



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority
MEETING MINUTES

**The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Meeting on August 23, 2021
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, Jim Landy, Michael Holmes, Melissa Beylouni, Renata Adler, Brook Clark, Terry Sagedy

Absent: Andrew Philbin

Public Attendance: None

Also Present: Amy Mangold – Director of Parks & Recreation, Carl Samuelson – Assistant Director of Parks, Clinton DePaolo – Chairman of Parks & Recreation Commission, Paula Burton – Project Manager at Western CT Council of Governments – Recreational Trails, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development, Kim Chiappetta (clerk)

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Public Participation: None

Acceptance of Minutes:

Chairman Ross Carley asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the meetings held on June 28, 2021. Mike Holmes entertained. Renata Adler seconded and all were in favor.

Chairman Ross Carley asked for a motion to accept the minutes of the meetings held on July 26, 2021. Jim Landy entertained. Mike Holmes seconded and all were in favor.

Campus Update:

Christal Preszler introduced Russell Bartley of R. W. Bartley and associates. She explained that Russell is synonymous with the Fairfield Hills campus and is a licensed environmental professional. Russell has been involved with the campus since prior to the purchase by the Town. Christal told members that Russell and Arthur Bogan have been incredibly patient and taught Christal so much during grant applications. She added that Russell understands the science and has the practical knowledge to bring it over to the laymen.

Russell Bartley began by telling the Authority that he began his work on the Fairfield Hills campus when he was hired by the Town to do environmentals prior to the purchase from the State. During this time he found an underground storage tank at the Yale Lab building that had fuel oil to fire medical furnaces used to burn medical waste, and the laundry building had an area for dry cleaning. Major problems were areas around the buildings where pesticides had been periodically sprayed. These older pesticides did not break down easily, so fairly high concentrations existed in the soil surrounding the buildings. Also, the white trim on the buildings had been painted with lead paint which over time leached into soil. The soil contained contaminants that were over State criteria. Russell then explained that the State has two standard categories for soil contamination and began with the first which is contact with soil. He explained that the contact with soil falls into two standards: 1) *commercial/industrial* – cases where people are in less contact with the soil, and 2) *residential or recreational* – cases where children are in contact potentially up to 24 per day. Russel then explained that the second State

standard category is ground water where rain passes through contaminants resulting in below drinking water standard. The original plan for the campus was to bring soil contaminants down to the commercial/industrial standard, but it was discovered that it did not cost much more to bring it down to the residential standard.

Russell continued to explain to the Authority that in regards to protecting ground water there are two standards. One is if the ground water has the potential to be used for drinking water. The ground water on the campus was primarily contaminated with pesticides, and with fuel oil and dry cleaning solvents. The contaminated soil was removed so that the ground water should clean itself. The State of CT DEEP standards allow natural attenuation remediation where the soil is taken down to where rainfall pass through it should not be contaminated. The water is then monitored over time as the ground water cleans itself up. Prior to remediation, a report was submitted to the State documenting the Towns plan for remediation. After remediation a report was submitted to the State in which it document that about 1,100 tractor trails loads of soil were removed and the areas were backfilled with clean soil. There were about 3,000 samples taken with multiple analysis each including lead, pesticides and hydrocarbons. In 2013 the State made comments on the report and the Town provided responses but the State was not heard from again. The report submitted contained a monitoring plan explaining how the ground water would be monitored over time. Russell noted for members that the campus ground water gets discharged through footing drains to Deep Brook which has been monitored. Since the report was not approved by the State, the Town did not begin monitoring as it was pending the approval. Russell recently wrote a letter to the State with numerous attachments explaining the background and sampling done to help bring the project to a closure. This letter includes additional avenues in regards to pesticides as the remediation regulations were revised in February of 2021 adding a new provision for pesticides. This provision recognizes if pesticides were applied on a regular basis based upon the standards at the time, contaminated ground water would not have to be cleaned as long as the water would not be used for drinking and would not leave the property. The property owner would be required to note the contamination in the deed. This provision was invoked for the Fairfield Hills campus to put a deed notice in noting that the groundwater is attenuated with pesticides. Christal asked Russel to confirm if it is correct that the level of contamination goes down to 3 parts per trillion. Russell replied the major pesticide that was being remediated, dieldrin, has a very low standard. He explained that this is because there are two reasons for establishing a criteria: 1) the contaminant is toxic (causes immediate serious problems), and 2) a suspected cancer causing compound (if consumed over a period of time causes cancer). He gave the example of the hydrocarbons at Yale Laboratory having a standard of 250 parts per billion. Dieldrin has a standard of 3 parts per trillion. Initially, the dieldrin was getting into the footing drains and flowing to Deep Brook which is a trout stream. Dieldrin is a fat soluble compound which can concentrate in fatty tissue and the standard for fat soluble compounds is less. Prior to purchase, the Town recognized it could not meet the low standard and reached an agreement with the State that the Town would monitor Deep Brook but would not have to treat it. Levels have come down from 90 parts per trillion prior to remediation to 10 parts per trillion. It is expected it will take another 6 to 10 years to reach 3 parts per trillion.

Melissa Beylouni asked if lead paint was removed from the buildings after the soil was remediated. Russell answered that there is still lead paint on the buildings that may be causing additional contamination. Russel clarified that the certification is for the end of the planned remediation. Christal reminded members of when Shelton Hall was lose scrapped to remove lead paint and then painted to encapsulate remaining lead paint. Russel said that considering the two criteria for lead, there was no lead in the ground water, but could be in the soil surrounding the buildings. The group discussed concerns with lead contaminants.

Chairman Carley asked for a member to put forth a motion to accept Russell Bartley's document to be to submit to the State. Terry Sagedy entertained. Melissa Beylouni seconded and all were in favor.

The group thanked Russell Bartley for his year of work on the campus.

Bicycle Playground – Parks & Rec:

Amy Mangold began by thanking the Authority for the time and energy. The group introduced themselves: Amy Mangold – Director of Parks & Recreation, Clinton DePaolo - Chairman of the Park & Recreation Commission, Paula Burton – New England Mountain Bike Association, Carl Samuelson – Assistant Director of Parks. Ross asked Amy to provide a refresher on the Bicycle Playground proposal that was presented in the Monday, June 28th meeting. Amy began by telling members that Clinton had the opportunity to speak with The News Times about the Bicycle Playground, and there was also article in the Bee. She continued to explain that a bicycle playground is meant to teach riding skills and to have fun. The proposal to have it on the campus would help to keep bikes off of the trail and in a condensed area. The proposed location is next to the Bike Share Program. All ages can use the Bicycle Playground, but it is envisioned that it will be used by the 6 – 12 year old age group. Amy recapped the health, economic and community benefits. She emphasized that it provides a safe riding place that does not exist in Newtown today. Clinton added that the demographic targeted is not able to ride in other available areas in town, so this gives them the skills to become more proficient riders and trail riders. Amy said that the space would also be used for training classes. She referred members to the current concept and noted the questions from the prior presentation on the location and safety being near an abandoned building. After the June meeting, Carl staked out the proposed area to provide Authority members with a visual of the size and scope. She pointed out that the drawing was not to scale so the graphic may have appeared like the playground would be closer to the building. Melissa agreed that Carl's staked outline of the area helped to visualize the size and scope. Carl said from a size perspective it is about 1/3 of an acre or about 18,000 square feet enclosed. Paula noted her support of the project and that the bike riding population is growing. Christal reminded Amy of her question on if the location could be shifted to run parallel to the side of Plymouth Hall in between Plymouth and the Senior Center parking lot. Carl said that the layout could work either way. Amy said the shift does not change the project, but her only concern is the planned access from Keating Farms Avenue. If the playground is pushed further back it may not allow access from Keating Farms. Clinton informed the Authority that the next step is to pay American Ramp Company for scale drawings. The group discussed incorporating plantings into the Bicycle Playground design. Melissa said she envisioned the Bicycle Playground being installed between the NYA and Community Center. Amy told Melissa that the original plan was for that location, but that area of property has a planned use by the Community Center. Christal explained that smaller areas of the campus are contingent on big projects and reminded members of the proposal for a skating rink at the NYA. In that proposal, the property between the NYA and Community Center was to be used for parking. Ross asked Christal to speak to the proposed mixed-use development from an Economic and Community Development perspective. Christal told everyone that the Town is speaking solely with Winn Development about renovating Kent House and Shelton House which have an estimated investment of \$50 to \$70 million dollars. She continued to explain the benefits of having things distributed throughout the Town and the need to do the big things first. Mike expressed concerns with the location and asked why Fairfield Hills. He questioned why Dickenson Park was not considered, being that there is a large area of grass near the skate park where kids also ride bikes. Amy explained that the space Mike was speaking to is utilized daily for camp and sports programs, and that Parks & Rec is constantly trying to find space for these programs. She added that this area is also used for concerts and events, and it tends to flood allot. Paula reminded members that having the Bicycle Playground on the campus is beneficial because of the bike share program at the Community Center. The group discussed the age range of children who would be able to utilize the playground. Carl told the Authority that the current proposed location results in the playground being 35 feet away from the back of Plymouth Hall, and if the location is shifted to the side of the building it will be 50 – 60 feet away from the building. Mike and Melissa both asked if the area would be fenced in. Amy said there is no plan to fence in the entire playground, but there would be fence along the roadway. Melissa asked what would be done with the Bicycle Playground during the demo of Plymouth Hall. Christal added that funds for the demo of Plymouth Hall is in the CIP for 2022 – 2023, but is not necessarily planned for then. The group discussed what could be done to protect the Bicycle Playground during the demo and the concerns with contaminants. It was explained that buildings are

remediated of contaminants prior to demolition. The group then discussed next steps in the process and concluded that Carl would stake out the proposed shifted location. Ross said that once all members have had the opportunity to visit the shifted location he would schedule a special meeting to not delay Parks & Rec any further. Amy explained that after the Authority, the proposal will be brought to Planning & Zoning. Terry expressed his love of riding a bike as a child and embraced the concept. He said he understood that there are not a lot of safe places to ride a bike and fully supports the project. Terry and Mike suggested the grass area by the former location of Danbury Hall. Paula noted that this would be further away from the bike share program and would require children to cross main roads on the campus. Terry asked who is funding the project. Amy explained that Parks & Rec will be doing fundraising and applying for grants, and hopes that there will be some funding from the Town. Melissa again expressed her concerns with contaminants and Russell explained that all hazardous materials are removed before buildings are taken down. Brook expressed concern with the timing of Parks & Rec raising funding and the possibility of the Bicycle Playground installation conflicting with the Plymouth demolition. Amy replied that the playground would be shut down during the demo and recommended that the demolition occur in the winter when the Bicycle Playground would not be in use. Renata asked if there would be an age limit. Amy said that there is no age limit, but older, more experienced riders would probably choose to ride at the skate park.

Ross thanked the group for again speaking with the Fairfield Hills Authority and for their flexibility in considering shifting the bicycle playground. The group briefly discussed the location and landscaping.

Member Updates:

Ross informed the group that Jim has been sworn in as a member. Andrew was also sworn in for another term.

Staff Update:

Christal told the Authority that she did not have anything to add.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Terry Sagedy motioned to adjourn, Mike Holmes seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.

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