

Community Conversation #3 – February 18, 2020

Fairfield Hills Campus -Possible Options-



Presentation Objectives:

- Review highlights from previous Community Conversations.
- Review options for campus and high level costs.
- Address remaining questions received from public by incorporating into the presentation.
- Announce plan for Session #4.



Review of Past Presentations

Community Conversation – September 23, 2019

Fairfield Hills Campus
-The History-



Community Conversation – November 18, 2019

Fairfield Hills Campus
-Financials-

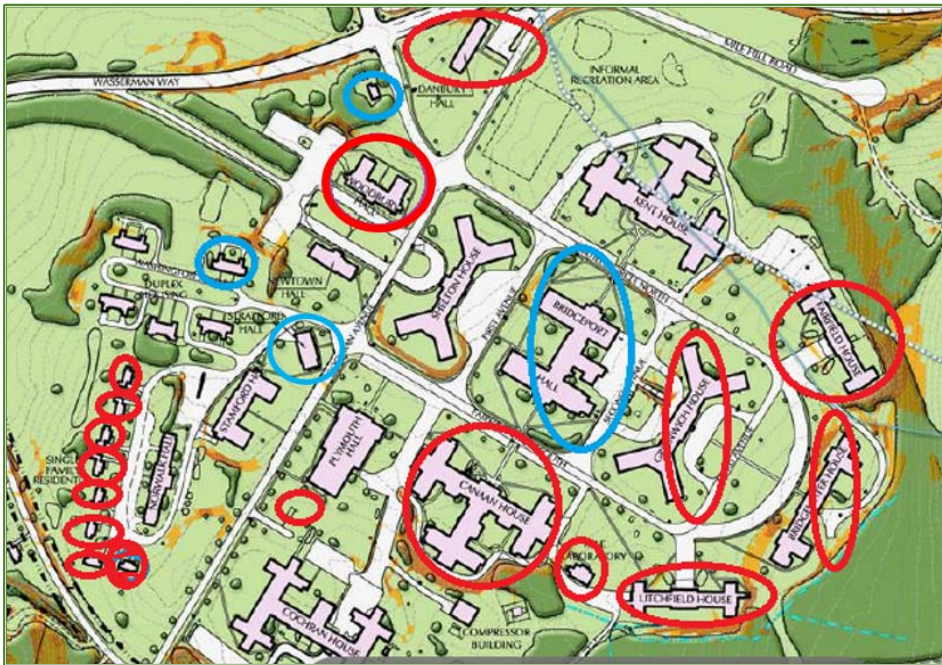


A quick review

- 17 buildings have been demolished
- 4 buildings have been renovated
- 4 buildings have been constructed

Approximately 1,100 tractor-trailer loads equaling 22,000 tons of contaminated soil were removed shortly after the property purchase.

Hazardous building materials in structures, tunnels and buried utility vaults remain.



Fairfield Hills Campus Events



Event	Date	Time	More Info
American Red Cross Blood Drive	Thursday, February 28th	1 – 6 p.m.	RedCrossBlood.org
Run4Hunger	Saturday, May 11th	8:15 – 11 a.m.	run4hunger-newtown.com
Strut Your Mutt	Saturday, May 18th	11 a.m. – 2 p.m.	newtownparkandbark.org/events
Super Cool Plant Sale	Saturday, June 1st	8 – 6 p.m.	Facebook: FineGardeningMagazine
Catherine Violet Hubbard Butterfly Party	Saturday, June 8 th	12 – 4 p.m.	CVHFoundation.org
Newtown Farmers' Market	Tuesdays, June through October	2 – 6:30 p.m.	Facebook: FarmersMarketatFairfieldHills
Rooster Run	Saturday, June 15th	8 – 10:30 a.m.	Facebook: Newtown Parks and Recreation
American Red Cross Blood Drive	Tuesday, June 25th	1 – 6 p.m.	RedCrossBlood.org
Mad Dash	Saturday, June 29 th	8 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Facebook: Newtown Parks and Recreation
Newtown Day	Saturday, July 27th	11 a.m. – 8 p.m.	https://newtownday.com/
REACH Car Show	Sunday, September 8th	8 a.m. – 4 p.m.	https://www.reachnewtown.org/new-events
Newtown Arts Festival	Friday, September 20 – Sunday, September 22nd	Times vary	https://newtownartsfestival.com/
Parks and Recreation Carnival	Friday, September 27 th – Sunday September 29th	Times vary.	Facebook: Newtown Parks and Recreation
Merry Hill & Newtown Volunteer Ambulance Fun- Tober Fest	Saturday, October 5th	10 a.m. – 4 p.m.	https://z-m-www.facebook.com/events/1206906099481472/
American Red Cross Blood Drive	Wednesday, October 23rd	1 – 6 p.m.	https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/financial-drive
Newtown Congregational Church's C.R.O.P Walk	Sunday, October 27th	2 – 3 p.m.	MerryHillCenter.com
American Red Cross Blood Drive	Thursday, December 19th	1 – 6:00 p.m.	RedCrossBlood.org



Financials -

Total Fairfield Hills Bonding for 2000 – 2018: \$37,925,000

\$29,925,000 without Community Center & Senior Center

\$18,925,000 without Municipal Center, Community Center & Senior Center

Community Center:	\$5,000,000
Senior Center:	\$3,000,000
Municipal Center:	\$11,000,000

Example of Projects Paid for with Bonding – 2015-2019

Project	Cost
Greenhouse demolition	18,000
Single Family Houses demolition	260,000
Shelton Cupola removal	30,000
Tunnels	70,000
Duplex 63 renovation	230,000
Canaan House demolition	3,183,000
Canaan House basement removal	370,000
Woodbury Hall demolition	700,000
Shelton Hall paint remediation	19,000
Stratford Hall roof remediation and replacement	120,000

Total: \$5,000,000

Financials -

Annual Revenue

Revenue from CAM:	\$29,750
Estimated event fees:	\$200
Total Revenue:	\$29,950

Annual Expenses

Average Annual Expense: \$307,000

Examples of Ongoing Expenses

- Snow plowing
- Snow shoveling
- Streetscape weeding, mulching, pruning
- Grass cutting
- Weeding, mulching, pruning outside of streetscape
- Street and sewer maintenance

Fiscal Years	Annual Costs
2005-06	550,000
2006-07	598,500
2007-08	498,500
2008-09	515,240
*2009-10	415,000
2010-11	385,000
2011-12	156,786
2012-13	165,085
2013-14	170,191
2014-15	175,454
2015-16	180,881
2016-17	186,475
2017-18	192,242
2018-19	202,188
2019-20	208,317
Total	4,599,859

*Fiscal Year 2009 – 2010	
DeMarco Management	74,954
Prestige Landscape	101,550
Security	89,895
	266,399

Utilities:

- Some sewer and water lines are 18 feet below grade and were installed in the 1930s.

Accomplishments:

- WSA has invested \$2 million to upgrade pump station, wells and storage facility.
- Fire protection system has been overhauled, replacing 12 hydrants.
- Main gas line installed on Keating Farm Ave and DG Beers Blvd.
- Utility loop installed (cable, phone, power), replacing original utilities.
- New laterals will be installed at a higher elevation.

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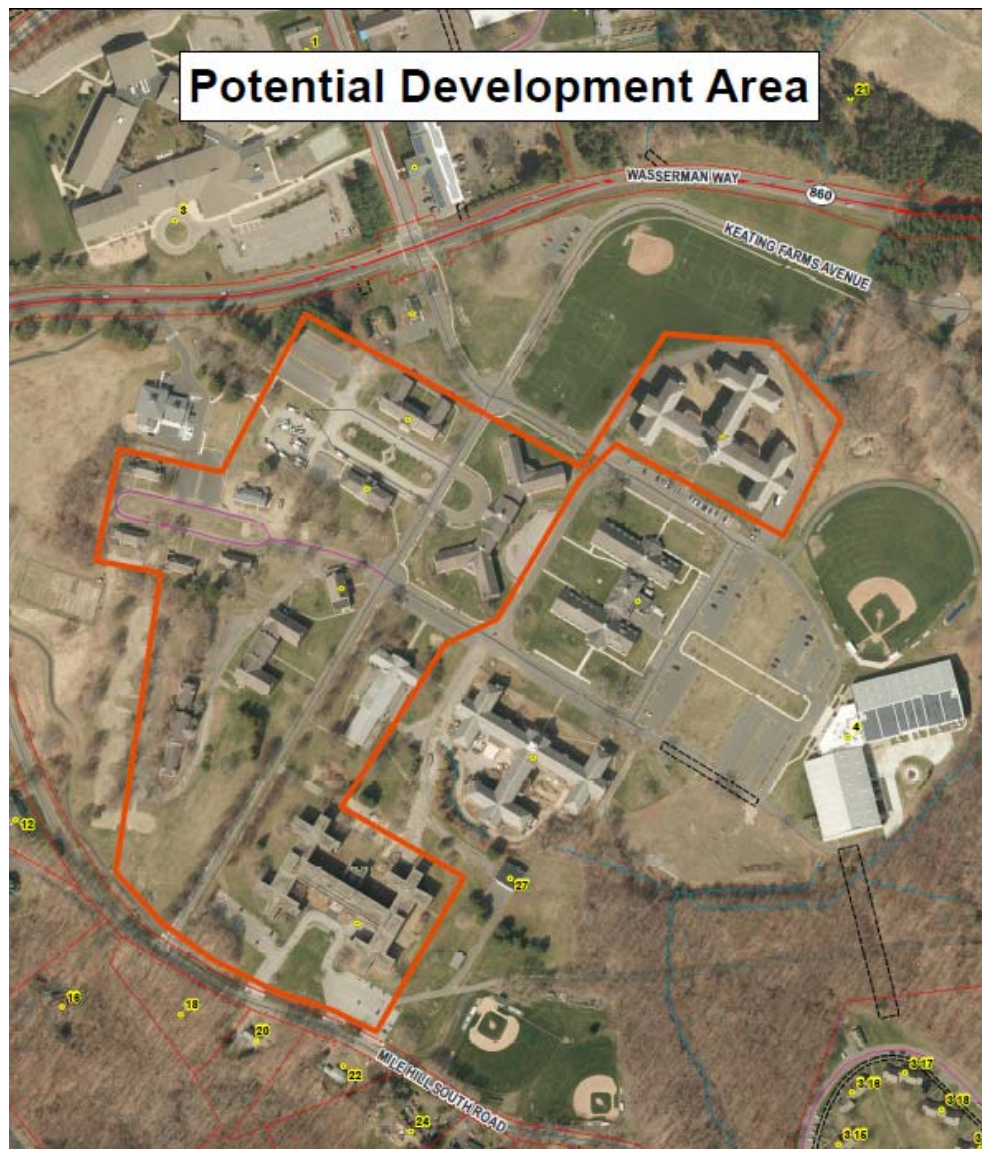
Challenges -



Keep in Mind.....

- The property was purchased from the State in 2004 so Newtown could control its destiny on the property.
- Buildings are aging rapidly.
- The Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse Zone does not currently allow residential.
- Town referendum will determine level of support for residential component.
- A vote in support of residential being added to the FH Master Plan does **not** mean it will happen.
 - Allows P&Z to **consider** adding residential use to FHAR regulations
 - Public hearings would take place with P&Z
 - Allows town to pursue interested developers for a project with residential component
 - No developer has been chosen
 - Land Use application process would need to be followed
 - Developers may still decide not to pursue this project
 - Developers still would need to apply for, and be awarded, tax credits to fund a project





Options



Option Spotlight #1: Continue Status Quo

Positives –

- Town retains greater control of campus activities
- Community gathering space for events
- More park like setting in short term while commercial is being pursued
- To date, Community Center & Senior Center were built on available property

Considerations –

- No large buildings will be renovated
- To date demo has been slow, will need to accelerate
- Cost of building remediation and demo is full responsibility of taxpayers
- Creating clean commercial sites has no immediate ROI for tax payers
- Useful lives of buildings are limited
- Parking management and campus event logistics

Discussion -

- Pursue commercial according to the FH Master Plan and FHAR regulations





 **NEWTOWN**
MUNICIPAL CENTER





Option Spotlight #2: Main Street Concept

- **Positives –**

- Place to gather
- Possible real estate tax revenue
- Bring potential incremental business to campus

- **Considerations –**

- Does not reuse existing buildings
- Cost of demo/site prep (\$20 million est.) will likely be incurred by Town
- No return on investment from demo
- Could cannibalize from other Newtown commercial districts
- Not a viable option. There are no proposals for this type of concept at this time.
- Parking management and campus event logistics

- **Discussion –**

- What is located in upper floors? Apartments?
- Note: retail and office demand is soft.



Option Spotlight #3: Mixed Use with Residential

- **Positives –**

- Potential to save large existing buildings, architecture and feel of the campus
- Cost of renovation/demo avoidance paid for by developer (\$25+ million investment for large building)
- Sources of possible revenue: real estate taxes, car taxes
- Interest exists to do these projects by qualified developers
- Contributes to financial sustainability of campus
- Significant employment opportunities for renovation work
- Opportunity to save aesthetics of campus and historic buildings
- Add diversity to housing mix

- **Considerations –**

- Parking management and campus event logistics
- Positive and negative Impacts of having residents on campus

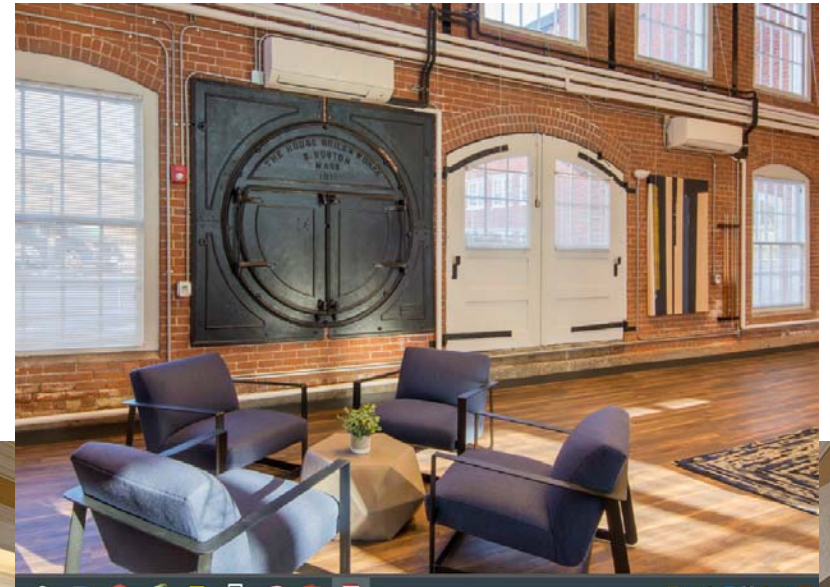
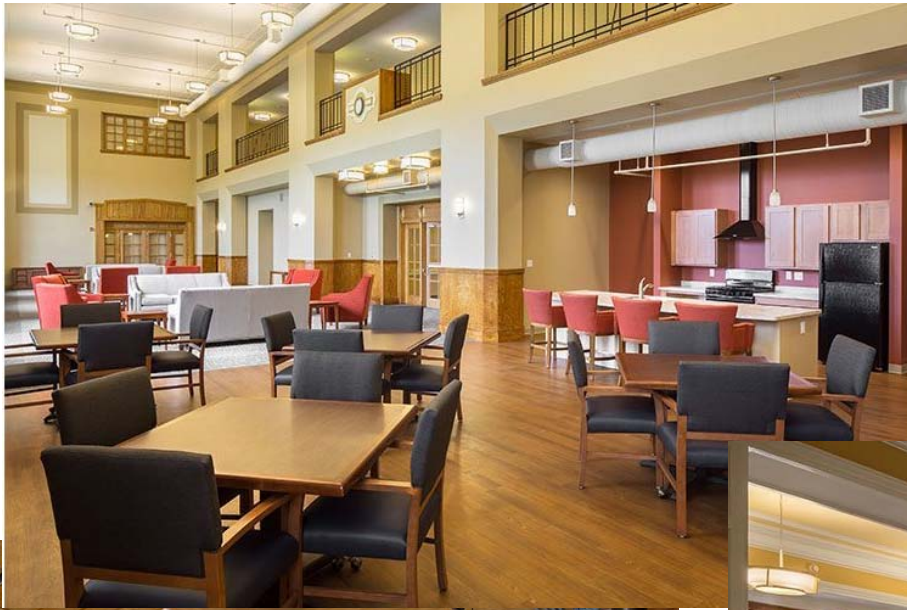
- **Discussion –**

- Currently only known financially feasible option for existing large buildings
- Significant investment in community (could be as high as \$50 million.)
- Other projects would likely be on green space
- Lease terms & conditions will address possible conflict with residents and campus activities
- Master plan calls for building reuse or rebuilding on current building footprints









FHMPRC Recommendations Regarding Uses at Fairfield Hills

Supported Uses: The Committee recommends that the plan be modified to *allow commercial proposals that include a housing component provided that the proposal is for no more than two existing buildings and that the commercial component is consistent with the vision of the property*. As mentioned in section 2.0, we understand that large development projects – like those that would be needed to salvage Kent or Cochran – require some level of a housing component to be financially viable both in gaining initial funding and in operating the business once finished. However, the survey results showed significant distaste for any housing, though there was the desire for additional development. Also, the survey made it clear that town residents would very likely not support spending taxpayer money either to help salvage or to raze the buildings. We also learned that some buildings were deteriorating to the point of raising significant safety concerns. Given this dilemma, we discussed what would be gained and what lost, should housing be allowed as an ancillary component to commercial development:

PROS: **Cost avoidance** – The larger buildings would cost about \$4M each to raze/salvage. **Character** – The older buildings have architectural features that many residents find pleasing. The newer buildings (like the NYA and community and senior centers) cannot reproduce these or similar features because they are cost-prohibitive. Allowing housing, as part of re-purposing the buildings, would more likely maintain the overall character of the property. **Safety** – There are considerable town expenses to address all safety issues present in the buildings. Development would help offset the overall cost. **Revenue** – Added development would provide more revenue to the town. **Population** – The added population would help the viability of the community and senior centers along with local businesses – both within the campus and across the town as a whole.

FHMPRC Recommendations Regarding Uses at Fairfield Hills

CONS: Parking – We are concerned about the viability of parking, especially as we do not yet know how, in practice, parking will work when the community and senior centers and the brew pub open. **Shift in focus** – The vision specifically calls out that Fairfield Hills is to be a destination for all residents of Newtown. Adding a housing component could shift commercial development to be more service-oriented to those living on the campus. The town as landlord, by proxy – From what we can tell, Newtown would be among the first to have people renting on town-owned land in a privately-owned building. **Aging infrastructure** – Housing will put more of a load on already fragile infrastructure, like sewers. While town staff is actively working on grant proposals to address the sewers, the town may see added cost to repair or replace such infrastructure. The committee then discussed whether there were checks and balances on the process of approving commercial development and if such checks would be able to ensure that any development was consistent with the vision. In addition to the standard Land Use and Fairfield Hills Authority process, the Board of Selectmen and other authorities, as appropriate, must approve any lease. Planning and Zoning approval would also be needed. ***In the end the committee decided that housing, when alongside a commercial project, would be acceptable provided that no more than 2 buildings on campus contain housing.***

Option Spotlight #4: Pursue Commercial Investment

- **Positives –**

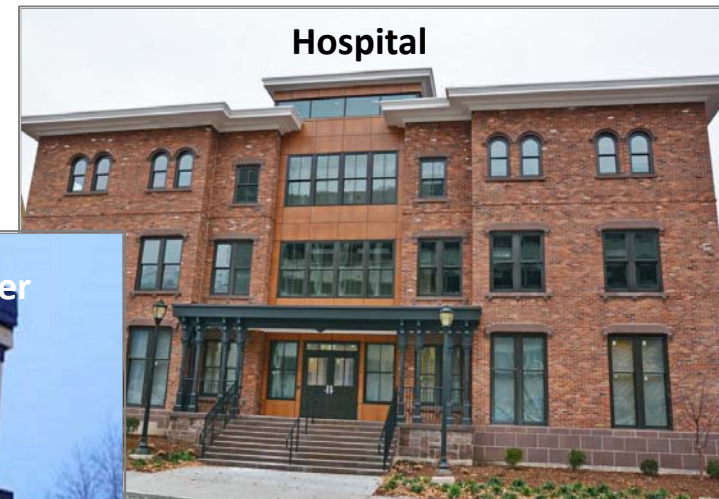
- Tax, CAM & Lease revenue
- Add jobs to Newtown
- Small buildings (duplex, Newtown Hall) are only possible option for redevelopment and are not financially feasible (no tax credits, less expensive real estate available)

- **Considerations –**

- Not reusing existing buildings
- Parking management and campus event logistics
- CAM and rent do not cover annual operational expenses
- Contributes to a financially sustainable campus
- Helps fund future campus projects
- Taxpayers likely to bear cost of remediation and demo of buildings
- No present or anticipated short-term interest

- **Discussion –**

- Projects would likely be on green space
- Community could still oppose uses (as in past)
- More large scale planning



Past Proposals



Past Commercial Proposals

Reason	Proposal	Location
chose another location off campus	veterinary hospital	Woodbury Hall
not financially feasible	cultural arts center antique store children's museum not-for-profit contemporary art center various food & beverage establishments police department veterinary hospital indoor tennis courts food court	Kent Hall Shelton House Plymouth Hall Plymouth Hall Plymouth Hall Stratford Hall Cochran Hall Newtown Hall Cochran Hall duplex building
not an approved use	mixed use (including apartments)	Shelton House, Newtown Hall and Woodbury Hall
proposal withdrawn	medical offices psychiatric conference center ice hockey rink athletic village soccer / sports center hydroponic greenhouses ice rink international school racquet ball club not-for-profit data center Board of Ed - magnet school Board of Ed - regional special education	Newtown Hall Cochran Hall Norwalk Hall all buildings Kent Hall Norwalk Hall inside NYA Kent House & Cochran House no specific building duplex building 2 duplexes Kent House Newtown Hall

Past Commercial Proposals

Reason	Proposal	Location
public opposition	apartments psychiatric hospital donut shop	Cochran Hall Norwalk Hall Woodbury Hall
rejected	Army reserve center veteran treatment center nursing school miniature golf course rope climbing & zipline course crop farming	High Meadow Kent House Newtown Hall, Stratford Hall, Stamford Hall & Canaan House no specified area southeastern side of campus by trail High Meadow

Submitted Questions by Topic



Topic: 8-30g & Affordable



- The town can not be forced by a developer to implement an 8-30g development, however there will likely be an affordable component to apartment developments due to federal and state tax credits needed to make the project financially feasible.
- If mixed use development is added as an approved use to the FHAR zone, the town can manage the type of residential component through land lease terms and conditions.
- The town has no plans to enforce rent caps as this may prevent projects from being financially viable and deter any potential interest.



Topic: Taxes



<u>Bond Issue Date</u>	<u>Bond Amount</u>	<u>Description</u>
6/15/2002 - 11/15/2007	3,900,000	Purchase of Property <i>(Include Mile Hill South homes and sewer capacity)</i>
	200,000	Environmental Insurance
	235,000	Pootatuck Aquifer Protection
	128,000	State of CT DEP
	132,000	Bonding & Legal Fees
	3,530,000	Soil Remediation
	325,000	Mothballing
	11,000,000	New Municipal Building
	* <u>19,450,000</u>	

* Bonded amount not including interest
Original debt runs out between 2022 – 2027.

Topic: Taxes

Remediation & Demo of all buildings including duplexes:

- Cost \$20,000,000
- Average annual principal and interest payment (20 year bond) = \$1,350,000
- Increase in average annual tax bill per household = \$109
- Total per household = \$2,180
- Current tax bill per household related to original FH bonding = \$100
- Total estimated annual tax per household related to FH bonding = \$209/year
- Cost per household/20 years = \$4,180



Topic: Financial

Financial benefits of mixed development include:

- Common area maintenance revenue
- Real estate tax revenue
- Personal property tax for commercial component of mixed use.
- Avoiding abatement and demolitions costs for buildings being reused.
- Unused buildings would still require abatement and demolition at the cost of the town unless other proposals were submitted to the town.
- Demo spending will take away from other initiatives



Topic: Financials

Estimated abatement & demolition costs

Cochran House: \$3,837,907



Plymouth Hall: \$1,043,495



Kent House: \$4,263,308



Shelton Hall: \$1,936,377



Newtown Hall: \$879,468



Stamford Hall: \$1,104,054



Norwalk Hall: \$1,638,921



If the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee's recommendation of a housing component in 2 buildings is accepted, this could potentially save the town a maximum amount of \$8,101,214 in abatement and demolition costs.

Topic: Intangibles

- Current and proposed uses will allow for the campus to remain as a place for residents to gather and a place to hold events as well as pursue commercial.
- High Meadow is 19 acres of protected open space.
- There are 66 acres open space in total.
- **If** mixed use development is added as an approved use to the FHAR zone, the town will continue to own the land surrounding the residential building(s) as well as the ground where the building(s) reside. Lease terms and conditions will be written to allow for public use of the property surrounding these buildings.



Topic: Process



Current

Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone:

- Currently does not allow housing as a permitted use on the campus.



2018 Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee:

- Collected information from boards, commissions, current tenants, commercial realtors, developers, residents and prior Master Plan Review Committee members.
- Collected more information from residents via a survey.
- Based upon these steps, the FHMPRC recommended the following:
 “The Committee recommends that the plan be modified to allow commercial proposals that include a housing component provided that the proposal is for no more than two existing buildings and that the commercial component is consistent with the vision of the property.”

Note: Developers need a residential component to make their projects financially feasible. Residential rentals are a more constant and reliable revenue source than commercial.



Topic: Process

Next Steps

Referendum:

Voters decide whether to include mixed use housing as an allowed use.

Board of Selectmen:

- Approve the ***Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee (2018) Recommendations***
- Pass a resolution authorizing the Land Use agency to apply to the Planning and Zoning Commission for an amendment to the FHAR adding Mixed Use Housing as a Permitted Use.

Planning & Zoning Commission:

- Must approve mixed use housing as an approved use on the campus.
- FHAR zone must be updated to include mixed use housing as an approved use.

Planning:

- The town has no plans to hire an outside consulting firm to assist in the process.
- Hiring a consulting firm may be beneficial in educating the community but would require funds that could be used elsewhere on the campus.



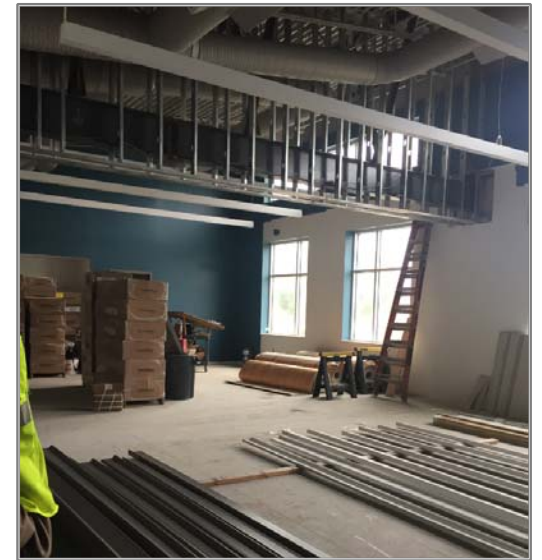
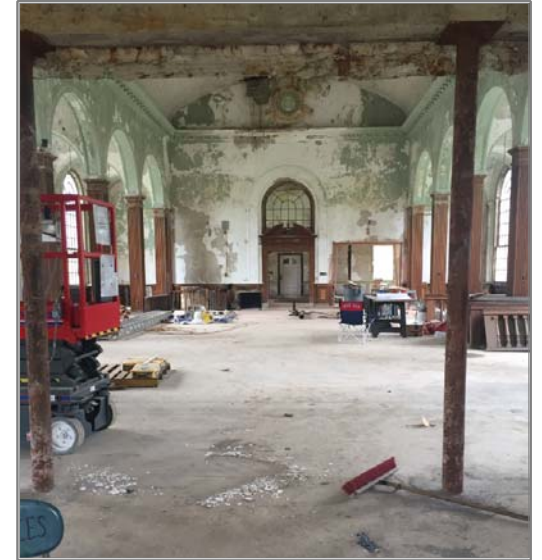
Topic: Requirements for Development

Town's Requirements of Developer:

- There is no plan for the town to require union workers or prevailing wage for development projects on the campus.
- There are no plans for the town to adopt an ordinance requiring the use of union workers.
- There is no need to establish a housing committee or authority as the development will be owned and managed by a private entity.
- Any development on the Fairfield Hills campus must abide by the FHAR zoning, follow the Master Plan and any lease terms and conditions.

Environmental Sustainability:

- The town encourages energy efficiency in developments including the use of solar panels.
- It is possible to add energy efficiency measures as a condition of the land lease.



Topic: Public Health & Safety

- Development on the Fairfield Hills campus will result in a positive impact to public health as these projects will include remediation which would safely remove or encapsulate harmful contaminants.
- Hazardous materials currently in existing buildings will be remediated and removed according to State of CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and Health Department regulation by qualified professionals.
- In the case of housing, remediation will be at the cost of the developer.



Topic: Other Options



Grants:

- Economic and Community Development department is always looking for grant opportunities for the Fairfield Hills campus.
- Most grant programs want to ensure there is a vested interest in projects so matching funds are required up to 50%.

Uses:

- Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development, Christal Preszler, continuously networks with groups outside of Newtown looking for opportunities that best suit the campus.
- Development is driven by market demand. Although ideas such as a university on campus are an approved use and may best suite the campus, it is only possible if there is a demand.



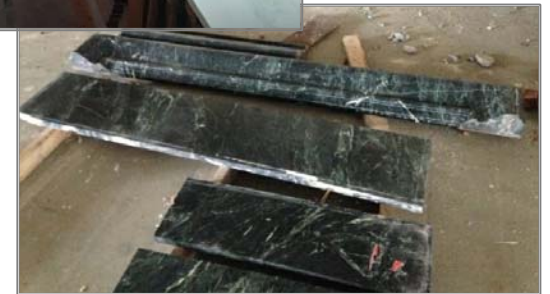
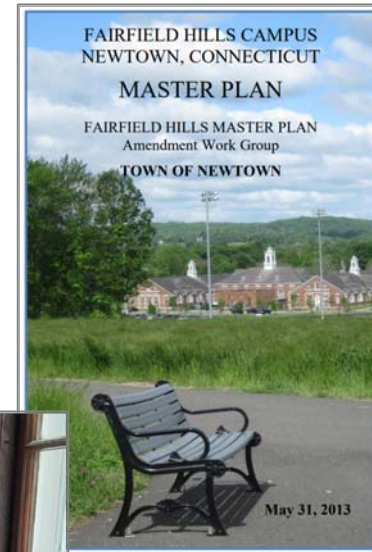
Topic: Other Options

Subdividing the property:

- The Master Plan does not include conditions for dividing the campus property and would have to be revised.
- This concept was considered in the past and was rejected by the public.

Reuse:

- The town makes efforts to preserve architectural elements of the campus and encourages their reuse when possible.
- The Fairfield Hills Authority has made considerations for alternative uses of the cupolas.
- The town considered selling the cupolas but was advised that reuse of original elements help qualify to receive historical tax credits.



What is Next?

Community Conversation #4: Meet Some Potential Developers

March 16, 2020 – Community Center

March 18, 2020 (Snow Date) – Community Center

Townwide Referendum



Submitted Questions & Comments

Submitted Comment:

FFH can be a very beneficial parcel to the tax rolls. This discussion I would hope can be rolled into the conversation. Also Newtown should not be afraid of the 8-30g but plan accordingly. Ridgefield is seeing many projects under the 8-30g and personally I think having residences and bringing people into the Central business area is key to our long term planning, commerce, tax rolls and can enable people of all ages and option to live in town, downsizing too and for many reasons.

Response:

- The town owns the Fairfield Hills campus and as the property owner determines its use as allowed by the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse (FHAR) zoning.
- Currently, the FHAR zoning does not allow housing as a permitted use.
- See slide #29 for further information

Submitted Question:

I would also be sensitive to the 8-30g issue and how to you work that into any planning for housing? Do you have an idea at this stage on how you might protect from this potential issues within the FFH compound?

Response:

- The town owns the Fairfield Hills campus and as the property owner determines its use as allowed by the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse (FHAR) zoning.
- Currently, the FHAR zoning does not allow housing as a permitted use.

Submitted Question:

Will there be support of an ordinance enforcing rent caps- so that all housing on town land remains affordable for the community- not affordable based on "market rates"?

Response:

- The town has no plans to enforce rent caps as this may prevent projects from being financially viable and deter any potential interest.
- “Affordable” rates are calculated based upon the area median income, not market rates.

Submitted Question:

In terms of the 8-30g affordable question and Newtown owning the land:

How will Newtown see any revenue in taxes if the town continues to own the land at FFH?

- The Town will likely see revenue in real estate taxes on the building(s), common charges and personal property tax on the commercial components should a project move forward.

Should Newtown own land since it is so very expensive to do so?

- Owning the land is not expensive. However, maintenance – including potential demolition does come at a cost.
- Owning the land allows the Town to have control over activities and development on campus.

Newtown should be encouraging and partnering in planning with potential investors and looking to generating tax revenue.

Submitted Question:

What does this mean to residents and their taxes? Debt load?

When does original debt run out?

- Debt runs out between 2022 and 2027.

Reducing to dollars and cents.

Response:

Remediation & Demo of all buildings including duplexes:

- Cost \$20,000,000
- Average annual principal and interest payment (20 year bond) = \$1,350,000
- Increase in average annual tax bill per household = \$109
- Total per household = \$2,180
- Current tax bill per household related to original FH bonding = \$100
- Total estimated annual tax per household related to FH bonding = \$209/year
- Cost per household/20 years = \$4,180

Submitted Question:

What is the end result of potentially including residential units in Shelton or Kent?

- financial burden with respect to demolition of up to two buildings would not be on the town
- preserve a building or buildings
- probable real estate tax revenue
- Common Area Maintenance (CAM) revenue

Simply avoiding the cost to demolish them in the future -- how much?

- Shelton demo cost: estimated \$1,936,377
- Kent demo cost: estimated \$4,263,308
- Estimated Total: \$6,199,685

Tax Revenue -- how much, if any?

- This has not yet been determined and would be based on final project proposal(s).

Balance of campus would remain untouched, with any remaining buildings still needing to be demolished?

- Correct, unless a proposal for an approved use is received.

Submitted Comment:

List of intangibles

- ❖ Place for residents to gather.
- ❖ Place to preserve nature.
- ❖ Place to hold events.

Response:

- Current and proposed uses will allow for the campus to remain as a place for residents to gather and a place to hold events as well as pursue commercial.
- High Meadow is 19 acres of protected open space.
- There are 66 acres open space in total.
- **If** mixed use development is added as an approved use to the FHAR zone, the town will continue to own the land surrounding the residential building(s) as well as the ground where the building(s) reside. Lease terms and conditions will be written to allow for public use of the property surrounding these buildings.

Submitted Question:

Of the following, which are true, which are false?

- 1) P&Z must accept residential development as an allowed use before the town can have a realistic discussion about any such opportunity.
 - True. There are currently conceptual discussions with no actual proposals taking place.
- 2) The Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zoning must be updated to include residential as an allowed use.
 - True, in order to allow residential, the FHAR must be amended.
- 3) Once residential use is an allowed use, a developer could sue the town to force us to allow residential development on the FFH campus.
 - False. The Town will continue to own the land and therefore have final say in it's use as per the FHAR zoning.
- 4) If there was ever a residential use established within the FFH campus, residents could band together in the future to sue the town, their landlord, or some other approach to prevent community uses in the campus such as arts festivals, farmer's market, live music, sporting events that use lights -- all of which are currently allowed.
 - True, in theory someone could present a suit. However the Town owns the land will continue to own the land surrounding the residential building as well as the ground where the residential building resides. Terms and conditions will be included in the land lease and tenant leases that ensures it is understood that FH is an active campus with events, music, sports, etc.

Submitted Question:

Will any future work completed on housing in Fairfield Hills be done with union workers?

Response:

- Unless required by law, there is no plan for the town to require union workers or prevailing wage for development projects on the campus.

Submitted Question:

Will there be support of an ordinance requiring all housing development done on town land be done with union workers?

Response:

- There are no plans for the town to adopt an ordinance requiring the use of union workers.

Submitted Question:

Will there be support for a "housing committee" to oversee housing being developed on town lands?

Response:

- There is no need to establish a housing committee or authority as the development will be owned and managed by a private entity.

Submitted Question:

Despite private development of any properties will there be support for public oversight for housing developments?

Response:

- Any development on the Fairfield Hills campus must abide by the FHAR zoning, follow the Master Plan and any lease terms and conditions set forth by the town.

Submitted Question:

Will housing be environmentally sustainable?

Response:

- While specific details of possible projects are unknown, the town encourages energy efficiency in developments including the use of solar panels.

Submitted Question:

What measures are being taken to make sure all housing is environmentally sustainable?

Will there be support for an ordinance that any housing on town lands have to meet certain environmental criteria?

Response:

- To date, nothing has been negotiated, but the town encourages environmentally sustainable measures.

Submitted Question:

What will be the public health impact of housing on Fairfield Hills?

Response:

- Development on the Fairfield Hills campus will result in a positive impact to public health as these projects will include remediation which would safely remove or encapsulate harmful contaminants.
- Hazardous materials currently in existing buildings will be remediated and removed according to State of CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and Health Department regulation by qualified professionals.
- In the case of housing, remediation will be at the cost of the developer.

Submitted Question:

When developers claim they seek a residential component in order to support any retail or restaurant development, what does that mean? Are they saying they need it in order to ensure X number of people are present to make use of the retail/coffee shop? Or do they mean financially, they need residential in order to make the broader development proposition attractive enough -- meaning, residential is the only way to generate enough revenue that retail/restaurants could even be considered as part of the development mix?

Response:

- Developers need a residential component to make their projects financially feasible. Residential rentals are a more constant and reliable revenue source than commercial and allow the developer to access tax credits that are not reliably available for commercial development.

Submitted Question:

I'd like to suggest- if not already thought of - to bring in Planimetrics <https://planimetrics.wordpress.com/> or alike consulting firm to educate the community as to new trends and directions in Connecticut that can help and educate a potential new direction and a renewed effort here. Clearly you need people living inside of FFH to support a mix of residence that will bolster activity and commerce. I believe there could be great potential but getting professionals to support a smart strategy in smart planning is key. Will you consider this or are you and the Town planning on going it alone with local influencers?

Response:

- The town has no plans to hire an outside consulting firm to assist in the process.
- Hiring a consulting firm may be beneficial in educating the community but would require funds that could be used elsewhere on the campus.

Submitted Question:

I've imagined this for a few years: A branch of UCONN at FFHills for Mental Health Studies. Given the history of this place, and 12/14/12, how bout finding a grant from the State of CT or the UCONN community to turn one of those giant buildings into a center for mental health studies. Talk about bringing people to this campus! . . . and to finding a grant to turn one of these giant buildings into a place of study and ideas. UCONN Newtown. Imagine It. The State of CT might like this idea. Hey, they might even pay for it.

Response:

- Development is driven by market demand. Although ideas such as a university on campus are an approved use and may best suit the campus, it is only possible if there is a demand.

Submitted Question:

Those sad cupolas, nestled in the corner across the street from Town Hall . . . I've watched them deteriorate for a few years now, on my walks. How bout we find a grant to renovate them, and make the smallest one into a float for the Newtown Labor Day Parade, as a symbol of FFH's.

How bout students at Abbott Tech or NHS take it on to renovate them. What an amazing project that would be. Let's not lose these lovely cupolas to time and weather. Imagine!

*Maybe a really rich resident would like to sponsor this endeavor. I'm not the only one who loves this place. But I'm not that rich!!!

Response:

- The Fairfield Hills Authority has made considerations for alternative uses of the cupolas.
- The town considered selling the cupolas but was advised that reuse of original elements help qualify to receive historical tax credits.

Submitted Question:

Did the State ever offer to sell the property to the town with all buildings torn down and remediated? If so, what was the cost vs what we paid for it as is?

Response:

- No, the State did not offer to sell the property with the buildings remediated and demolished.

Submitted Question:

If residential development takes place at Shelton, how would public access to that area be restricted?
Could Shelton and Kent be developed and still allow open/free access to the campus for the public?

Response:

- **If** mixed use development is added as an approved use to the FHAR zone, the town will continue to own the land surrounding the residential building(s) as well as the ground where the building(s) reside. Lease terms and conditions will be written to allow for public use of the property surrounding these buildings.

Submitted Question:

By the close of this discussion series, the real question for residents is, what does the public prefer:

- Open space, but buildings demolished at a cost of [\$ for all remaining buildings cleared] + Opportunity cost of [\$ in Tax Revenue]
VS.
- Mostly open campus, that is [describe real world accessibility to the public even after development], with X-number of residential units generating [\$ property tax for the town], and X-number of retail/restaurant/coffee shops, etc.

Response:

In response to “Open space,”:

- The Master Plan includes areas for both commercial development and open space.

In response to “\$ for all remaining buildings cleared”:

- Estimated total cost is estimated to be \$20,000,000.

In response to “\$ in Tax Revenue”:

- Without specific proposals tax revenue can not be determined, but the town would expect to receive tax revenue.

In response to “\$ property tax for the town” (residential):

- Without specific proposals tax revenue can not be determined, but the town would expect to receive tax revenue.

Submitted Question:

Has (or will) the town be willing to explore potential subdivision of the property and selling off undeveloped parcels to potential developers?

Subdivision and sale of certain parcels could allow for:

- 1) Procurement of funds to be used for remediation/renovation of existing structures; and
- 2) Addresses funding limitations related to remediation/renovation.

If subdivision is restricted by the original conveyance of the property from the state, has the town:

- 1) Approached the state about allowing for subdivision;
- 2) Explored whether the restriction is legally enforceable?

Response:

- The Master Plan does not include conditions for dividing the campus property and would have to be revised. By keeping ownership of the property, the town has control over development and activities on the campus.
- This concept was considered in the past and was rejected by the public.

Submitted Question:

What is expected referendum question?

Response:

While the Newtown Legislative Council must approve the specific referendum question, the question could be similar to:

Do you support the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee's proposal that recommends that the Fairfield Hills Master Plan be modified to allow commercial proposals that include a housing component provided that the proposal is for no more than two existing buildings and that the commercial component is consistent with the vision of the property? Yes_____ No_____

Submitted Question:

Timing of vote?

- Expected to be April 28, 2020

Response:

The current plan is to have the question on the April referendum, but this may change.

Submitted Question:

What is the actual history of real opportunities that have come and gone for Fairfield Hills?

- Refer to slide/page numbers 25 & 26.

Was there ever a college campus scenario that the town said no to?

- No.

Was there ever a corporate campus that the town said no to?

- No.

Was there ever military training facility that the town said no to?

- Yes, one early proposal faced obstacles due to the proposed location and another was discussed but did not progress to an application.

Mental health facility?

- The town received a proposal for a psychiatric hospital which received public opposition.

Golf course?

- The town received a proposal for a miniature golf course which was found not feasible.

A development of private homes?

- Private homes are not an approved use in the FHAR zone.