



**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**  
**Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee**  
**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee held a Special Meeting on August 28, 2018 in Council Chambers at the Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown CT 06470**

*These minutes are subject to the approval at the next meeting.*

**Present:** Deborra Zukowski, Bob Bowen, Chandvir Ahuja (arrived 6:43 p.m.), Gary MacRae, Robert Rau, Jeffery Jorgensen, Neil Chaudhury, Doug Smith (arrived at 7:54 p.m.)

**Absent:** Rob Sherwood, Bryan Roth

**Public Attendance:** none

**Also Present:** Dan Rosenthal – First Selectman, Kim Chiappetta - clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm.

**Public Participation:** none

**Minutes:**

Chairman Deborra Zukowski began by pointing out to committee members that the minutes dated August 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 were incorrectly documented as approving the minutes from the August 15<sup>th</sup> 2018 meeting. The approval should have been for the prior meeting which was August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Neil Chaudhury motioned to amend the minutes from August 15, 2018 meeting under the section Approval of Minutes. Bob Bowen seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

**Unfinished Business**

**Election of Vice-Chair:**

Chairman Zukowski informed members the need to vote in a Vice Chair.

Jeff Jorgensen motioned to nominated Neil Chaudhury as Vice Chairman. Gary MacRae seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

**Start-time for Meetings:**

Deb indicated to members that the Committee's meeting time is set earlier relative to other commissions and committees. Bob Rau and Gary MacRae recommended moving the start time to either 7:00 7:30 p.m. Mr. Jorgensen expressed that he preferred an earlier meeting, but did not feel strongly.

Chairman Zukowski requested a motion to move meeting start to a later time. Mr. Chaudhury motioned to move meeting start time to 7:00 p.m. Mr. Bob Rau seconded. Motion passed with all in favor.

### **Rules of Order:**

The next discussion was regarding the rules of order of which the committee will operate. The group discussed the number of members required to determine a quorum and to pass a vote. Deb explained to members "Roberts Rules" has a concept in which 2/3 vote is required to pass an item. She also recommended that administrative matters could be determined by a majority (majority of the number in attendance). Jeff highlighted that it is necessary to determine a number required to ensure progress is made. First Selectman, Dan Rosenthal recommended 6 members for a quorum and a 2/3 majority to pass items. The group then discussed how other commissions work and the needs of the FHMPRC. Members expressed concerns with not having a quorum at a meeting. Mr. Rosenthal informed members that the meeting could still be held for discussions but votes would have to be suspended until the next meeting where there is a quorum. Chand expressed that the rules of order should be kept simple.

Chandrivir Ahuja motioned to require 6 members for a quorum, 6 members vote in favor to forward recommendations to the Board of Selectman, and a simple majority for all other voted items. Neil Chaudhury seconded.

Jeff asked what would be required to revise the Rules of Order and expressed concerns with objectives not being accomplished due to a lack of a quorum. Deb clarified that a 2/3 vote of members present at the meeting is necessary to change the Rules of Order.

The Chairman then asked for a vote. Motion passed all in favor.

### **Public Bios:**

Deb distributed a document containing bios collected from committee members that she would like to have listed on the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee page of the town website. She recommended that the vice chairman have a public email for members of the public to email questions and concerns. Chand kindly asked if everyone could re-introduce themselves. After introductions, members discussed the possibility of obtaining name signs. The clerk will follow-up.

Returning to the Rules of Order, the next topic of discussion was regarding adding new business to the agenda. Neil clarified that for business items not already on the agenda the committee can vote to add the item to the agenda, and then discuss in that meeting. Most committees require a 2/3 vote to add new business. He further explained that the Legislative Council does not allow new items to be added to the agenda during the meeting. Jeff recommended that new items be added to the agenda with a vote but not voted on in that same meeting. Jeff said that members can inform the Committee that they are not prepared to vote, but in cases where all members are prepared to vote.

The group then briefly discussed the need for members to prepare for meetings in advance for New Business items on the agenda.

Discussion continued regarding new business voted onto the agenda during the meeting. Deb provided two options for cases where new business is voted onto the agenda: 1) New business items cannot be voted on in the same meeting, 2) 1 person can postpone a vote.

Neil informed members that there is language in the Legislative Council rules that allows members the opportunity to request to postpone in order to obtain more information. Deb asked for a motion.

Neil motioned to include a rule that gives any member the opportunity to postpone the vote for new agenda (business) items in an effort to obtain more information. Chand seconded.

Deb asked if anyone wanted to discussion further. Jeff asked if postponement can be used only in cases where more information is needed. Neil clarified that this is the intent and added that these rules are not often used but are good to have.

Motion passed all in favor.

Deb then asked for a vote to add new business items to an agenda.

*After discussion, Neil broke the motion into two parts:*

Neil motioned that new business items can be added to the agenda in meeting by 2/3 vote of attending members (members present at the meeting). Neil. seconded. Motion passed all in favor.

Neil motioned that new business items that were added to the agenda in meeting cannot be voted on in that same meeting. Chand seconded. Motion passed all in favor.

Deb expressed that at times people have concerns with electronic devices in meetings, adding that she does understand the need for phone to be accessible. The group then discussed how many people use electronics devices for taking notes and calculators. The discussion closed with everyone in agreement to be courteous.

## **New Business**

### **Discussion of Current Master Plan:**

Deb reminded members of a request in the last meeting for lessons learned from the prior Master Plan Committees. She thought it would be best to talk through a historical perspective.

She began by stating that she believed the property was purchased in 2002. At that time there was a zoning regulation called Fairfield Hills Reuse Adaptability plan which is listed as Exhibit B in the 2005 Master Plan. Deb reviewed the 2005 Master Plan process and determined that the group developed a philosophy and determine what was critical which at the time was a school and town hall. All other property was banked for future generations. This master plan included a map where each building was identified for a specific reuse. Buildings were grouped into categories: private, public and non-profit. After the group reviewed the Adaptive Reuse plan they identified a list of preferred and non- preferred uses. Preferred uses included things such as office space, laboratory for research and development, restaurant, museum, library, etc. Non-preferred uses included things such as shopping center, whole sale business, bulk storage warehouse, etc.

### *Zoning Regs Section 3 – Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse:*

After Deb reviewed the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zone, she noticed recommendations made by the 2005 Master Plan Review committee of non-preferred items resulted in those items being stricken from the Adaptive Reuse zone. Jeff asked for clarification if these are defined legal zones, and Deb answered that they are legal zones. Neil asked if these non-preferred items were made not allowed, or were simply removed. Deb replied that section 6.3.300 of the Zoning Regs lists permitted uses, and these non-preferred items are no longer listed as permitted uses. Jeff added that Planning and Zoning makes the actual changes to the zoning regulations and the Master Plan Review Committee only makes recommendations. Jeff also thanked Deb for reviewing the documentation.

Deb identified to the Committee that sections 6.03.212 – 6.03.230 were added in 2010, and provided some examples in detail. She specifically highlighted section 6.03.221 which states that site development plans will not be approved if not consistent with the Master Plan.

### *Comparison of 2005 to 2010 Master Plans:*

In reviewing the history, Deb found two things that displeased the community. One was the First Selectman's recommendation to make what is now High Meadow, into a military training facility. This was an effort to make the property profitable. The second was that the public wanted Bridgeport Hall as a community center, which had to later be used to town offices. Members of the community were concerned that the master plan was not being followed. Deb then reviewed the past various proposals for the campus. She then reviewed the updates made to the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse zoning that appear to have been made despite the Master Plan.

The 2005 Master Plan was specific in identifying purposes for each building, which has not been achievable in some cases due to infrastructure. The 2010 Master Plan Review Committee was focused on identifying the purpose of the property. Some of the recommendations that were made were as follows:

- Ensure operational transparency
- Continued public participation
- Drive toward one town wide plan (do not have a separate plan for Fairfield Hills)

At the time, opinions in town varied. Some wanted development to decrease taxes, others wanted sports & recreation, while others wanted open space. Chand voiced that from what he could see there was a vision but no back-up strategy. The group then discussed events that have affected the campus, and the need to consider the aging infrastructure. Deb informed members that after 1 ½ years of no progress on campus, she visited the Fairfield Hills Authority and discussed the master plan. Jeff expressed he felt there was active obstruction of implementing the Master Plan and expressed concern with the lack of regard for the plan.

### *2013 Housing:*

Deb moved on to discuss housing on campus. She asked members to turn to section *E – Mixed Use Residential Above Commercial* in the May 31<sup>st</sup> 2013 updated Master Plan where she noted that in the original version it stated developers have been discouraged from submitting proposals including minimal housing, and that the 2010 Census showed a decrease in young families possibly due to the lack of housing diversity. The final version of the document only notes that allowing housing development may increase the diversity of the town.

Deb then noted that the P&Z made other substantial changes to the Committee's version of the May 2013 Master Plan. Jeff confirmed that P&Z is the legal authority and that The Master Plan Review Committee can only make recommendations. Neil recommended that the document should note that it had been edited by P&Z. Deb summarized that the Committee should not micro-manage the property as there may be circumstances that require change, and she reiterated Chand's idea of developing strategies. Deb added that there is a need to pay attention to the process after the Master Plan updates have been submitted to P&Z and to be advocates for their recommendations.

#### *Changes to the campus & vision:*

Deb will be documenting changes on campus since the last Master Plan update. Deb informed members of Pat Llodra's vision of a quiet private place on campus for assistance such as social services, free medical care, substance abuse assistance, and a food pantry. The group then discussed a grant that allowed the Parent Connection to utilize one of the duplex units for its location. Deb pointed out other ideas and reasons why they did not become reality. She told members that they need to consider whether or not to allow new buildings to only be built in the footprint of original buildings, or if vacant land could be used for new buildings while considering the zoning regulations that stipulate only 10% of property can be buildings and 20% can be hard surfaces. Bob Rau asked what was Deb's take away was from her experience. Deb explained that with each review of the Master Plan there is a better understanding and become more effective. She added that she was happy to see new members with new points of view.

The group then discussed topics for future meetings. Deb told members that there will be sub-committees established to accomplish specified tasks. For the next meeting they will discuss the process of creating (updating) the Master Plan and enforcing it.

The group then discussed commercial development on the Fairfield Hills campus taking away from development in other areas of town, the purview of the committee, and the need to have liaisons with other committees.

#### **Areas for Further Research/Subcommittees**

Deb requested a motion to postpone *Areas for Further Research and Subcommittees* to the next meeting. Bob Rau moved to postpone to the next meeting. Neil seconded. Motion passed all in favor.

#### **Public Participation**

None.

#### **Discussion of Future Agenda Items**

Deb asked if there were any other items that should be added to the next agenda besides what had already been identified (*Process of creating the Master Plan and enforcing it, Areas for Further Research and Subcommittees*).

The group agreed that the two agenda items would require a substantial amount of time and that no other items will be added for the next meeting.

Debbie asked the Vice Chairman to officially document the rules of order as were passed so that the committee could vote on accepting the document.

**Adjournment:** With no further business, Chand made a motion to adjourn, Neil seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*