

Amended 1-24-11

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee
Thursday January 13, 2011
Council Chambers, Newtown, Connecticut**

Mr. Maurer called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm.

Present: Gary Steele, Paul Lundquist, Robert Maurer, Nancy Roznicki, Alan Shepard and Deborra Zukowski; **Absent:** Michael Floros, Michael Mossbarger, and Ben Roberts.

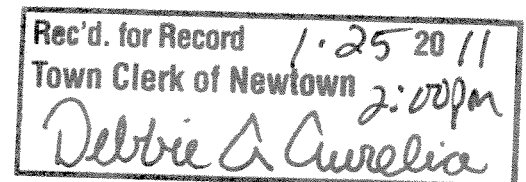
Public Participation: Ruby Johnson from 16 Chestnut Hill Road, distributed 4 handouts. The first is titled "Fairfield Hills Campus Cost Estimates." This document was prepared by Harrall-Michalowski Ass. Inc. in May 21, 2001. This document discusses costs associated with FFH campus and she felt that the committee would find it interesting. Ms. Johnson also distributed "FFH Expenditures by Vendor by Task/Project for Expenditures up to June 11, 2009." She also distributed 2 emails between her and Robert Tait concerning funding of baseball fields.

Ms. Johnson would like the committee to consider having a summer camp at FFH, especially once the zero entry pool is completed. Ms. Johnson also wanted to respond to the Newtown Bee's article in last week's newspaper. She thinks it's important that FFH be part of the town, not a separate entity. She thinks the Fairfield Hills Authority has strayed from this thought. Ms. Johnson also commented that she would like to see FFH expenditures incorporated into the town budget.

Jennifer Johnston of the Cultural Arts Commission spoke. She asked Ms. Zukowski to clarify her tasks. Ms. Zukowski responded that Ms. Johnston has 2 tasks to complete for the FHMPRC. The first is to research the revenue model of successful cultural centers such as the Ridgefield Playhouse. Groups such as the Playhouse are non-profit so the revenue should even out at zero. The second task is for Ms. Johnston to find out if this area can financially support another theater like the Ridgefield Playhouse. Ms. Zukowski suggested that Ms. Johnston put any information that she has into an email to be shared with the FHMPRC.

Ms. Johnston asked for a deadline. Mr. Lundquist responded to try and have this information to the group within the next month. The public participation will begin in early March and this information would be helpful to have for that phase.

Mr. Maurer said to Ms. Johnston that the group is anxious to hear what the Cultural Arts Commission has to say. He asked her about the Newtown Players. He wanted to know why they don't want to come to FFH. Ms. Johnston replied that she wasn't sure because she hasn't talked to them yet. Ms. Johnston did add that the Newtown Players currently do not have heat in their facility so they only perform during the spring and summer. She wasn't sure if that was their choice or, if given heat, they would want to operate during the colder months.



Ms. Johnston brought up the option of using Plymouth Hall for the cultural performing arts center. Ms. Roznicki added that Mr. Geckle felt it was still possible to use the facility for that purpose. Ms. Zukowski contributed that there was some discussion in a previous document that said that Plymouth Hall would be demolished. Ms. Roznicki responded that Newtown, Woodbury, Strafford and Plymouth were the most usable buildings at FFH.

Ms. Johnston said that Plymouth Hall would be ideal because there is already so much there including a theater and pottery rooms. She also said that Stratford is beautiful but small. She said in order for all cultural arts to use the facility, the more open the facility the better.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended, from the December 9, 2010 meeting. Mr. Lundquist seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

New Business:

- Ms. Zukowski said that many friends gave her documents to read once they heard she was on the FHMPRC. One of the documents discussed an amendment that would cut the power of the Fairfield Hills Authority. Ms. Zukowski said it was unclear if the amendment was approved or not. Ms. Zukowski said it is potentially pertinent because the last interest from a developer was to convert Cochran into an apartment building which is private use. Currently Cochran is slated in the Master Plan for public use. Mr. Maurer responded that he thought that the amendment had passed. He said he would get clarification.
Ms. Zukowski wants to know what it means for Cochran. She added, does the Master Plan need to be revised?
- Mr. Maurer was concerned about the article in last week's Bee regarding the progress of FFH so he had a discussion with Ms. Llodra. Ms. Llodra reassured Mr. Maurer that the FHMPRC is doing a great job and she is not expecting a report until April or May. He also asked Ms. Llodra what she wanted for a report. She replied that she is looking for a 4-5 page summary including a list of recommendations.

Subcommittee Updates:

Public Participation Subcommittee: Mr. Lundquist will draft a memo that discusses the cost breakdown of the public participation process. The total cost of the process is \$13,800. Mr. Maurer asked Mr. Lundquist what Rosa, the consultant, needs from the subcommittees. Mr. Lundquist responded that the subcommittees should create briefing materials. These materials should relay options, not recommendations. Mr. Shepard added that the subcommittees can come up with discussion topics.

Mr. Lundquist said that the Microcosm Council is scheduled for March 4-6, 2011. The materials will be needed between now and then. Ms. Zukowski asked if Rosa received the Demographics report yet. Mr. Lundquist replied that he didn't know. Ms. Roznicki said at the end of January it

will be time to call and recruit people for the Microcosm Council. Mr. Lundquist added that the group will need to recruit 12-15 people that represent the varied demographics of the Newtown community.

Ms. Roznicki asked which list they will be using to call the people. Mr. Lundquist replied that they will work off of a voting database. Then they will be called and asked specific demographic questions. He added that the trick will be recruiting the appropriate mix of people. Mr. Shepard asked if they committee will be calling and asking people to attend. Mr. Lundquist responded that what they have to say will be scripted. He also added that it is not going to be an easy task.

Ms. Roznicki asked if there will be an incentive for people to agree to participate in the Microcosm Council. Mr. Lundquist said that the people will receive \$100 if they agree to participate. Mr. Lundquist said that the next step will be to get the voter registration list. He said it is important to give people enough notice.

Mr. Steele suggested making the phone calls from a central location, perhaps a place that has 6-8 telephones. Mr. Lundquist added that the phone calls should be done before 8pm during the week but the weekend is more wide open.

Ms. Roznicki suggested having a coffee and donut get together to try and recruit people. Ms. Zukowski suggested standing in front of a grocery store to recruit people. Mr. Shepard added that any given Saturday at a grocery store in Newtown is a good mix of people. Ms. Zukowski brought up the issue of demographics. She feels it would be important to go to each of the grocery stores in Newtown. Mr. Lundquist had some concerns that the questions may take too long for people who are grocery shopping. It may take 5 minutes which may not be appropriate outside a grocery store. Mr. Steele agreed that he would prefer not to stand out in the cold answering someone's questions.

Mr. Steele suggested writing something for the Newtown Bee to inform the community about what the FHMPRC has been doing and the upcoming events. Ms. Roznicki agreed that the group could use a front page article about getting the public involved. Ms. Zukowski added that the group could use some PR. Mr. Lundquist suggested that they could put out a press release to The Voice and The Patch.

Mr. Maurer asked for a volunteer to draft a memo/press release. Mr. Steele volunteered to write it with input from the group. Ms. Roznicki would like to see this memo covered in different newspapers.

Mr. Maurer suggested that the heads of each subcommittee check in with Mr. Roberts. Ms. Zukowski feels it is important that everyone on the FHMPRC sees and approves all subcommittee documents. She also reiterated the importance that the document should not be recommendations. Mr. Lundquist suggested putting this on the agenda for the next FHMPRC meeting. At that meeting the group can vote on the reports.

Housing and Commercial Subcommittee: Mr. Maurer said that they hope to meet next week.

Open Space, Recreation, and

Social Services Subcommittee: Ms. Zukowski distributed an Arts Center report, see attached. She discussed using Plymouth Hall for the Cultural Arts Center. She said it can hold up to 800 seats. She would like to see it as a regional center, not just a Newtown center. She added the importance of the proximity to Route 84. She said that the cultural groups currently use Edmond Town Hall but this is expensive and inconvenient because it has to compete with the movies. Mr. Steele brought up the Ives Center as a possible competitor. Ms. Zukowski said that since the Ives Center is so much bigger, it would be a totally different type of venue. Ms. Zukowski did express concern about market saturation in this area. Can this area support another Ridgefield Playhouse?

Ms. Zukowski then distributed an Outdoor Events report, see attached. She discussed the use of FFH for events such as Relay for Life and the Farmer's Market. Ms. Zukowski feels FFH is great because it has large open spaces, access to water and toilets, proximity to Route 84, level areas and hard surfaces. Mr. Maurer had concerns about parking availability. Ms. Zukowski said that overflow parking could use Reed to park and walk across the street.

Ms. Zukowski distributed a third document about the Parks and Recreation, see attached. She said that Newtown is not excessive with the number of fields, they are at the low end compared to surrounding towns. Mr. Maurer asked about the possibility of an indoor ice rink at FFH. Ms. Zukowski responded that it is a possibility but may need a private enterprise.

Ms. Zukowski stated that Newtown Social Services liked the idea of using the duplexes for their offices because of the level of privacy that they provide.

Ms. Zukowski said that she is meeting with the Conservation group on 1/14 at 7:30AM.

Education Subcommittee: Ms. Roznicki presented a document, see attached. This document discussed the possibility of land banking 60 acres of land for future educational use, such as a middle school or a high school. Mr. Steele suggested that the Pros/Cons part of the document be renamed to "Facts Pertinent to the Situation." He said what is a pro to one person might actually be a con to another. Ms. Zukowski suggested calling it "Points to Ponder."

Mr. Lundquist asked if there was any idea where the 60 acres might be. Ms. Zukowski responded that there has been some discussion about where but she felt that is really an implementation issue. She did say that the Kent area, near East Meadow may be considered for this. Mr. Maurer suggested leaving the "where" open right now and not specify Kent. Mr. Maurer asked if there was a possibility of an Alternative High School coming to FFH. Ms. Zukowski responded that the Alternative High School is actually in the bottom floor of the high school. She did not see an AHS coming to FFH. She said it is not really called Alternative High School. The goal is to keep the students as part of the high school, not pull them out. They take separate classes but within the existing high school.

Mr. Shepard agreed with Mr. Maurer about keeping the acreage generic and not to label it. Ms. Zukowski suggested leaving the labeled area off of the public documents. She suggested that Ms. Roznicki have 2 documents. 1 is for the public and 1 for our documentation, this document could include the places for the school.

Public Participation:

None

Ms. Zukowski made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Steele seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Sharlow, Clerk.