



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee
MINUTES

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee held a Meeting on December 18, 2018
In the Explorer 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, Chandravir Ahuja, Doug Smith
(7:32pm)

Absent: Jeffery Jorgensen, Robert Rau, Bryan Roth, Bob Bowen

Also Present: Mark Tambascio, Alan Shepard, Dave Kingsley, First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Malcom McLachlan

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 p.m. without a quorum. Meeting continued with a quorum at 7:32 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

N. Chaudhary moved to approve the minutes of the 11/20/18 meeting, G. MacRae seconded. D. Zukowski made the following corrections: Don Mitchel was not present. Page 3, ½ down in the 4th paragraph the sentence should read “Neil gave examples of the master plan and breweries not being being documented as supportive uses, the FFH adaptive reuse zone states that uses need to be consistent with the master plan”. Motion passes with changes, C. Ahuja abstained.

C. Ahuja moved to approve the minutes of the 12/5/18 meeting. N. Chaudhary seconded, motion unanimously approved.

New Business

Current Tenants – What Works, What could be improved – Malcom McLachlan is the president of the Ambulance Association which is a current tenant of FFH. They are starting their fifth year in their building. They are happy with the with the plowing and the maintenance. There have been a few times that during events, the driveway gets blocked because traffic is backed up. They have no problems with the walkers and joggers using the trail that crosses the driveway. G. MacRae explained that Jen Crane from the Center for Support and Wellness is looking to put together a consortium of nonprofit groups to talk about volunteerism. This is something that the Ambulance Association would like to be part of.

Mark Tambascio and Dave Kingsley are the first private effort on the campus. They will be opening a brewery late summer of 2019. D. Zukowski asked what was their experience as well as where and what the concerns and successes prior to opening. D. Kingsley explained that their process working with the town was supportive and helpful. Going forward, they are focused on the building, getting it up and running. They are looking at signage and want to make sure people will be able to find their brewery.

You will be able to see the brewhouse when you walk through the doors. There will be a tasting room, a gas/wood fired pizza oven and one gourmet food truck on the weekends. There will be a patio with bocce and cornhole. Soda, cold brew coffee and kombucha on tap as well. There will be events like birthday, weddings, holiday parties.

Handicap assessable parking issues have been addressed. They are not concerned about parking, there are a lot of options.

M. Tambascio explained that he looked at the building 5 years ago and fell in love with it but it wasn't time for a business there at the time. A lot of brewers are built in warehouses and garages because they need high ceilings, this one will be unique.

D. Zukowski questioned people having wine and beer going on the trails, are they concerned of mishaps?

M. Tambascio explained that craft breweries are like going to any restaurant or bar. Demographics are young and becoming very family orientated.

Commercial Development at FFH would increase traffic to their business.

There are limits to their lease. Music is limited to acoustic outside. If they wanted to have something like a beer fest it would be a separate permit though FFHA. There will be pop up kiosks for local artists and may even have an art gallery and do art events.

First Selectman Rosenthal explained that most of the tenants are town. EOC, Municipal Center, Center for Support and Wellness. At times there can be parking issues but at the moment there are no plans to build more parking. He would like to see them link Cochran house parking to the NYA. It is a short shot from the front of Cochran house if you cut through the walking trail. If there is a big event at any of the facilities, you can use that for overflow for the Community Center or NYA.

D. Zukowski asked what would it take to have a bus route that would hit the schools, senior living, Edmond Town Hall, and FFH? First Selectman Rosenthal explained that he could see a transit loop functioning in town but needs to investigate the cost. Presumably it would be something that everyone could take advantage of.

A Bike and Trail Committee has just been appointed. They can do signage for bike safety. There are things we can do to make roads more bike friendly. There will be a sidewalk going in from Glover Avenue, down South Main to Wasserman Way then down to the Reed School.

Once the brewery and Community Center is open, and there is another event on the grounds, they may have to consider other parking alternatives. They have made a commitment to their tenants. There are no designated spaces but during special events, they may have to designate parking for the tenants. Week to week they do not see any issues with parking.

A community calendar was discussed. It seems like it would be a good resource to let their tenants know what is going on. FFHA tracks events at FFH right now but that is it. Everything is bifurcated right now. The Community Center will have a calendar as well.

G. MacRae asked if you look at all the buildings and marked ones that could be repurposed, the majority of buildings cannot be repurposed. If you are going to select one or two buildings that should come down for parking, retail, residential, what two buildings and why? First Selectman Rosenthal said Shelton and Kent. It is in the CIP but pushed out a few years. He has talked to developers and there are pathways that can be taken. The state can give credits which may be a pathway to get some of the buildings renovated for use. There are people that think the buildings don't have to come down. He would like to peruse the idea that if the building is up they have something to negotiate. Looking at Cochran house, that is \$3.7 million to take it down. If you demolish and rebuild a retail establishment, that could be \$110,000 a year in tax revenue. It would take 40 years to break even. Would rather give someone a building, secure tax credits, something to jump start it. If the town doesn't have to demolish it, it would save tax payers almost \$4 million.

It was asked if old scary derelict buildings make it harder to bring in commercial. D. Kingsley explained from a business prospective, if he had a high end restaurant he would feel differently. For a brewery it adds something.

First Selectman Rosenthal explained that when the town was acquiring the land, advice was if you wanted to develop the land you have to have an outpost. Because we have a presence here, it brings a higher level of interest and kept everyone at the table. The brewery has caused people to inquire about the campus and see what the town will do.

Old Business

Public Communication

N. Chaudhary suggestion is a page the public cannot weigh in but post links to that page so people can discuss. If we notice erroneous messages going out, we post it on their site to correct it. C. Ahuja explained that they are providing a wall of neutrality. Invite people to participate if they have anything to say.

C. Ahuja expressed concern that he is not signed up for News and Announcements as others are not as well. Not everyone in town takes part. It was discussed that if they do have a Face Book page, there wouldn't be as many people following it as they would like. You need more of a dialog for social medial. C. Ahuja said that the blast that was sent out earlier was a natural commentary and doesn't like operating in a vacuum. We have had minimum public participation. D. Zukowski believes that they will be getting more public for the commercial housing talks. D. Zukowski is not satisfied with the publicity the board is getting. She would like to get posts out to Accountability, Education, Nicer Newtown and Logical Newtown. Let them know when the survey is coming out and doesn't see a gain for a stand along anything.

N. Chaudhary moved to forgo setting up a Face Book page dedicated to the Fairfield Hill Master Plan Review Commiettee and instead allow D. Zukowski to post on various social media sights on behalf of the committee. D. Smith seconded, motion unanimously approved.

Communications

D. Zukowski requested operational expenses from Christal Presler and Fred Hurley. She has also requested CIP expenses from Bob Tait.

Liaison Reports

D. Smith has reached out to Matt Ariniello, the Director of the Community Center. Park & Rec Commission has a relationship with Park & Rec staff. Cultural Arts, is standalone but they would like to see them have a relationship with Park & Rec staff as well because they also deal with cultural arts.

Public Participations

None

Discussion of future agenda items

N. Chaudhary requested to add a change in the quorum from 6 to 5 members to the agenda.
D. Zukowski will make it more clear that housing will be discussed at the next meeting.

Both January meetings will be at the Senior Center and the February meeting will be back at THS.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:59pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Arlene Miles, Clerk Pro-Tem