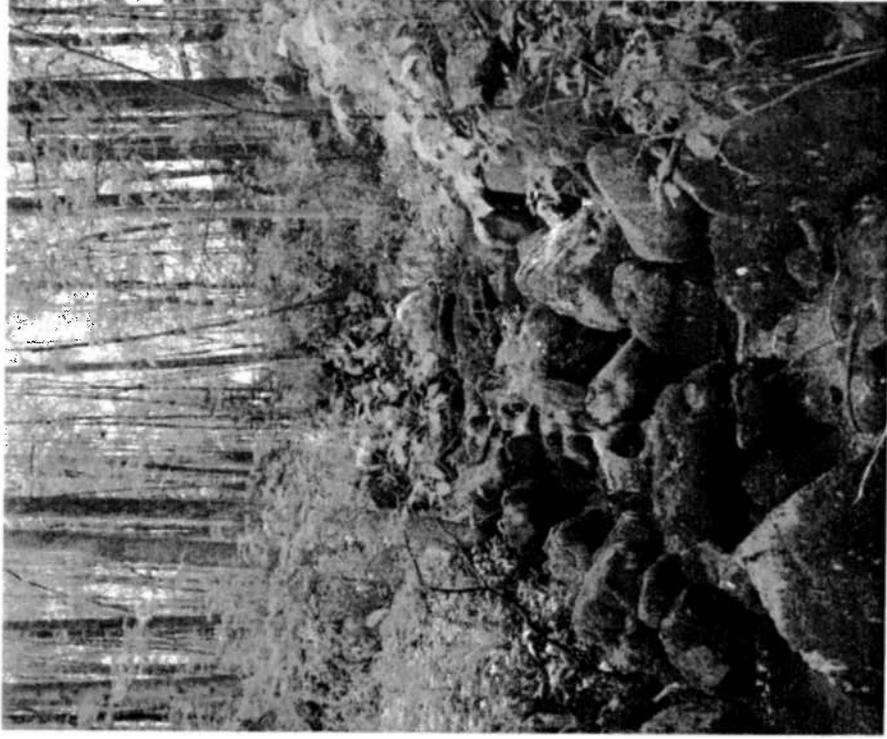


The OS Process for Town Acquisition



- Multi-agency review for purchase includes Conservation, P&Z, Selectmen, and LC
- OS is offered to staff through letter of request
- CC is informed of offer and is given maps and description of parcel
- CC ranking and recommendation is recorded in database
- Appraisals, title searches and environmental reviews secured
- BOS is given presentation by staff on parcel and transfer, a recommendation is given
- Referral to Zoning for vote on POCD
- Legislative Council is given presentation by staff on recommendations of past agencies, vote is taken to purchase/receive property

Open Space Process (continued)



- Closing date is set and completed
- Land is surveyed and mapped
- Signage is set
- Care and Custody established
- Stewardship program established
- Trails established, if warranted