



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

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee held a Meeting on December 5, 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, Neil Chaudhary, Gary MacRae, Rob Sherwood, Jeffery Jorgensen, Chandravir Ahuja (arrived 7:20 p.m.), Robert Rau (arrived 7:40 p.m.)

**Absent:** Doug Smith, Bryan Roth, Bob Bowen

**Public Attendance:** none

**Also Present:** Amy Mangold – *Director of Parks & Rec*, Carl Samuelson– *Assistance Director of Parks & Rec*, Edward Marks – *Parks & Rec Commission Chair*, Laura Lerman – *Cultural Arts Commission Chair*

The meeting was called to order at 7:16 p.m. without a quorum. Meeting continued with a quorum at 7:20 p.m.

**Public Participation:**

None

**Approval of Minutes**

Approval of the November 20<sup>th</sup> minutes was moved to the next meeting.

**New Business**

**Cultural, Recreational Uses:**

Chair Deb Zukowski introduced the invited guests to the Committee, and explained the purpose of the meeting. Mr. Edward Marks, Chairman of the Parks & Rec Commission, began by distributing a packet that was presented to the Fairfield Hills Authority in 2015. (See attachment A.) He pointed out that the second page was taken from the original Master Plan in 2003 and it describes various uses for the campus. He then referred to diagram ES-6 (attachment A). In 2005 there were changes to the Master Plan to accommodate for a Parks & Rec building or a community center. He identified for members the changes in the maps. Spaces were allocated for baseball, softball, and multipurpose fields. Updates were made showing a reduction of 1 field, NYA's use of the space and space for the Community Center. There were no changes to the multipurpose. In response to a community request in 2013, revisions were necessary to determine how the Community Center would be oriented in conjunction with the NYA, and how to accommodate existing fields and community events. In the past year (2018), the map was refined further in response to overwhelming requests for Pickleball courts and event areas. The group then discussed the details of the design of the proposed Pickleball courts and the fundraising that would be done at a later date to allow for low level lighting.

Mr. Marks and Ms. Mangold noted that the Pickleball courts moved in the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan) from 2019 – 2020 to 2021 - 2022. The group further reviewed the map and discussed parking for the Pickleball courts. Deb noted that although this is titled "Master Plan" it is not from the Fairfield Hills Master Plan. Amy explained that it is the Parks & Rec Master Plan, but does coincide with the requests and recommendations in

the original Master Plan. This Parks & Rec Master Plan places the fields in a more realistic layout. Jeff Jorgenson asked which of the fields in the diagram are in the original Master Plan. Mr. Marks referred back to Figure ES-6 from the original Master Plan and pointed out the 4 multipurpose fields that were in the same area, though expanded to include the area under Kent. Carl explained that in 2013 when Parks & Rec was asked to make their updates to the Master Plan, the four multipurpose fields in the 2007 map did not work where there were intended due to the distance from Wasserman Way to the fields. These fields were then changed from the 4 multipurpose to the 3 fields on the map.

Neil Chaudhary asked when Parks & Rec is looking at what can be done on the campus, are they referring to the most current Master Plan. Amy explained that the Parks & Rec Master Plan incorporates everything including the current state of buildings on the campus. Carl Samuelson added that in 2013 Land Use asked Parks & Rec to update their plan, and the map that was presented is the rendering from the engineers. Per Mr. Marks, when Parks & Rec is contemplating a project it is presented to the FHA where they are informed of what Parks & Rec would like to do and how it is consistent with the Master Plan. There is first a collaborative effort with the FHA, then the project is presented to Land use. He added his concerns that the Master Plan may not be referenced when proposals are presented. Deb explained with the example of apartments were first being proposed at Cochran Hall. At the time of the proposal the land under Cochran Hall was marked for fields. Deb had attended a public hearing where she spoke to the group about this fact and asked what was going to be done for fields. In the 2013 update there is language that states if any land that was dedicated for future fields is removed, land suitable for fields will be provided elsewhere in the town. She then asked if the need for fields is the same as 10 years ago considering the decrease in demographics. Mr. Marks explained that at the time the plan was designed sports were one or two-season sports, but are now being played 3-seasons out of the year. Parks & Rec has not been approached by town sports leagues with a need for fields at this time, so they feel they are in a good place. He added that there is no plan to install lighting at any of the existing fields based upon the use of these fields. Also, Parks & Rec considers residents who neighbor these fields when reviewing needs for lighting. Carl added that school security requirements have diminished access to fields at and around the schools so that field maintenance can only occur at times when school is dismissed. Mr. Marks added that maintaining these fields is made more difficult in that certain pesticides and weed killers cannot be applied. Carl further explained that centralizing fields reduces maintenance time because drive time and loading and unloading equipment is decreased.

Gary MacRae asked if one building could be taken down to answer some of the Parks & Rec needs, which building would it be and why. Amy and Mr. Marks identified Kent Hall because it does not have a true use and it is in a decrepit state. It would make for a better space for playing fields and community activities. There is also a plan for one last phase of the trail that could be completed.

Rob Sherwood asked if the existing tennis court could be renovated to accommodate Pickleball courts. Carl noted that Pickleball lines have been painted on existing tennis courts, but the height of the net is actually higher than what is required for the sport. In addition, Pickleball courts have been added to two parking lots on the Fairfield Hills campus. Amy expressed that adding Pickleball courts would be a great addition to the campus for the Senior Center as well as all other ages. The group then discussed the cost of adding courts to the Fairfield Hills campus and the existing infrastructure.

Mr. Marks explained there is a commitment of \$25,000 from a donor that they are concerned will be lost if the donation cannot be used this year. Jeff Jorgenson expressed that he does not agree with the vision of a central park, and asked what it does to the Town if there was an effort to add more commercial to the campus. He gave an example of outside groups purchasing field time. Mr. Marks provided a brief history of when NYA was preparing programming they had originally wanted to have outdoor programming. This could not be supported because youth groups who were currently using the fields for free would then be charged for use of the fields. Since that time the fee structure has been changed so that it is a tiered opportunity to use fields. Carl explained that the Town does not have the space necessary to build for use by large tournaments. In addition there is

little time remaining where the fields are not being utilized. He then asked if there has been any thought in regards scouting groups' activities and camp grounds. Deb added that there is a lot of effort for organized sports, but no effort for non-organized sports other than the trail. What percentage of the population is being supported by organized sports recognizing that the same children play multiple sports? Mr. Marks explained that Parks & Rec provides alternative education programs yearly throughout the four seasons that are not necessarily catered towards children. He added that there are other organizations that provide programming and Parks & Rec does not want to interfere with these organizations. Deb asked if kids who are interested in the arts have opportunities outside of their schools. Amy replied that there are some low level programs, but Parks & Rec has no other space for these activities except for the schools. Mr. Marks explained that there have been 3 iterations of a request for a community location that would accommodate a teen center, black box theater and ceramics room where these types of activities could be accommodated. The group then discussed options and budgets. Amy added that Parks & Rec would love to partner with Cultural Arts to have a place for these activities on campus. Mr. Marks expressed that Parks & Rec should defer to the Cultural Arts commission.

Amy circled back to a question regarding what else is offered by Parks & Rec, and explained that Parks & Rec is the steward of the trail that is used for both passive and active recreation. In addition, the Victory Garden and the fruit trail is under Parks & Rec, as is the dog park. She spoke of the need for an event space, as events are often held in the soccer field area.

Deb then asked Laura Lerman, Chair of the Cultural Arts Commission, her thoughts on the representation of Cultural Arts on the campus. Laura began by informing the group of what is already being done by the Cultural Arts commission on the campus. The Municipal Center Art Gallery houses exhibits from local artists monthly. One Sunday per month, the Municipal Center is opened so the artist can hold a reception. The Arts Festival is held the second week in September annually. The Cultural Arts Commission is currently working with the Community Center in regards to activities. Laura noted that it is more expensive when events are held indoors, and that many events can be held outdoors without these costs. She then described Plymouth Hall and that it contains a theater and pottery room. Deb asked what Laura would like to see on campus. Laura replied that it would be nice to see more cultural arts events outdoors such as a dance recital or band concert. An amphitheater would be a nice addition to the campus to hold these types of events. The group then discussed outdoor concerts held at Dickenson Park, and that outdoor cultural events capture a wider range of people. Deb then asked about a sculpture garden. Laura said that the Town has been given beautiful sculptures that could be used in the garden, and that Pat has spoken at great length about wanting a sculpture garden. The group then discussed potential locations for a sculpture garden and that a sculpture garden is typically located in green space. Laura added that a sculpture garden should not be a destination because only admirers of sculptures would visit and that the point is to draw all to enjoy. Laura said that a space which allows for a sculpture garden would be at the Municipal Center outside of the First Selectman's entrance. Amy informed members of the green space at the Municipal Center facing 1<sup>st</sup> street that has been reserved for a garden in memory of a former Municipal Center employee. Neil returned the conversation to the amphitheater and asked if this was in any department's CIP. Mr. Marks said that an amphitheater had not been a part of the Parks & Rec CIP, and noted that this would either be Fairfield Hills or Cultural Arts. Neil said if this vision becomes reality, then not much is left for commercial. The group then reviewed the map, and identified areas of the campus reserved for commercial development. Deb noted people stating a need for bathrooms and people watching their kids play sports who want food. She added that there is discussion to have Cochran Hall refurbished to have restaurants and services on ground floor and then age-restricted apartments above it, which would disrupt the Parks & Rec Master Plan. Deb then asked how Parks & Rec felt about this. Mr. Marks expressed that he would be fine with this decision as long as there was a plan that accommodates the passive and active recreational uses on campus. Again he referred to the need to consider the Master Plan, and added that Cochran House does not easily lend itself to alterations. Carl said that the original Master Plan included 12 athletic fields, and now the plan is down to 10 fields. The actual locations of fields is not a concern, but it must be ensured that fields are considered. Amy noted that maybe a ballfield would not be wanted, but they may want to consider space for a bicycle play

field which is a new and growing trend, a disc golf field or a playground. If we don't plan for future recreation, we won't have it. Deb recapped that the child population is decreasing and single season sports have turned into tri-season sports. With this said, the need for the fields may still be there but that is not known for sure. She asked if it is possible for Parks & Rec to go back and investigate given the current expectations. Mr. Marks said that early on when the town was contemplating buying the property, some projections were done based upon the school data. Parks & Rec could piggy-back off of this information. Carl pointed out the need for fields considering the use for community events, and specifically pointed out the re-orientation of the soccer and softball fields to also be utilized for community events. Jeff noted that the document was misleading with the title Fairfield Hills Master plan. Jeff expressed concern that if the Parks & Rec Master Plan map is posted as is, it may be misunderstood by someone as being part of the Fairfield Hills Master Plan. Mr. Marks said the title can be changed, and asked where the FHMPRC would want this map posted. The group then discussed the current 2013 Master Plan and what the FHMPRC could recommend.

Deb thanked Parks & Rec and Laura Lerman (Cultural Arts Commission) for attending.

### **Old Business**

#### **Calendar:**

Deb explained to members that she had thought if meetings were required past the last meeting date in April that they could simply add meeting, however she found out that additional meetings would have to be considered special meetings. Members discussed if there was a required timeframe in which the update had to be completed. Deb and Neil confirmed there is not. At the end of the conversation, the group agreed to add 4 more meetings.

Neil made a motion to add May 8, May 28<sup>th</sup>, June 12<sup>th</sup> and June 25<sup>th</sup> to the official calendar. Chand seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **Public Communication Channels (Social Media, Town Web Page, etc.):**

Neil recommended that the public is not allowed to provide input in social media, as this is the easiest solution. Chand said that he is not in favor of having someone as commentator. Neil noted that a member can be assigned to comment only when public input is inaccurate. Deb informed members that Fairfield Hills has their own website and that this may be an option for the FHMPRC. Jeff added that there are many information only pages on Facebook, and this is not out of the ordinary. The group discussed opportunities for public input such as a survey and planned public meetings. Neil recommended confirming that there can be a lockdown in Facebook to not allow comments. Deb added that whoever does initial post will be only person to be involved in conversation. Neil highlighted that responses should only be regarding inaccuracies. Deb recapped that the recommendation is to have a business-style Facebook page, and to direct readers to other on-line sources that contain information. Deb asked Neil to formalize the plan for the next meeting and the group will vote at that time.

Deb told members she spoke with Phil Clark regarding the commercial, housing & mixed use meeting. She further explained the details of moving meetings to accommodate everyone's schedules. The group agreed to switch the commercial/housing/mixed use meeting from 1/22 to 1/9. Deb will contact invited guests to confirm all are available for 1/9.

Deb said that there will probably be two public hearing meetings as housing has been a hot button item in the past. Neil added that these meeting will be regarding all topics, not just housing. The group discussed the possible need of giving time limits to speakers to allow time for all to speak. Jeff reminded members of the 2014

Fairfield Hills Commercial Development round table meetings held at the Reed library and asked if these meetings would be similar. Neil answered that there will be an announcement stating the FHMPRC is considering revisions to the Master Plan and will specify the topics being covered, and the note that the committee welcomes the public's input. Jeff noted that the meetings may not be useful as much of the public information will be more opinion. Deb said that she would like to hold two public meetings. The first will be earlier in the process and will allow for the public to provide their input. The second will be later in the process where the FHMPRC will present to attending members of the public the committees thoughts and reasons for them. Deb asked members to come up with their thoughts on the language that will be used for the announcement of the public meeting.

**Senior and Disabled Uses Committee Discussion:**

Deb asked Gary to forward his email to Kim to append to her notes.

The group then discussed parking options, and whether or not the Town is able to sell portions of the Fairfield Hills campus property. Neil recommended asking the First Selectman to contact the Town attorney to provide clarification.

**Public Participation**

No public participation.

**Discussion of Future Agenda Items**

No discussion.

With no further business, Neil made a motion to adjourn. Jeff seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Kimberly Chiappetta, Clerk.*

# Attachment A

## **Fairfield Hills Recreational Master Plan**

*A Presentation to Fairfield Hills Authority*

*March 23, 2015*



**Presenters:**

**Amy Mangold – Director, Newtown Parks & Recreation Department**

**Edward Marks – Chairman, Newtown Parks & Recreation Commission**

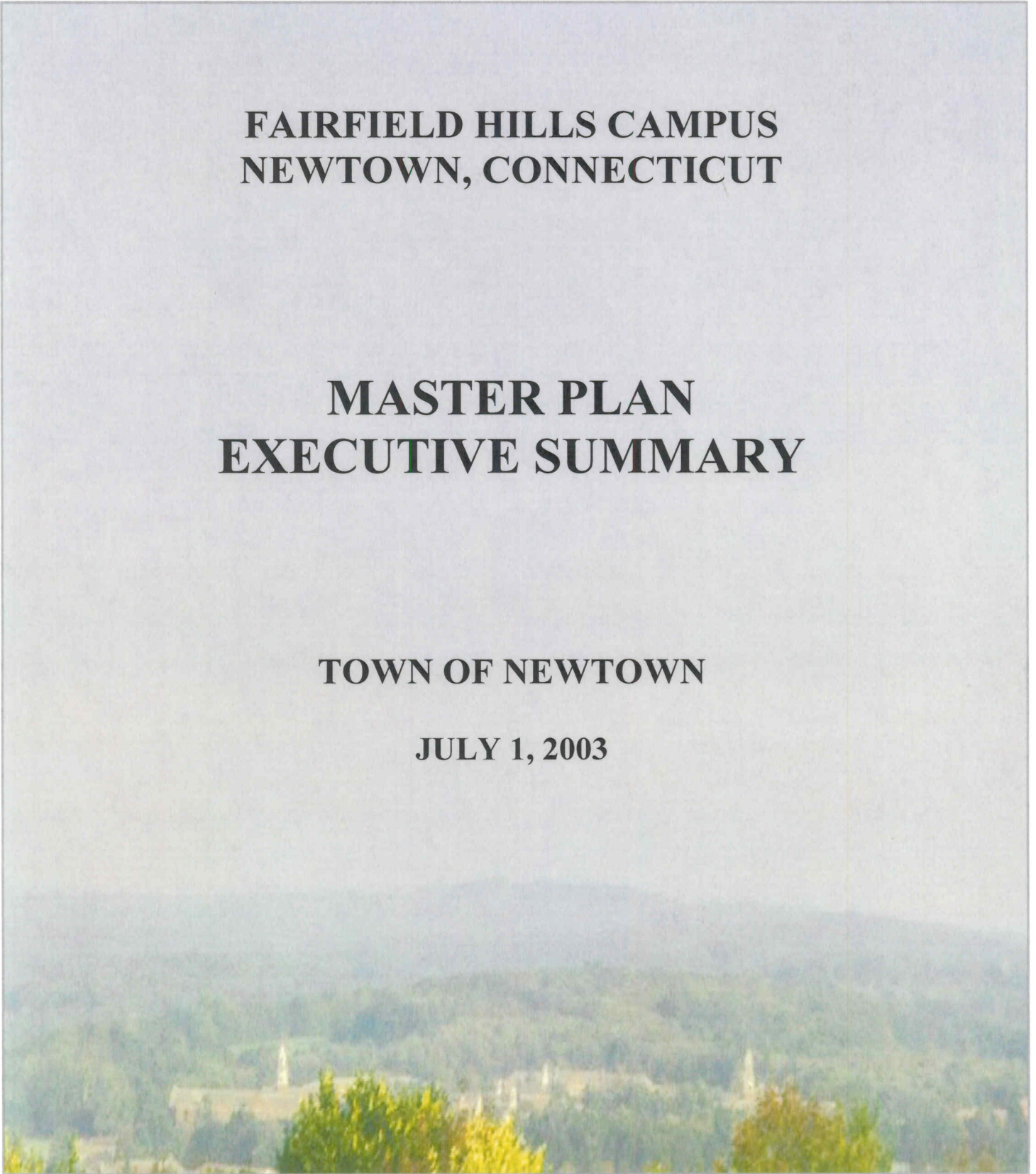


**FAIRFIELD HILLS CAMPUS  
NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT**

**MASTER PLAN  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**TOWN OF NEWTOWN**

**JULY 1, 2003**



# Fairfield Hills Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee

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Robert Geckle, Chairman  
Richard Sturdevant, Vice Chairman  
Alan Clavette  
Kevin Cragin  
Al Cramer  
Mary Ann Currie  
John Martocci  
Maira Rodgers  
Janice Roman  
Charles Wrinn

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## Board of Selectmen

Herbert Rosenthal  
Joseph Bojnowski  
William Brimmer

---

## Town Staff

Jan Andras  
Elizabeth Stocker, AICP

---

## Consultant Team



Harrall-Michalowski  
Associates, Inc.



SmithGroup JJR



Milone and MacBroom, Inc.



Kaestle Boos Associates, Inc.



Fuss and O'Neill, Inc.



The Downes Group



# **Fairfield Hills Master Plan**

## **Executive Summary**

### **BACKGROUND**

In June 2001 at the Town Meeting, the voters of Newtown approved the bonding for the purchase of a 186-acre southerly portion of the Fairfield Hills Hospital site containing the main campus at its core, a significant amount of undeveloped property, and a small two-acre parcel on the north side of Wasserman Way containing the fire station and machine shop. The larger balance totaling 336 acres of the original Fairfield Hills Hospital property has been retained by the State of Connecticut for the Governor's Horse Guard and related uses; transferred to the CT Department of Agriculture for permanent open space; proposed for permanent open space to protect Deep Brook; and proposed for sale to the Town for expansion of the Commerce Road Business Park. In addition, 19.2 acres is the site of the new John Reed School. Figure 1 shows these various parcels. Figure 2 shows existing conditions on the 186 acre parcel.

The Town Meeting vote authorized a variety of activities to be undertaken by the Town including preparation of a Master Plan for the 186-acre area. The material distributed at the Town Meeting established five themes for this Master Plan. These themes were:

- The Campus should contain a substantial open space component inclusive of both active playing fields and passive open space.
- One or more of the existing structures should be renovated and adapted for use as Town offices and possibly educational uses.
- Selected structures within the entry plaza portion of the Campus should be renovated for economic development activity, such as small professional offices.
- A core area of the Campus could be reserved for revenue generating economic development activities compatible with other uses and the surrounding area.
- All components should be provided within the context of a master plan that preserves the campus environment, with the Town maintaining overall control of the Campus.

In addition to preparation of the Master Plan, the Town Meeting authorized the following program components:

- Secure all agreements/approvals for water rights.
- Secure environmental insurance.
- Purchase the property.
- Construct playing fields for a net increase of seven fields.
- Remediate site conditions.
- Remediate and demolish buildings needed to accomplish program components.
- Renovate a building for Town and Board of Education purposes.
- Improve the general site and infrastructure.

These activities were assigned a budget of \$20,123,600 as part of Phase I and Phase II of the Fairfield Hills Campus Cost Estimates. A Phase III was included for the disposition of additional buildings including demolition if required. There was no funding approved for these Phase III activities. It was assumed that such activities would be funded from other sources including the possibility of non-town investment. It was clear to the voters that the funds approved would be used to accomplish the Phase I and Phase II activities with the three main accomplishments being:

- Purchase and long-term control of the site.
- The provision of seven additional playing fields.
- The provision of a building to accommodate Town and Board of Education administrative needs over the next 15 to 20 years.

## **THE PROCESS**

Based on the direction provided at the Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen established a process to refine the Master Plan for Fairfield Hills, gain resident input, and move the Master Plan through the local approval process including approval by the Planning and Zoning Commission in accordance with the Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse section of the Newtown Zoning Regulations. A key component of the process was the appointment by the Board of Selectmen of a ten-person Fairfield Hills Master Plan Ad Hoc Committee. As shown in Figure 3, the committee has held 26 meetings, invited 45 community groups to present needs for the Campus, held two community workshops of two sessions each, hosted a tour of the Campus and produced a video tour of the Campus for broadcast on local access TV. The entire process was covered extensively by the Newtown Bee including the publishing of a two-page insert describing alternative plans for discussion at community workshops. The central philosophy of the Committee has been one of flexibility. The Master Plan proposed by the Committee addresses immediate needs as expressed by the community while retaining future opportunities which come with purchase of the Campus from the State. Decisions as to these opportunities will be made over several decades by Newtown residents.

## **THE PLAN**

The Master Plan is a strategic plan for the use of Fairfield Hills to the benefit of the Newtown Community. The components of this strategic plan are described in this section.

### **Town Hall**

The recommended Master Plan shown in Figure 4 addresses all the themes/program components approved at the Town Meeting in June 2001. The plan proposes a three story 40,000 square foot Town Hall located at a choice of keystone locations on the Campus. One location is at the northern end of the Green where the old entrance from Wasserman Way approaches Newtown and Woodbury Halls. The second location is at the southern end of the Green generally where Shelton House is currently located. Figure 5 shows the potential layout of the building and some perspective views. The location and design of the building will provide outstanding views to and from the building; modern, efficient space to meet town needs; meeting space for numerous community groups and



governmental commissions; and the capacity to expand over time as needed in a cost efficient manner, with the building systems needed for expansion in place.

### **Playing Fields**

The playing fields including four multi-purpose fields, two full size baseball fields, two softball fields and two youth baseball fields, and retention of the two existing youth baseball fields are proposed at locations shown on Figure 6 established in consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commission. The fields can be constructed in a sequence and within a schedule to meet the priorities of the Parks and Recreation Commission and users as well as coordination with other demolition and construction activities proposed in the Master Plan.

### **Open Space/Land Banked For Future Use**

It is important to note that vast majority of the 186 acre site comprising the Campus is proposed to be land banked, open space, and recreation fields. The land banked portions of the site are comprised primarily of the West, East and High Meadow areas shown on Figure 6. The specific use of these areas will be decided over several decades. In the near term, these areas will be primarily passive natural areas. Such areas include 134 acres or 72% of the Campus. An additional six acres of open space is within the core for a total of 140 acres or 75% of the Campus.

### **Road Changes/Parking**

Figure 7 highlights on the Master Plan the locations proposed for road changes and parking areas. The road changes highlighted by circles are design features and not needed to increase traffic capacities. The areas highlighted with asterisks include the closing of the old entrance from Wasserman Way other than for emergency vehicles and some lane widening at the main entrance. Newtown zoning regulations require approximately 1,175 spaces for the Plan and 1,040 spaces if Shelton is demolished. This does not include spaces for the high school academy concept or the playing fields. There are between 1450 and 1500 provided in the Plan for basic plan components as well as these two uses or an alternate use of the Kent House site for a 50,000 square foot office use. The major need within these 1450-1500 spaces is generated by Plymouth, Bridgeport and the playing fields which are all community benefit uses.

### **Utilities**

Figure 8 presents a preliminary layout for the sanitary sewer, storm sewer and water systems to serve the Campus. All of these systems are currently in place and are capable of serving the Campus in the near term. However, there are features of the water and sewer systems that due to age, materials used and design should be replaced. For example, roof drains from existing buildings are connected to the sanitary sewers and the clay pipes result in ground water infiltration. During storms with heavy rain or times of ground saturation, the sewage treatment plant must process high volumes of effluent. While the plant has the capacity to handle these levels, the correction of this condition should be addressed over the longer term. The Town is currently in discussion with private

# Figure ES 6 Fairfield Hills Master Plan – Playing Fields

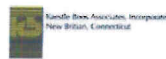


**Facilities**

- 1. New Townhall: 40,000 gsf - ADHOC Committee Recommendation
  - 2. Woodbury: 30,000 gsf
  - 3. Newtown: 16,000 gsf
  - 4. Shelton (reduced): 40,000 gsf or Site of New Town Hall per Selectmen Recommendation
  - 5. Kent (reduced): 50,000 gsf or High School Academy Site
  - 6. Canaan (reduced): 50,000 gsf
  - 7. Stafford: 5,000 gsf
  - 8. Plymouth: 600 seat auditorium - 24,000 gsf
  - 9. Bridgeport: 40,000 gsf
  - 10. Duplaxes: 10,000 sf
  - 11. Stamford: 40 Dormitory Rooms
  - 12. Environmental Education Center: 3,000 gsf
  - 13. Museum
- Twelve Recreation Fields

## Fairfield Hills - Master Plan (Playing Fields)

Newtown, Connecticut



May 2003





**Facilities**

- 1. Woodbury: 30,000 gsf
- 2. Newtown: 16,000 gsf
- 3. Shelter: ~~Demolished~~
- 4. Kent (*reduced*): 50,000 gsf
- 5. Canaan (*reduced*): 50,000 gsf
- 6. Stratford: 5,000 gsf
- 7. Plymouth: 600 seat auditorium - 24,000 gsf
- 8. Bridgeport: ~~40,000 gsf~~ 47,000 gsf - Town Office
- 9. Duplexes: 10,000 sf
- 10. Environmental Education Center: 3,000 gsf
- 11. Museum
- 12. ~~Single Family Homes to Remain~~ (*Removed*)
- 13. 12 Recreation Fields

# Fairfield Hills - Master Plan

Newtown, Connecticut



Harvall-Michalowski Associates, Incorporated  
Hamden, Connecticut

SmithGroup JJR SmithGroup JJR, L.L.C.  
Ann Arbor, Michigan



Milone & MacBroom, Incorporated  
Cheshire, Connecticut



Kaestle Boos Associates, Incorporated  
New Britain, Connecticut



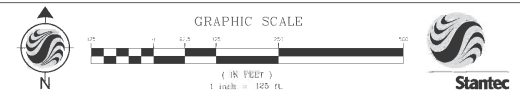
Fuss & O'Neill, Incorporated  
Manchester, Connecticut





# FAIRFIELD HILLS - MASTER PLAN

SITE PLAN RENDERING  
 AUGUST 26, 2013







# FAIRFIELD HILLS - MASTER PLAN

SITE PLAN RENDERING  
REVISED AUGUST 2018

