



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee
MINUTES

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee held a Meeting on September 12, 2018
In the Parks & Rec meeting room, 3 Main Street, Newtown CT 06470**

These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting.

Present: Deborra Zukowski, Gary MacRae, Neil Chaudhury, Doug Smith, Rob Sherwood, Bryan Roth, Chandravir Ahuja (arrived 7:28)

Absent: Jeffery Jorgensen, Robert Rau, Bob Bowen

Public Attendance: Rebecca Kerns

Also Present: Kim Chiappetta - clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

Public Participation: none

Minutes:

Deborra Zukowski began the meeting by asking for a motion to approve the minutes of the August 28th meeting.

Neil Chaudhury motioned to approve. Doug Smith seconded. Deb then asked for discussion and pointed out the following inaccuracies from the August 28th minutes:

- Page 2 under Rules of Order – “She also recommended that administrative matters could be determined by a majority...” was incorrect. Neil had made the initial recommendation.
- Page 3 – 4th paragraph – “Deb then asked for a vote...” was incorrect as the request was for a motion.
- Page 3 – under New Business – Correct Exhibit B to Exhibit D.

Deb then closed the discussion.

Neil Chaudhury amended his motion to approve minutes as amended. Gary MacRae seconded the amended motion. Motion passed with all in favor.

Unfinished Business

Public Bios:

Deb informed members that public bios could be updated to third person if they wished. She will be posting bios within 1 week. She reminded members that they are optional. The group had a brief discussion regarding the content. Neil asked if personal information should be included. Deb recommended a certain level of personal information as it connects the Committee member to the community. The group agreed on the bios containing business and personal information.

Deb requested a motion.

Doug motioned to request the bios be posted to the Town website on 9/24. Gary seconded. All in favor.

Rules of Order:

Deb reminded everyone that in the last meeting members made motions for accepting the Rules of Order, and Neil was asked to capture this information in a document for posterity. Both Deb and Neil noted that there were some additions.

1. Roberts Rules of Order:

Neil began by explaining to the group that the first rule in the “Rules of the 2018 Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee” was that the Committee would follow Roberts Rules of Order.

2. Quorum:

The second rule defines a Quorum as a “bare majority of current members present” which means that in the case of the current Committee which is composed of 10 members, 6 is required for a quorum. He added that there is language in the event that membership decreases the required number for a quorum is adjusted.

3. Motions:

Neil read the third rule regarding motions and further explained that this rule was adjusted from requiring 6 members to vote in favor to requiring “at least the number of *yea* votes that make up the quorum” to ensure that in the event members leave the Committee a revision to rule number 3 will not be required. To summarize as the quorum changes so does the minimum number of votes.

4. Right of Postponement:

Neil explained that the Right of Postponement (rule number 4) is documented as was discussed in the prior meeting. A member can motion to postpone a new business item until the next meet when it will be considered unfinished business. Business can only be pushed off by 1 meeting.

5. Postponed New Business Agenda Items:

Neil added item number 5 to cover conditions where a new business item that is not discussed in a meeting will still be considered new business in the next meeting.

6. Discussion of matters not on the agenda:

Matters not listed on the agenda can be discussed, but cannot be voted.

7. Rules Amendment:

Neil informed members that he added this rule to cover making changes to the Rules of Order. This rule requires 2/3 majority approval (of those present) and a minimum of 6 “*yea*” votes. He expressed concerns that if changes to the rules are necessary and only 6 members attend meetings regularly changes would require a unanimous vote. If the number of members in attendance is less, then there cannot be a vote. Doug then asked what happens in cases where a quorum is not in attendance. Neil explained that the ultimate decision is made by the Chair as to whether or not to hold the meeting. If the meeting is held without a quorum, only discussions are permitted. There cannot be any votes.

Deb summarized that the motions made in the last meeting referred specifically to requiring 6 members.

Neil motioned to approve the Rules of the 2018 Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee. Gary seconded the motion.

Deb then asked what members thought about rule number 7 regarding the use of 6 members. Rob expressed concerns with requiring a minimum of 6 yeas votes. Members discussed further and determined that it would be best to remove the requirement for 6 yeas votes.

Neil motioned to amend the motion with the words "with a minimum of 6 yeas votes" removed from rule number 7. Gary seconded. All in favor

Deb then stated unwrapping a vote on the motion. All members in favor.

New Business

Areas for Further Research/Subcommittees

Deb informed members that the next step is to determine the types of information needed to make informed and reasonable decisions. She added that this discussion was to brainstorm and that there would be no vote. Neil recommended that George Benson be invited again and Rob Sibley be invited to discuss the campus from an environmental perspective and to understand what can and cannot be done as by state laws.

Deb would like to obtain ideas on why there are 10% and 20% restrictions. She clarified that 10% is the area of the footprint which can be no more than 10% of the land and that an impervious surface can be no more than 20% of the land. The group then had a brief discussion regarding this restriction.

Neil recalled that there are restrictions on the campus property until the bond is paid off. He asked when will the bond be paid off and do the restrictions go away once the bond is paid. Rob Sherwood explained that from what he recalled the restrictions would no longer apply.

Doug said that it may be beneficial to know the costs associated with rehabilitating, abating/razing, or doing something with the buildings.

Gary expressed concern with what is being discussed as potential uses of Fairfield Hills today by other organizations. He referred to an article in the 9/5 dated Voices newspaper in which the Chairman of the FHA spoke of entertaining people who expressed interest in other areas of the property and that interested parties meet with members of Land Use and Economic Development. Gary continued that things are being discussed with people who have responsibility. Neil asked members to keep in mind that these things may not be revealable. Gary then quoted from the August 28th Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee minutes where Deb informed members that after 1 1/2 years of no progress she visited the Fairfield Hills Authority (FHA). Deb clarified that her comment was regarding the lack of action regarding the master plan recommendations, and that former First Selectman, Pat Llodra had called together a work group to revise the Master Plan. The group then had discussions regarding the FHA currently using the Master Plan revised in 2013.

Neil questioned if any proposals had been refused because they were not consistent with the Master Plan that may have been considered acceptable.

Gary clarified that he was not asking for confidential information, but thought it may be beneficial to know the type of entities expressing interest. Rob S. then suggested having a Committee member sit in on the Fairfield Hills Authority meetings.

Deb then asked if there were any other areas members want more information about. With no further recommendations, Deb moved on to discuss Public Engagement.

Public Engagement

Deb explained to members the importance of obtaining public opinion in regards to the use of the property. She further explained that once the Committee has created a list of what they want to talk about then they can determine the groups to contact. Neil agreed that knowledge gathering would be beneficial. Gary expressed his interest with the welfare of seniors in Newtown and recommended that Anna Wiedemann (Chair of the Commission on Aging) be invited to a Committee meeting. Deb explained that senior programming falls within the confines of Senior Center, however the group can consider how to use the property to get seniors onto the campus. Gary distributed a map of the community center and the surrounding campus and pointed out the outdoor amenities that currently do not have a budgetary support; providing examples of a pavilion, band shell, amphitheater and fire pit. He further identified that one of the best things in Fairfield Hills is the trail. Gary suggested that members of the Committee consider being liaisons to other commissions to represent the interest of Fairfield Hills and offered to be a liaison in the senior community. Deb said that there is a sense of trying to grok what would make this property vibrant for the senior population.

Neil said that one thing the group could do is to write language such that it would consider the senior population. Rob S. added that regulations could be written and informed the group of his experiences with Westchester County.

Chand added to Gary's concept of having liaisons, and that there can be a liaison to the Economic Development Commission, Arts Commission and other entities in Town. Neil recommended that instead of having liaisons the Committee could invite people from these commissions to come speak. He added that he would like to hear from Parks & Rec and believes they are a huge component. He also added the importance of reaching out to a fair demographic and possibly focus on certain groups when doing outreach. Committee members then discussed the various groups with whom they would like to meet.

Deb asked that for the next meeting members build a list of people they would like to meet with for fact finding.

She then read a list of the sub-committees from the last Master Plan Review noting that they may not apply to this review. Groups included: *Education, Public Safety and Municipal Administration, Resources & Infrastructure, Commercial, Open Space, Recreational & Social Services, Process & Public Participation (how to reach out), Housing, and Demographics*. She further explained details of what was done during the last review. Chand expressed that the group will have a better sense of what sub-committees are needed after fact finding.

Doug informed members that although this may fit better into Senior Center programming, the Western CT Health Network provides services to a large population of Newtown residents, and that it may be beneficial to form a sub-committee to query this resource to identify needs. The group then discusses potential healthcare needs as related to the Fairfield Hills campus.

Deb asked members if prior to fact finding they could begin discussing mechanisms for bringing in the public, and provided an example of the previous group hiring a facilitator. She then provided specific examples of what was done. The group then discussed the option of holding a public hearing. Doug suggested soliciting public statements electronically. Neil added that they may want to contact Shannon Hicks to see if the Newtown Bee on-line survey can be leveraged. The group then discussed how to move forward with holding a public hearing and the need for a budget. Deb will follow-up with the First Selectman.

Committee members agreed to invite George Benson, Director of Land Use, to the next Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review meeting being held Tuesday, September 25th.

Public participation

Rebecca Kerns introduced herself as an applicant for the open FHA seat and explained that she wanted to learn what the Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee was working on.

Discussion of Future Agenda Items

Deb then summarized the future agenda items including social media and guest speakers.

She asked Kim to email Committee members when the minutes are posted.

She then informed the group that the agenda for the September 25th meeting will be posted on Friday (9/21); therefore she will need member feedback by Wednesday, September 19th.

Adjournment: With no further business, Doug made a motion to adjourn, Chand seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*