



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee
MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee held a Meeting on January 9, 2019

At the Senior Center, 15 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook CT 06482

These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting.

Present: Deborra Zukowski, Neil Chaudhary, Gary MacRae, Jeffery Jorgensen, Robert Rau, Chandravir Ahuja,

Absent: Bob Bowen, Rob Sherwood, Doug Smith, Bryan Roth

Public Attendance (*speakers*): Walt Motyka – 5 Kent Rd., Rebecca Carnes – 150a Hanover Rd., Kinga Walsh – Community Center Committee member - 21 Horseshoe Ridge Rd., William Ng – 9 Merlins Ln., Ross Horalski – 133 Forest Dr., Guy Howard – 4 Main St., Nancy Doniger – Community Center Committee member, Michele Hankin – 16 Greenleaf Farms Rd., Baxter Hankin – 16 Greenleaf Farms rd., Edward Shanley – 7 Little Brook Ln, Alan Shepard – 1 Glover Ave, Barbara Snyder – Coldwell Banker, residential real estate.

Also Present: George Benson – Director of Planning, Christal Preszler – Deputy Director of Planning for Economic and Community Development, Wes Thompson – Economic Development Commission Chair, Bryan Atherton – Northeast Investment Realty Managing Director, Chris Hottois – Flint Ridge Developers, Kim Chiappetta - Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Public Participation:

Approval of Minutes

Approval of the December 18th minutes was moved to the next meeting.

Chand motioned, Gary second. Passed.

New Business

Commercial, mixed use (housing over commercial), and housing: Private Sector:

Historical Summary of the Master Plan:

Chair Deb Zukowski began the meeting by explaining to the audience that the original Master Plan contained 3 core uses for the campus: recreation, town services and commercial. One of the goals at that time was to not set everything in stone as priorities and needs change as time goes by, so current needs were recognized and the remaining was land banked for future committees. The 2010 Master Plan was updated to recommend High Meadow become protected open space, and a vision statement was crafted with strategic uses that were in-line with the original Master Plan. The plan was also pruned for items that had become obsolete. These changes are reflected in the amended 2013 Master Plan. She continued to explain that this committee wants to get a pulse on how the community feels the property is progressing, and if there are other uses for the property. Deb noted

the current status of the campus in regards to its recreational uses and the slowness of commercial development due to the economy and other factors that are out of the Town's control. Previous meetings have been to understand the history and have included Bob Geckle, Lila Dean, Fred Hurley, Parks & Rec (Amy and Carl), Senior advocates and are canvassing parties who are interested in the use. A member of the audience (Walt Motyka) asked if the committee was addressing how funds would become available for this commercial development. He continued that when he was working on the original Master Plan the Town would not have to invest any additional funds. Deb explained that part of that would be covered within this discussion, and part is gathering information via requests for bonding that has been done related to the campus. From discussions with Bob Geckle, Lila Dean, and George Benson it was learned that the original plan was for commercial to basically cover the operating costs of the property. The committee is currently collecting operating costs of the campus which include the areas of the Christal's department (Economic and Community Development – Fairfield Hills budget), Parks & Rec and Public Works. Neil added that the committee is purely in a fact finding mode and have not debated any uses. At minimum the committee may determine that the current plan is fine and do nothing, or the committee may re-write the entire document. The goals are to review and see what changes if any need to be made. Another member of the audience (Michelle Mika – 16 Greenland) asked if all land will only be leased for development, and also asked in regards to planning how much control stays with Newtown. What will the balance be between the Town and developer? Deb explained that questions from the public will be answered later in the meeting.

Commercial Development perspective:

Deb asked the invited guests, from a Commercial Development perspective why or why not would developers be interested in FFH?

Bryan Atherton answered by stating that development is demand driven. The markets are cyclical, and market has been great for the last 8 years with a predicted down-turn in the near future. You can't follow demand; you must use predictive analytics and see where demand is. He continued to highlight the current economic climate in the State and in Fairfield County. Deb asked if Bryan feels that the Fairfield Hills property is not development ready. Bryan replied that he feels the property is more development ready now than it has ever been. There is a vision and leadership in place that understands market dynamics, but the Town has not been positioned for when opportunities present themselves. Deb then asked what else should be done to the property to position it to take advantage of development opportunities. Bryan replied that properties are looked at by highest and best use. Based on location, zoning, infrastructure and utilities, what is the best use of the property. You must perform a market analysis to predict or understand where demand exceeds supply. He gave the example of retail and the vacancies in store fronts due to the changes in retail shifting to the internet. Bryan expressed as a resident he is stake holder in this town, and there is a need to perform true market analysis to have successful development.

Chris Hottois then gave his presentation. (See documents following minutes.) He started by telling everyone that Flintridge Development has a different approach to investing and development than traditional developers in that they are community focused, long-term, and not only want to invest in the properties to make them something everyone can be proud of but they also want to invest in the communities. He clarified that he was not attending the meeting to drive commercial development in Fairfield Hills, nor is he an expert on the property, but was in attendance at the request of the committee to share his thoughts. The map displayed to the group was from the original Master Plan outlined with commercial development zones in yellow. The next map was updated by Mr. Hottois showing the current state of the campus, and he spoke to the beautiful walking trails and how the property is very unique to Connecticut and a valuable amenity from a community/open space perspective. Mr. Hottois pointed out that the area of future brewery shows uncertainty. There are buildings that need to come down and there is dated/lacking infrastructure (water, sewer, sanitary sewer). Access to

utilities is very important to a commercial developer and in the case of Fairfield Hills utilities are all underground and some are buried really deep. The storm sewer is taking in rain water which is going to the water treatment facility due to a broken pipe. From infrastructure stand point, understanding quality status of the infrastructure is very important. The Town has done some work and has a decent idea of what is there and what is not. Location is important, but site lines and visibility are also important. The portions of the campus marked for commercial development do not have visibility from the street, and lack identity. The road that loops in front of the Newtown Parent Connection (Washington Circle) is 15 feet wide and is not conducive to heavy traffic or deliveries and there's a lack of parking. There is a lot of uncertainties in this area which results in little activity from commercial developers. There are also related costs of demolition and possible infrastructure issues. Mr. Hottois expressed concern that when Town entertains one off deal it presents potential future challenges down the road. He gave an example of the incoming brewery (Stratford Hall) and the investments in renovating the building. (Mr. Hottois clarified that this example could be any future tenant and was in no way a knock against the brewery.) Part of the investment raises the question of parking, which the Town has agreed to give the brewery access to 40 parking spaces which are not in the designated zone. What will happen to parking when there are events on the campus, and how will it affect the for-profit business? There are future plans to demo Plymouth Hall or Stamford Hall (in the location of the brewery), so how will this impact the tenant's business. The location of the handicapped ramp, loading and food truck parking poses aesthetics issues. These are considerations that have to come into play when re-developing this space.

Mr. Hottois noted that Fairfield Hills is a valuable asset to the community. He expressed his own personal love of the campus, and understands there is currently not a consensus in the community and that part of this process is to build consensus and a path forward. One thought is that the Master Plan references various components, (municipal center, community center, commercial), and perhaps an approach could be to focus first on the municipal side. There may be opportunities to consolidate Town offices onto the Fairfield Hills campus, possibly resulting in cost synergies and efficiencies if the Town establishes a long term plan for existing own properties. There is also an opportunity to rationalize the number of Parks & Rec field against town demographics. He gave an example that if the town determines there is a need for more sports facilities on the Fairfield Hills campus, then there may be an opportunity to take away sports facilities in other locations of town reducing costs and possibly providing an opportunity to sell off these town owned properties. The town needs to come up with a distribution strategy for town owned buildings that are vacated. He gave the example of the Senior Center and questioned its future once the Senior Center is moved into its new location on the Fairfield Hills campus. Another municipal component is to determine the town's ability to host outdoor sporting tournaments and the economics and probabilities of doing so. Considerations must be made when building facilities to identify the initial uses and determine how to maximize utilization of the facilities as a town.

Mr. Hottois recommended to focus first on what the town needs as a governing body. Next, identify the top 2 – 3 community needs which is part of the Master Plan review process. Once the top two community needs are programmed into the Master Plan, the remaining space can be identified. If commercial space remains and the town still wants to drive commercial development, a layout can be drawn just as a home builder would plan a residential sub-division. With the assistance of a planner, the town should make efforts to identify, size and outline commercial plots. The one thing the Master Plan does not have is a plan that gives a commercial developer comfort in knowing that in the future there will not be a building in their area that may negatively impact their business. In absence of concrete plan, it will be difficult to attract commercial developers.

Neil summarized that what he heard was there is limited visibility for signage making it not commercial friendly, there is poor infrastructure, limited parking, leasing land instead of purchasing, all of which makes it sound like Fairfield Hills is not conducive to commercial development. He also asked if more buildings were removed what it would do to the desirability of commercial. What does adding mixed use or stand-alone apartments do to the desirability of commercial?

Mr. Hottos answered that the existing buildings represent a cost to either the Town or a commercial developer. If town pushes this cost onto the developer, the developer will pay next to nothing in rent in exchange. He also noted the uncertainty of the infrastructure and that the developer will consider it an additional cost. If the Town is able to remove buildings the area would be considered a destination location, so it must be determined what types of uses would be interested in the campus. With all of this considered, there is a risk if commercial development is attracted to the campus then it will potentially be taking commercial business away from other areas of town.

Mr. Atherton added that the parcel is a gem and agreed that it would be destination. He noted various destination types of businesses such as retail, entertainment, athletic, continuous care, assisted living, and memory care, but there is a finite amount of demand. He noted the development in other parts of town that the use could have been on the Fairfield Hills campus, but would have left the other properties vacant.

Neil asked if it makes sense for someone to lease when they can purchase in other area of town. What could be done to make someone want to come to Fairfield Hills? Brian replied that with respect to leasing, corporate America does not own properties. Target, Walmart and Home Depot are all land leases, or build to suit leases. Companies that have a focus in retail have an internal rate of return that cannot be achieved if they are investing in real estate. There are also tax benefits to leasing. In cases where the land is owned by a company, they can only depreciate the improvements on a property and not the land. By leasing 100% depreciation is established. He then replied to the question, what we can do and expressed that predictability is necessary and required and that there cannot be uncertainty. The property must be as close to shovel ready as possible specifically in regards to infrastructure and environmental. He recommended focusing on the uncertainty aspect.

Jeff Jorgensen asked if the town should do market analysis and how often, has any been done, and if yes when was the last one done. Mr. Atherton said that a market analysis is definitely necessary, but cannot be done until a highest and best use is understood. There needs to be an understanding of infrastructure, utilities, and possibly DOT infrastructure. A market analysis is secondary to understanding infrastructure and highest and best use.

Deb then asked George Benson to speak regarding infrastructure. George Benson explained that it comes down to financing. In a perfect world the infrastructure would be fixed, the buildings would be removed and a plan would be in place, but there is no money. There will not be any money until there is an end user. State money cannot be obtained until an end user ready to move in. There used to be CIP money to remediate and remove buildings, but the money is all gone now. At this time the town depends upon developers coming to us and the town tries to find an appropriate space for them on the campus. Parking is also an issue. There are no funds or willingness of town to do this type of work. The town does want to do infrastructure work but can't without funding. He further explained that most grants require the town to match a certain percentage of the grant amount, and that matching funds were removed from the Fairfield Hills budget. Most developers that have approached with interest in the campus have included a residential component in their proposals, which had been added to the last re-write of the Master Plan but had been removed by Planning and Zoning due to the community not wanting residential. At this time there is a need to work on a case by case basis. We are stuck in a chicken and egg situation where the town needs to improve the property to attract developers, but needs the developers to obtain the necessary funds.

Committee member Jeff Jorgensen explained that his understanding is regardless of what the Master Plan says, the Town reviews all development proposals. He continued to explain that he has wondered why nothing substantive has been done on the campus for the last 10 years, with the exception of the Community Center which is being built with funds that were a gift to the Town. He asked George what it will take to get a development to take root. George gave an example of a commercial development proposal that included 32 apartments above that would have required removing Newtown, Woodbury and Shelton hall. People who

attended the Planning & Zoning meeting to consider changing the campus zoning to include housing were adamantly against this and the change was not approved. Deb informed everyone that some of the early proposals for the campus are available for review at the library.

Michele Hankin (16 Greenleaf Farms Rd) told everyone that years ago she was involved in focus groups regarding the town's overall plan and that 10 years ago the schools were busting at the seams. People knew that adding students meant a need to building new schools, so they did not want housing. Now with the decline in population there may be a need to close a school; however with the competitive housing market people may not want housing competing with their own homes. Trends in the population and demographics must be considered. The Committee has to have tentacles in every part of town to have cohesive, thought out project that not only considers Fairfield Hills, but the whole town. Plans have to be thought of in a broader way so there is not a patchwork of development on the property. Deb added that Michele's comments are exactly why 5 year review happens because essentially things change.

Deb directed the conversation back to infrastructure. George said that the infrastructure is functional now, but is old. There are occasional problems that require investigation. The ideal plan is to put in a new loop for the sewer. He explained that the campus was a basin. Infrastructure was placed in the bottom and then the area was filled in with soil resulting in an infrastructure that is 30 feet down. Mapping from the State is not very good and changes are often not mapped. If a big developer is interested in the campus, then it could justify spending for the sewer. Christal added that there is only \$4,000/year in the operational budget and the Special Revenue budget, which is not sufficient for the infrastructure costs which will be in the millions of dollars. The Town belongs to the Western CT Council Of Governments (WestCOG) and the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG) both of which prioritize infrastructure projects. In both of their lists Fairfield Hills infrastructure is categorized as a Tier One request for funding under grants. We position ourselves to be ready to apply for grants by doing all the steps necessary to be prepared. Committee member Chandravir Ahuja asked if there was a conceptual plan and would doing something like this make sense. George gave the example of the Town of Preston who had a similar property and was able to remove all of the buildings with State grant money awarded because they were considered a depressed community. Once Preston's buildings were removed they were able to set-up a plan. We do not know which buildings will be removed and when so it is difficult to plan. For now, we want to be open if someone wants to come to the campus. Having a conceptual plan does not work for this campus besides the plans that are already in place. It is a unique piece of property with challenges.

Baxter Hankin (16 Greenleaf Farms Rd) said with George's comment that Fairfield Hills cannot be subdivided to create a Master Plan that going to have an overall vision of how things can be laid out, we could potentially do so by using the existing plan that requires new construction to be in the footprint of existing buildings and then create a Master Plan to subdivide lots around them. George explained that the original Master Plan was more defined, but it did not work. There was no one to go into the buildings.

Barbara Snyder (Coldwell Banker – residential real estate) said that thinking about the constraints Chris laid out and Bryan spoke about, is it possible to think of this interior landlocked piece of the campus as you would an inner city mall that already has a city around it but you are trying to make a downtown area into a walker friendly destination. Can you Master Plan the area to have the parking on the outer perimeter and then have a developer to come in and do the interior area. Deb thanked all three members of the public for their comments. Gary MacRae agreed that Barbara's comment was valuable, and that the committee is thinking out of the box with no constraints. They are considering that areas marked for commercial can be moved. Gary recalled the committee's tour of the campus with Ross Carley and learning the high cost of re-purposing a building, and how Newtown Hall was one of the few buildings that could be re-purposed. He informed the group of what he has taken away from past meetings with knowledgeable guests.

Gary asked can the committee be told something that is possible to save some time. Ross expressed that he feels small steps must be taken such as securing the buildings or the work on Stratford Hall for the incoming brewery. The FHA would like to see some of the buildings come down to allow for commercial lease space, but until the town decides to invest in the property or until we can obtain a grant, we will be at the mercy of asking a developer to take part in redevelopment. Christal added that the Town constantly speaks with developers who are both local and regional. There is a lot of work done behind the scenes to see if a proposal is possible before it is moved forward. George explained that some of the viable proposals were turned down by the community.

Deb asked to discuss mixed use and to understand why people disagree with this use. Three big issues that people have with these types of proposals are: 1) portions of the campus being quartered off for a business such as a mental health facility, 2) impact on use of the campus such as not allowing lights on fields past a certain time or events due to the noise, and 3) negative impact on property values for homes surrounding the campus. George expressed that the prejudice against apartments has always existed in this town. Jeff asked how do we get past the "not in my backyard" attitude. George explained that the Town has been unable to change this attitude, but Fairfield Hills is a town owned property and the community has a right to determine its use.

Neil asked why commercial developers would want to come to Fairfield Hills instead of the exit 9 area or somewhere similar. Christal replied that there is a uniqueness of the property and buildings. It is a plus/minus because of the cost to remediate but there is a draw to the architecture of the buildings and to the feeling of campus itself. Neil used the example of the brewery and that this proposal evolved out of a love for the campus. Mr. Atherton elaborated that Fairfield Hills has great linkages of pedestrian (paths), nature, environment and athletic. He gave George credit and expressed that if it wasn't for George the town would not have embraced the residential apartment feel that is needed to grow the population and retain the youth who cannot afford to live in the state. He also noted that George was an integral part in creating the incentive housing zone which takes the stigmatizing out of the affordable housing. The mixed use concept is most efficient. It raises the more taxes and revenue than any other development due to the density, grows the population that demands on more retail, and does not have a demand on school systems because people are getting married later in life. Parking is efficient because it is shared and demand is at different times. George added that facilities similar to Fairfield Hills in Massachusetts and New York have all been rehabbed with mixed use. Christal added that she has learned part of the reason why there is vacancy and larger stores are not interested in coming to Newtown is due to the lack in density. In terms of increasing density without using a lot of property apartments are a way to get the density and help the economy.

Public Participation:

Rebecca Carnes – 150a Hanover Rd: Ms. Carnes informed the group that former First Selectman Herb Rosenthal came up with a mixed use plan that had gone to referendum, which lost by 200 votes. Growing up in town, Ms. Carnes could remember the Fairfield Hills facility when it was operational. She pointed out the campus was closed due to de-institutionalization and the town bought the property in either 1994 or 1995. There are constant complaints on what to do with campus. The elephant in the room is that there is no money to make improvements to the campus. She recommended that the committee focus on what is successful and gave the example of the NYA which is partly a not-for-profit. Their money source is donations. A possibility may be for the town to focus on medical and more specifically mental health considering the mental health crisis happening in our country.

Kinga Walsh – 21 Horseshoe Ridge Rd: Ms. Walsh informed everyone that she is a resident since 2000 and the Chair of Community Center Committee. She also introduced Rebecca and Nancy who are also on the

committee. She asked that they please consider, whatever the committee decides to recommend, how will it complement what is already on the campus? She also asked that they please consider the existing uses and what is the ultimate goal on the campus? How will it Fairfield Hills compliment within itself and the rest of the town. A really important thing to consider is parking and how the shared parking will work. She gave an example of the Community Center, Senior Center and brewery holding an event at the same time. Ms. Walsh asked the committee investigate the infrastructure and recommended the committee speak with Fred Hurley – Director of Public Works. She added that as she understands it, if the number of parking or tenants reaches a certain number it may be necessary to have a traffic study by the State. The big picture is to consider what is this campus and what will it do for the town. It is a destination for residents to go as a town, and if it includes mixed use then it can be discussed further, if not what is the draw.

William Ing - 9 Merlins Ln: Mr. Ing introduced himself and told every that his background is in finance. He has been in Newtown for 4 to 5 years and loves the tight knit community. Where he comes from in Virginia they build town centers where they are focused on one or two key items that draw other commercial tenants. He gave an example of a theater or skating rink. Easily following these types of developments were restaurants and shops. Where money should come from is major problem and the town needs to consider apartments or town homes. Town homes in Virginia are 2,000 square feet and brought up local property values. They existed in spaces where you could walk to the centers. The committee should determine how to obtain funds and then come up with a vision. He noted how good the community is together and the possibility of having a center where everyone can come together that includes commercial such as shops.

Ross Norowski – 131 Forest Drive: Mr. Norowski began by highlighting multiple comments regarding money being an issue, but believes there are allot of people who would love to invest in commercial real estate. His idea was a mall that would only cover about 2 acres. Having a mall would bring in jobs and people outside of Newtown.

Guy Howard– 4 Main St: Mr. Howard began by informing everyone that he and his wife have lived in town since 1990. He expressed the incredibly frustrating experience watching the unrealistic constraints placed upon the people involved to develop a property with no money. When it is said that there is no money available, if there is a plan and support behind he believes the town would approve the funds. Many are trapped by the illusion of the vision of Fairfield Hills but much cannot be reused. As a tax payer, he would be willing to contribute to taking it all down so that there is open space that could be clearly planned. Mr. Howard noted that often in Newtown a small numbers of people crowd a meeting with their concerns and direction that may not be the opinion of the entire town. He asked that the committee consider taking all of the buildings down and to not be trapped by the fact that there is no money.

Nancy Doniger – Community Center Committee: Nancy Doniger introduced herself and noted that she is a member of the Community Center Committee. Ms. Doniger expressed that she agreed with having overall plan and to not do things piece meal. She also has concerns with parking. There are already allot of wellness and mental health places on campus and recommends agricultural or sustainable. There is also canine training and a dog park. She would like to see the campus remain largely open and encourage the more of what already exists.

Edward Shanley – 7 Little Brook Ln: Mr. Shanley told everyone he has lived in town 53 years. He asked how much it cost to demolish the last building and Christal replied that Woodbury cost around \$700,000. He then noted that this was a much lower cost from years ago. Considering the number of buildings, the town cannot afford to demolish all of these buildings. The problem is money. More people his age are moving out of Newtown because they can no longer afford the taxes.

Baxter Hankin – 16 Greenleaf Farms Rd: Mr. Hankin returned the conversation to the early idea of a mixed use town center. He believes this is great way to move forward with the property where the town can control the design and create a community destination.

Walt Motyka – 5 Kent Rd.: Walt Motyka introduced himself and explained that his background was Master Planning for major corporations. He recommended looking at other towns who had the same situation and how these towns found ways to take old buildings by selling them for \$1, and getting a bond to replace the value. The bond goes to the town to finish the project. In Baltimore there were 40 row houses that were sold for \$1 and the city was named as the recipient. Deb clarified that the buildings were no longer in control of the city. Mr. Hottis expressed that his suspicion of the scenario was that the land was sold to the developer who was then free to develop as long as it conformed to zoning regulations. He added that the necessary infrastructure must have already existed. The group then discussed how the Fairfield Hills campus could not be sub-divided so portions of the land could not be sold off.

Bryan noted that the discussion was a public/private partnership. In place of tax incremental finance, the private and public work together. After municipal and community needs are identified, a feasibility analysis can be done to help determine the highest & best use for what is left. Bryan explained that the feasibility analysis will show that mixed use is the only use that will have close to the revenue stream that will offset such a huge project.

Allen Shepard – 1 Glover Ave: Allen Shepard told everyone that he has a background in engineering. He began by noting that the proposal for mixed use with 35 units would not have paid for the project. When considering removing a building at the cost of \$6 million dollars, high density would be necessary to break even on the project. This would require new sewers. Allen noted the additional aspects that would need to be considered. It is necessary to evaluate plans as to cost effectiveness.

Rebecca Carnes – 150a Hanover Rd: Ms. Carnes returned to note that many concerns have been expressed regarding issues with liability and gave the example of urban explorers entering the empty buildings. Buildings are becoming more dilapidated and more expensive to deal with. She recommended requesting donations to rehabilitate the property for a type of mental health facility. She summarized the work that is being done has been done multiple times in the past and that a new idea is necessary.

Possible committee quorum adjustment and related updates to committee rules:

The committee discussed changes to the rules regarding reaching a quorum and majority vote.

Neil moved to change the committee rules, quorum, to read “A quorum is achieved by 5 members being present or a bare majority being present”. Gary seconded. Motion passed all in favor.

Neil motioned to change Rule 3 to read “All motions, resolutions and amendments related to recommendations to the Board of Selectmen or fulfillment of the Committee’s Charge, must pass by at least the number of “yea” votes that make up a bare majority of seated members.” Gary seconded. Motion passed all in favor.

Communications:

Deb asked Kim to add an email she received from a resident regarding input to campus development to the minutes. (See attached.)

Deb will told members that she is pending CIP information from Bob Tait and will email to the group when it is received.

Liaison Reports:

Gary announced that the Senior Center director has retired. He asked if anyone would be attending Dan Rosenthal's listening session schedule for this Friday (1/18) at the Senior Center. He also informed the group of the resignations of Ann Lobosco, Director of Social Services and Jennifer Crane, Director for the Center for Support and Wellness and explained that with these positions being vacated the First Selectman will be reviewing for opportunities to restructure.

Deb told the Committee that Doug Smith will be talking with Matt Ariniello to ensure his voice will be heard.

Discussion of Future Agenda Items:

Deb noted that the next meeting scheduled Tuesday, January 22nd is being held to mine the public for information that may have been missed. Chand expressed that there is a need to better investigate the economics of mixed use housing. He asked if there is any way to learn more. Neil said he knows someone who has knowledge of a plan where mixed use can fund itself, and will ask this person to share information.

Bob Rau reminded members of the concerns with a small number of members of the public attending and influencing meetings. The group then discussed the possibility of doing a poll/survey to ensure the opinions of the general public are collected.

Neil said it may be necessary to consider the impact of development on the campus to the rest of the town.

Adjournment:

With no further business, Neil made a motion to adjourn. Gary seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*



Kimberly Chiappetta <kimberly.chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov>

Communications ... Fwd: Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee question

Deborra Zukowski <debz.newtown.ct@gmail.com>
To: Kimberly Chiappetta <kimberly.chiappetta@newtown-ct.gov>

Tue, Jan 8, 2019 at 11:49 AM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Lisa Dietter** <fplady@icloud.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 5, 2019 at 12:28 PM
Subject: Re: Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee question
To: Deborra Zukowski <debz.newtown.ct@gmail.com>

Hi Deborra,

Thank you so much for sending on the attachments to me. They were very informative especially since they reflected views from five years ago. Many positive improvements, updates and additions have happened since those meetings.

My husband and I would like to attend however we are out the of state for several months.

If I may offer a suggestion, perhaps in a commercial respect. My suggestion is for a group of doctors offices be developed to enhance and for the betterment of the community. Their location would be developed in such a manner the intrusion of the FFH campus proper would not be bothered by any increased traffic. They would be able to offer reciprocal services that would be of benefit to the community and its patients. These buildings would need to reflect the architecture that is resplendent of the Fairfield Hills Campus.

We are not in favor of "mixed use" that includes apartments. The ambivalence of Fairfield Hills does not lend itself having apartments included in any future plans. Are these apartments to be for low income housing? If so, has anyone considered that these may not generate tax income but reduce property values for the surrounding homeowners. I am sure that it not the intent of the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee to reduce the income on taxable property near the FFH campus while low income housing may not pay any property taxes. I am also sure it is not the intention of the committee to reduce property values of the properties surrounding the FFH campus. Would anyone on the committee like this property value reduction/tax situation to be in their own lap or effect their property?

Again, thank you for sending over the past minutes. Would it be possible to get future updates? Or a location on the web that can be accessed?

Sincerely,

Ted and Lisa Dietter

On Jan 5, 2019, at 8:31 AM, Deborra Zukowski <debz.newtown.ct@gmail.com> wrote:

Hey there!

There are two groups that are associated with Fairfield Hills. The main one, the Fairfield Hills Authority, is tasked with implementing the current master plan. The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee is a temporary committee that reconvenes every 5 years to research and propose updates to the master plan, based on the current and expected future needs of the town. Any questions about current development proposals should be asked to the Fairfield Hills Authority. Their next meeting is on Monday, January 26.

As part of our work to provide update recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission (P&Z), the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee is trying to understand opportunities, issues, and concerns about the three core uses in the current master plan: Town services, recreation, and commercial. We've already spoken with various representatives of the first 2 and so the meeting on Jan 9 is to hear from those associated with commercial uses. These conversations/meetings are meant to hear from people with all points of view so that we ensure we collect as much information, as is reasonable in the time we have, on

which to base our recommendations. Another part of our research will include providing this information to the public more broadly (e.g., using a survey), to get feedback about the current views of the community.

If you have questions about potential future commercial uses, please come to one of the meetings. We will have public input prior to our conversation with the invitees when you can ask your questions. I will try to ensure that the questions are included as part of the discussion. Additionally, you are very welcome to contribute to our work more individually on Jan 22. If evenings are difficult, please email your questions. (Again, those about specific developments already being discussed by town officials, should be sent to the Fairfield Hills Authority.)

As for the definition of "mixed use," that is defined by P&Z. In private conversations with Land-Use, we've been told that it means housing rentals over commercial.

In closing, the committee is trying to understand benefits and costs of uses - including recreational, town services, and commercial - and trade-offs among them. Any additional input about what the property could offer in the future is very welcome.

Best,
Deborra Zukowski
Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee Chair

On Fri, Jan 4, 2019 at 3:30 PM Lisa Dietter <fplady@icloud.com> wrote:
January 4, 2019

Hello Deb,

My husband and I have some questions about the type of housing that is being proposed and studied by the Fairfield Hills master plan committee. Also, what type of commercial use as being considered or discussed. Additionally we would like to know what "mixed use" is defined by with the Fairfield Hills master plan review committee.

Sincerely,
Ted and Lisa Dietter

Lisa Dietter

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