

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FAIRFIELD HILLS
MASTER PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**The Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee
Monday January 24, 2011
Senior Center, Newtown, Connecticut**

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

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

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Town Planner; Rosa ?? .

Public Participation: None

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Maurer made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended, from the January 13, 2011 meeting. Ms. Zukowski seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Elizabeth Stocker, Commercial Development Review:

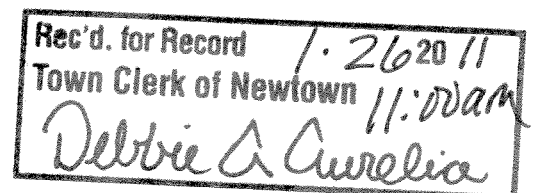
Ms. Stocker stated that she was at the meeting as a follow up to the October meeting. She attended the FHMPRC meeting to look at two maps to see what is available for future development in Newtown.

She distributed a document titled, "Town of Newtown, Connecticut, Vacant Industrial Zoned Land." She showed the group on a map the areas in Newtown that are zoned for other than residential uses. Ms. Stocker said that 3% of the town is currently used for industrial or commercial uses.

Ms. Zukowski asked Ms. Stocker about the Hawleyville area and its access to sewers. Ms. Stocker replied that the sewers come in from Bethel. She added that the plan is to pull the sewers up to the 130 acres of land at the Route 25 and Route 6 intersection. She also said that it is all commercial in that area and they already have approvals for several different projects. You will begin to see more development in that area in this spring.

Ms. Stocker then pointed to the second map that she brought. She said that this map correlated to the inventory. She said that only things that are vacant, totally undeveloped are shown on this map. Mr. Lundquist asked why Fairfield Hills is not on the list. Ms. Stocker responded that it is because it is not a vacant property, there are many buildings.

Ms. Zukowski asked Ms. Stocker if there are currently a very high number of vacant buildings. Ms. Stocker responded that there are not a very high number of vacant buildings. She stated that there is a vacant building on Peck Lane. She added that there is space available in other buildings in Newtown but not many buildings that are completely vacant. She said the old Pitney Bowes building which was vacant for a few years is currently being renovated.



Mr. Lundquist asked Ms. Stocker what percent of available vacant land is in competitions with Fairfield Hills. Ms. Stocker felt that none of it is competitive at all. She said that in other areas of Newtown the zoning is different. She added that although Fairfield Hills has buildings, there are not necessarily an asset. Mr. Lundquist asked if Tech Park is a more appealing place for developers. Ms. Stocker responded that it depends on what a developer is looking for. Ms. Roznicki asked Ms. Stocker if there was much competition over the Newtown line in other surrounding towns. She replied no there is not.

Mr. Maurer asked Ms. Stocker where the M-2 and M-5 zones are. She responded that many of the zones have been eliminated. There are some M-1 zones, one example is on the east side of Route 25, the west side is residential. Mr. Maurer asked Ms. Stocker if M-1 zones need to be single story. She replied, no they do not. She added that there has been some rezoning recently that now allows for residential over commercial. She said Hawleyville could have something like that, Sandy Hook currently has some of this type of development.

Mr. Maurer asked what type of zoning does Fairfield Hills have. Ms. Stocker said it is zoned adaptive reuse. She added that there used to be about 30 different uses that would be appropriate for the Fairfield Hills property but it has been whittled down. There used to be many more commercial options than what is there now.

Ms. Zukowski asked if the commercial zoning is building specific. Ms. Stocker replied, yes, according to the Master Plan. Ms. Zukowski then asked how many acres at Fairfield Hills is zoned commercial. Ms. Stocker said about 23 acres. Mr. Maurer asked if any of that 23 acres is where the aquifer is to which Ms. Stocker responded no. Ms. Zukowski asked if Ms. Stocker felt that 23 acres is sufficient. Ms. Stocker replied, not necessarily. She said it is important to focus on filling the main campus at Fairfield Hills first.

Ms. Zukowski asked Ms. Stocker if there is an impact on what can be developed in the High Meadow area since it is in the aquifer. Ms. Stocker said no, but there is an overlay zone for resource protection. There is an extra layer of review before something will be permitted to be developed there. She added that any development there should be more of a passive use, for example, you wouldn't want a chemical plant in the High Meadow area.

Ms. Zukowski said that Newtown is trying to remain a "rural" community. In order to do that she asked Ms. Stocker what ratio of commercial development would be important to maintain a "rural" community. Ms. Stocker responded that there is a plan of conservation and development. In that plan it states the town should focus on reusing what's in place. Try to keep the economic growth rate at the same pace as the residential growth rate. She added that about 10% of the grand list is nonresidential.

Mr. Maurer asked Ms. Stocker about her feeling of whether Fairfield Hills should be zoned a design district. Ms. Stocker responded that it is a district that already has many design guidelines in place. She said that part of the original zoning included a book of design guidelines, the zoning already requires it.

Ms. Stocker said that the point of the maps that she brought was to show that there are limited areas in Newtown for future commercial development.

Ms. Zukowski stated that it is important that we don't let the 10% slip in the future. Fairfield Hills can help prevent that number slipping in the future.

Ms. Stocker said that she can get more copies of her maps for the FHMPRC if they would like some.

Review of the Public Participation Process:

Mr. Lundquist reported that a draft of the script is ready for the recruiting for the Microcosm Council. Mr. Roberts said that we are asking people for a significant time commitment. The hours will be 9AM to 5PM on Saturday, March 5th and a half day on Sunday, March 6th. He stated that it is very important that the group begins the calling/recruitment process very soon. He feels it would be important to start making the calls by the end of next week.

Mr. Floros asked if it was going to be random calling. Mr. Roberts said, pretty much but they will work off of a voter registration list. Mr. Lundquist then distributed the draft of the script that the group will use to make the recruiting phone calls. Mr. Floros questioned if they can ask whether the individual works in Newtown or not. Mr. Lundquist felt that was a valid question to ask. Mr. Floros said it might be good to have people that employ people in Newtown but doesn't necessarily live in Newtown. Mr. Lundquist said that the key right now is to get everything ready to begin recruiting next week. Rosa added getting some press would be very helpful. Mr. Maurer said that Gary Steele made a draft of a letter that can be used for the press. Mr. Floros will take Mr. Steele's letter, embellish it and make it a letter to the editor in the Newtown Bee on behalf of the FHMPRC. Ms. Zukowski felt that more should be in the Bee than only a letter to the editor. She offered to talk to a writer for the Bee for an article focusing on the FHMPRC, in particular the upcoming public participation effort. Mr. Floros feels the letter to the editor is important because the group has control over what is said in that letter. He was concerned over the lack of control the group would have over an article written by a Bee writer.

Ms. Zukowski then distributed 8 Documents from the subcommittees, see attached. These documents need to be condensed for the public participation process. Mr. Lundquist also said that the numbers in the documents need to be verified before anything is distributed to the public. Ms. Zukowski asked the committee members to read the documents over the next week and be ready to come back and discuss them.

Rosa suggested that the committee members read over the script that will be used for recruiting and make any changes necessary. Mr. Roberts would like to begin calling on very soon. Mr. Lundquist was concerned with starting to make the calls before the location for the Microcosm Council is finalized. Ms. Roznicki added that calls can be made on weekends too. Mr. Lundquist suggested making the phone calls between 3PM and 8PM during the week and between 11AM and 8PM on the weekends. Mr. Roberts asked the committee members to let him know when you are available to make calls. Mr. Floros asked if the list will be alphabetical. Mr. Roberts responded, no, he is going to randomize the list. Mr. Roberts asked for a volunteer to find the locations for the 3 public participation events. Mr. Lundquist offered to call and

reserve locations. Mr. Floros suggested using the Reed Middle School cafeteria for the 2 large public participation events.

New Business:

- Mr. Roberts said that the Selectman approved funding for the public participation process.
- Ms. Zukowski said it would be beneficial for the member of the FHMPRC to see the communities of Foxborough and Orange. These communities are similar to Fairfield Hills and have been developed. Mr. Floros responded that he felt that was more of implementation and not necessary to visit these communities.

Public Participation:

None

Mr. Maurer made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Roberts seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Allison Sharlow, Clerk.

The role of demographics for our committee

- We need metrics for ensuring that our survey(s) and other forms of public input appropriately represent the town (i.e., respondent data will be weighted to reflect the real-world demographics of our community)
 - Assumptions behind survey:
 - The survey will be town-wide
 - The survey is intended to reflect views of the citizenry within today's current social and economic climate.
- We also need an estimate of the overall, long-term population of the town. Such information provides a context for vetting alternatives when the subcommittees talk with resources. For example, it provides grounding to better understand the needs for fields, schools, emergency services, etc., to enhance strategic, long-term planning for the use of the Fairfield Hills property.
- Primary Source
 - Planimetrics, "Newtown Buildout Analysis & Population Projections"
- Other Sources
 - US Census, both 2000 and 3-Year estimates [2006-2008], see: <http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?lang=en>
 - Reconcile with US Census 2010 when available (expected February, 2011 - as noted on above landing page).
 - Connecticut Economic Resource Center (CERC) Town Profile, see: <http://www.cerc.com/TownProfiles/Custom-Images/newtown2010.pdf>
 - Current school enrollment figures, as of October 29, 2010 <http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/site/files/enrollmnt.rpt-10-29-10.pdf>
 - Garner Correctional Institution population estimate as of 3/28/10 <http://www.newstimes.com/news/article/Garner-inmates-to-count-as-Newtown-residents-in-424541.php>

Metrics for ensuring reasonable representation of community

Unless otherwise stated, the combined resources of CERC Town Profile data and US Census (2000 and 3-Year estimates 2006-2008) will be used as reference for the following demographic parameters:

- Age
- Gender
- Employment
- Ethnicity
- Marital status
- Household income
- Households with seniors
- Households with children under 18 at home
- Households with children in the Newtown Public Schools – will be sourced from Town/BOE data
- People who voted in the last budget referendum – will be sourced from Town/Registrar of Voters data

Working assumptions re: overall, long-term town population for better strategic planning

- **Our Position:** To better understand the long-term strategic uses for the Fairfield Hills property, we believe that an estimate of population based on the build-out of the town, as modeled in the

Planimetrics document, tempered with more recent information from other population sources (see above), provide a reasonable set of assumptions for us to proceed with¹.

- Our POV regarding the two population projections: The two highly different views provided in the documents strongly suggest that the underlying models are extremely sensitive to recent historic trends. The first, the “Population Projections for 2000-2030” document essentially views the future through the lens of the tail end of a time period rife with housing speculation. The “School Enrollment Dynamics & Projections 2010-2019” document extends the economic realities seen during an unprecedented recession through to 2020. Both population studies show example routes to eventual build-out. In our opinions, an estimate of the final population at build-out, not the actual route to build-out, is pertinent to the work of the committee.
- Leveraging Planimetrics Build-out Expectations:
 - Expected population at build-out is about 33,770 (Planimetrics, page 4, 17). Note that this is based on a calculated number of housing units and an estimate of 2.79 persons per household.
 - Current Newtown population count is: 27, 658 (US Census 3-year estimate, minus Garner Population).
 - Garner population count is: 597
 - Overall number of seniors (65+) will double (Planimetrics, page 17).
 - Current Newtown senior population count is: 3007 (US Census 3-year estimate).
 - Estimate segmentation for school-aged population based on Census and CERC data. Use this as the top-bound for a range of 5%. The range, while somewhat of a wild guess, is meant to illustrate the impact of smaller overall households – i.e., should birth-rate continue dropping.
 - Based on above, the recommended population counts are listed below. The calculations provide some level of illustrating of the impacts, e.g., we use a range for the school age population and also show how the numbers would change if the zoning were to change to allow 10% more dwellings (e.g., to accommodate state recommendations for affordable housing). Refer to the appendix to review the calculations used to create these tables.

Number of dwellings	12,104
Build-out population	33,770
% increase from 2008 Estimates	22%
Estimated Seniors	6,010
Seniors as % of population	18%
Non senior population	27760
School age [20% - 25%]	[5,550 – 6,940]
Elementary (34%)	[1,890 – 2,360]
Intermediate (17%)	[940 – 1,180]
Middle (17%)	[940 – 1,180]
High (32%)	[1,780 – 2,220]

Table 1: Build-out populations, assuming 2008 Zoning

¹ Note that this courser level of granularity removes reliance on highly random variables seen in the nearer-term population studies. Such variables can and do change dramatically over time. Trying to account for them long-term is beyond the scope of the FFH Master Plan Review Committee’s objective and would not add any new insight for our purposes, in our opinions.

Number of dwellings	13,314
Build-out population	37,150 ²
% increase from 2008 Estimates	34%
Seniors as % of population	18% ³
Estimated Seniors	6,690
Non senior population	30,460
School age [20% - 25%]	[6,090 – 7,620]
Elementary (34%)	[2,070 – 2,590]
Intermediate (17%)	[1,040 – 1,300]
Middle (17%)	[1,040 – 1,300]
High (32%)	[1,950 – 2,440]

Table 2: Build-out populations, assuming Zoning for Affordability

- Examples of Externalities: Note that overall populations and segmentations are based on social trends. Therefore, the numbers listed above should be used with an understanding that external factors beyond those modeled may change the overall population and sub-population segmentations. Note that since this assumes build-out, the economic influences that more directly influence construction and turnover are not included.
 - **Zoning regulations:** Our belief is that zoning will change to allow more housing units, rather than fewer, i.e., the calculated number of housing units would increase.
 - **Ethnic Diversity:** Currently, the population of Newtown is predominantly white. State-wide the overall minority population and the minority birth rate are growing at a much faster rate than for the white population. This will cause an upward pressure on the number of persons per household.
 - **Multi-generational households:** During the recession, children have been moving in with their parents. For higher-priced areas, this trend has been going on even longer. Depending on whether the children bring children, the persons per household number may go up in ways that affect schools and recreation.
 - **Senior Flight:** As housing sizes and taxes go up, and grown children settle in other locales, there may be a response wherein seniors leave to be closer to their children or to maximize the utility of their retirement funds. Should a higher number of senior households move away, they would likely be replaced by households with children. This will cause an upward pressure on persons per household.
 - **Open Space Acquisition:** Currently, Newtown does have an open space acquisition policy. Execution of this policy will reduce the number of future projected dwellings for a given zoning plan. Likewise, private landowners may establish conservation easements that would further remove land from development.
 - **Soaring Energy Costs:** Much of Newtown's draw could be reduced, i.e., commuters to Hartford, Stamford, etc. would be less inclined to move here because over financial costs associated with commuting would increase. This could impact actual build-out, depending on availability of industrial and professional jobs nearby.

² Note that the table below holds the number of people per dwelling at 2.79. This likely overestimates the population, since the number per dwelling is likely related to the diversity of dwelling types.

³ For diversity, assume that the percentage of seniors remains at 18%, i.e., that the number of seniors more than doubles.

Appendix

Base Assumptions

Source: Planimetrics Report (Note this assumes 2008 zoning.)

Build-out population	33,770
Increase in # of seniors	2X
# of existing dwellings	9669
# additional dwellings	2435
Total # dwellings at build-out	12104
People per dwelling	2.79

Segmenting core subpopulations

We are calling out two subpopulations, seniors and school-age children. For the seniors, we use the Planimetrics recommendation that their number will (at least) double. For school-age children, our recommendation is that we simplify the overall calculations, and offer a potential range instead. To determine the range, we need to determine what percentage of the non-senior population school-age children accounted for and put this number as the top of a 5% range – given the trend that families are still getting smaller. Based on the tables below, we recommend that the range be 20 – 25%.

Source: US Census American Community Survey 3- yr estimates, 2006-2008

Total Newtown population	28,255
18 yrs and older	20,201
Under 18	8,054
Under 5	1,577
School age (5-17)	6,477
65 yrs and older	3,007
Garner population	600
Non Senior, Non Garner ⁴	24,648
School age as % of NonSenior, NonGarner	26%

Source: US 2000 Census

Total Newtown population	25,031
18 yrs and older	17,699
Under 18	7,332
Under 5	2,022
School age (5-17)	5,310
65 yrs and older	2,189
Garner population	597
Non Senior, Non Garner	22,242
School age as % of NonSenior, NonGarner	24%

Source: CERC 2009

Total Newtown population	26,011
% 5-17	21%
School age (5-17)	5,462
Garner Population	600
Non Garner population	25,411
%Senior	10

⁴ Note that there is an assumption here that the age range for the bulk of the Garner population is between 18 and 64.

Non Senior, Non Garner	22,870
School age as % of NonSenior, NonGarner	24%

Segmentation to type of school: We suggest the use of current ratios, since these are as valid as anything else. For example, social trends may well cancel as in: 1) More established families will buy into Newtown and 2) Couples are waiting longer to start families.

Source: Current school enrollment figures, as of October 29, 2010 .

School	Enrollment	Percentage
Elementary	1,840	34%
Intermediate	896	17%
Middle	897	17%
High	1,729	32%
Total	5,362	100%

Build-out populations, assuming 2008 Zoning⁵

We chose not to use the numbers provided in the Chung 2008 Population assessment since the methods used to determine these numbers were very subject to recent economic conditions, as shown by the ensuing 2010 study.

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Seniors as % of population	18%
Non senior population	27760
School age [20% - 25%]	[5,550 – 6,940]
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Build-out populations, assuming Zoning for Affordability⁵

A presentation summarizing incentive zoning was presented to the Planning and Zoning commission a few months back. This presentation discussed potential changes to the current zoning that would diversify housing by adding roughly 10% more dwellings.

# of dwellings	13,314
Build-out population	37,150 ²
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Seniors as % of population	18% ³
Estimated Seniors	6,690
Non senior population	30,460
School age [20% - 25%]	[6,090 – 7,620]
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⁵ Rounding to nearest ten's place.

History: Commercial development, especially when paired with housing, has been one of the more contentious issues dividing the public on the reuse of the Fairfield Hills campus. Historically, the Master Plan of 2005 report focused on the implementation of commercial and/or economic development, with the assumption that a master developer would drive the development of at least 150 acres, as set forth by the Planning and Zoning commission in their Fairfield Hills Adaptive Reuse (FFHAR) zoning specification. Despite several plans from many developers, the town was not able to agree on the proposals of any one developer.

While housing was considered during early discussions, especially single family housing, for the reuse of the campus it had been removed by the time the 2005 Master Plan was drafted and amended in 2007. As such, it was not a permitted use within the FFHAR zone. It appears that housing was removed because of concerns that it would significantly impact the available open space at the campus, compromise community use, and increase the overall tax burden on the town.

Over the last few years, representatives of our town have entertained several proposals made by individual entrepreneurs to establish restaurants, a veterinary hospital, and several medical offices on the campus. While the town had accepted the idea of these proposals, none reached the contract stage. Several proposals were withdrawn, while others could not secure financial support. As a result of limited or no commercial and economic activity at Fairfield Hills, the town engaged a commercial real estate agent to promote the property.

Since then, one developer has expressed an interest in Cochran House for up to 160 one and two bedroom apartments and as part of the deal he would also be willing to refurbish Newtown and Woodbury for commercial use. Given economies of scale, his position was that there was insufficient return on investment for refurbishing those two buildings without the large-scale housing component. To date, that proposal has been put on hold – given the requirement of housing – and the only reuse of the campus has been the construction of a new building that houses the Newtown Youth Academy and the renovation of Bridgeport Hall for the town's municipal building.

Discussion: This document hopes to call out some of the alternatives that could be a part of a revised/updated Master Plan, and places these alternatives in context of today's realities given what we have learned as we tried to implement the existing Master Plan. This discussion will focus on three topics: 1) why economic development, 2) the types of development and 3) the manner in which the development could go forward. The discussion will attempt to look at the opportunities from a town-wide perspective, when appropriate.

Why Economic/Commercial Development?

The original Master Plan attempted to balance the costs incurred by the town for the development of the campus with revenue that could be gained by encouraging low-impact (re: taxes and environmental) businesses to join the redevelopment. The idea was that the businesses would carry the cost of refurbishing the buildings and needed infrastructure rather than having the town incur that cost. Also, the businesses would offset the operational costs via campus maintenance charges and property taxes.

At this time, the town has used its own funds to begin the rehabilitation of the campus including the original \$20,050,000 bond, \$1,525,946 from the sale of associated houses, \$3,500,000 and \$500,000 in additional bonds for parking and ball field lights, respectively, and other monies including matches for grants, in-kind services, and a movie lease. Going forward, the Fairfield Hills Authority estimates that an additional bond of about \$21,500,000, along with an estimated \$5,730,000 generated by potential leases and \$3,000,000 in additional grants, is needed to finish the redevelopment as guided by the current Master Plan and implemented according to [1].

While the town is reviewing its overall space needs, the campus sits as a likely candidate for town-based structures like a recreation center, emergency buildings (ambulance and police), core social service offerings and a potential future school. These uses benefit the town as a whole and so a discussion has

begun about thinking more broadly about revenue offset across the entire town rather than focusing on the developing the FFH parcel in a revenue neutral manner. Below are some “back of the envelope” calculations to understand the general scope of costs we have taken on and a town-wide perspective on the financial relief and tax-based benefits we could reap. Note that this is a “forward-looking” analysis that targets new monies and taxes. Existing bonds, their use, etc. are not a part of this discussion.

Looking at Capital Costs

To have meaningful public discussion, we need to understand pertinent trade-offs, in this case, the ability to control the property for public use and what that control will cost us. One possible approach to informing our discussion is to pull out those costs that are a part of making the property usable, specifically the demolition costs¹. Any repurposing can then be considered an “add on,” and costs/benefits tallied independently. For example, the added costs for making the campus desirable for development (ala, town leases) – i.e., additional parking, infrastructure (e.g., water and sewer), and sidewalks – could then be understood and discussed more directly.

The following three scenarios are intended to help provide perspective on overall capital costs. These scenarios are crafted based on the layout of the uses provided in the Master Plan and the anticipated costs for razing the buildings, as provided in [2], specifically:

	7/01/2009 Projections
Danbury	\$205,000
Shelton	\$2,000,000
Norwalk	\$400,000
Plymouth	\$1,250,000
Stamford	\$565,000
Kent	\$3,000,000
Canaan	\$3,000,000
Cochran	\$3,750,000
White Houses	\$200,000
Total	\$14,370,000

Use / Control Scenarios

1. The town provides about \$15,000,000 in capital funds (not necessarily all at once) to raze all of the buildings noted in [1,2]. This effectively turns the campus into a “green field” that the town can then decide how best to leverage for the public good, while leaving the buildings identified for reuse in the Master Plan and subsequent implementation[1] available for leasing. Note, this option does not preclude additional/alternate private development of the property. It just removes potential disincentives that may “scare” smaller companies and/or developers off.
2. The town provides about \$10,000,000 in capital funds to raze Danbury, Shelton, Kent, Plymouth, and Cochran. This scenario opens up the areas that are planned for playing fields in the current master plan. In addition, it provides for the option of having a town green in front of the Municipal Building and an adjacent Arts Center². The other buildings are taken care of by private interests, either via reuse or demolition. The developers are then in control (within zoning regulations) of how the underlying land is used and are free to

¹ There will likely be some other required improvements to the infrastructure, needed regardless of added development, including water and sewer improvements, estimated at \$2M and \$1.5M, respectively.

² Note that instead of using the \$1,250,000 money to demolish Plymouth, it could be added to the \$3,750,000 currently allocated to a band shell [1] for refurbishing the building, if possible.

optimize their return on investment, within those guidelines. Governance, i.e., town ownership and lease vs. direct purchase is orthogonal to this discussion, though it may impact the likelihood of finding developers willing to shoulder the burden of reuse/demolition. This option provides access to all of the buildings slated for reuse identified in the Master Plan or a possible maximum of about 40³ acres that could be offered for private development – should the public decide direct sale is preferred to the town leasing of the buildings/property.

3. The town provides about \$5,000,000 in capital funds to raze Shelton, Kent and Danbury. This option opens up land for the multi-purpose fields, as noted in the current master plan, though loses the baseball/softball fields. It also provides for the option of having a town green in front of the Municipal Building. The other buildings are taken care of by private interests, either via reuse or demolition. Like scenario 2, the developers are then in control (within zoning regulations) of how the underlying land is used and are free to optimize their investment, within those guidelines. Governance, i.e., town ownership and lease vs. direct purchase is orthogonal to this discussion, though it may impact the likelihood of finding developers willing to shoulder the burden of reuse/demolition. This option provides access to all of the buildings slated for reuse identified in the Master Plan or a possible maximum of about 55³ acres that could be offered for private development – should the public decide direct sale is preferred to the town leasing of the buildings/property.

The following projected costs for the bonds needed for each scenario, provided by Robert Tait[3]⁴ are:

		<u>Scenario 1</u>	<u>Scenario 2</u>	<u>Scenario 3</u>
20 YEAR BONDING	***	\$15,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$5,000,000
1st Year Add'l Debt Svs Payment		\$1,350,000	\$900,000	\$450,000
10th Year Add'l Debt SvsPayment		\$1,080,000	\$720,000	\$360,000
20th Year Add'l Debt SvsPayment		\$780,000	\$520,000	\$260,000
1st Year Effect on Mill Rate		0.3509	0.2339	0.1170
10th Year Effect on Mill Rate		0.2807	0.1872	0.0936
20th Year Effect on Mill Rate		0.2028	0.1352	0.0676
1st Year Effective Tax Increase using a Base Mill Rate of 24.00.		1.46%	0.97%	0.49%
1st Year Tax Increase: Amount based on a house with an Assessed Value of \$350,000		\$122.82	\$81.87	\$40.95
Total Lifetime Cost (total of payments)		\$21,300,000	\$14,200,000	\$7,100,000
Total Lifetime Cost per Household (350,000 assessed value) – for entire 20 years		\$1,965	\$1,310	\$655
*** Principal payments are level funding each year (same amount); hence the annual debt service payments (principal and interest) decline over time.				

³ This number is based on eye-balling the planning zones map provided in the master plan and is not necessarily accurate.

⁴ The calculations are based on 4% interest. Should interest increase to 6%, the total lifetime cost for bonding \$15,000,000 increases from \$21,300,000 to \$24,450,000 (about 15% more).

Anticipated, Non-Tax Revenues

The amount of non-tax revenue is based on the method and extent of development. In the current Master Plan, the method is to lease Newbury, Woodbury, Stratford, and the Duplexes, and to lease the land under three “infill” buildings of 50,000 sq ft each. As part of the review, we are also encouraging the discussion to include outright sale of land. For the former, non-tax revenue is estimated in [1] as a single total payment of \$5,730,000⁵ In addition, the former also provides for \$375,000 of recurring, non-tax revenue to offset the expected \$500,000 operational costs associated with the campus[1]. Should the town decide to sell the property, the potential price per acre is about \$300,000, given access to infrastructure and a level, usable property devoid of wetlands. However should the buildings remain on the land, the price per parcel would be reduced based on the cost to demolish or reuse the buildings. Note that reuse of the buildings would roughly cost the same as demolishing them and building anew.

Impact on Taxes

Ideally, the town should have a target percentage of the grand list for commercial development. This target percentage, in general, helps define the character of the town and the load the residences pay to maintain that character. For example, emphasizing the “rural” feel of a town generally means fewer commercial establishments.

From a town-wide perspective, therefore, the question is how much additional development will help bring Newtown to what it considers a “healthy” ratio. While the town is trying to understand what the target percentage is, comparison with “like” towns can help provide some perspective. The following table provides current ratios of some other Connecticut towns that are considered to have similar overall demographics as Newtown. Note that these numbers have been computed from the towns’ 2009 grand lists, provided to Chris Kelsey[4,5]. We hope to augment these with other towns, as they become available.

	% Comm
Madison	6.5%
Newtown	10.1%
Glastonbury	17.6%
Trumbull	17.7%

To get a better idea for the impact of acreage on the percentage a simple model projecting build-out, shown in detail in Appendix A, has been developed to help guide our discussion. The table below shows the impact on the ratio, should 200 and 300 external acres of the 500 available industrial-zoned acreage was developed. It also shows the impact, should 40 acres at Fairfield Hills be added to the mix. Note that the model assumes that residential development has increased as projected in the Planimetrics build-out study[6], i.e., the calculations are trying to demonstrate full residential build-out and accompanying commercial that will happen concurrently. Only a portion of the available 500 industrial-zoned acreage is included, given that some of those acres are more difficult to developed (e.g., they are polluted or wetlands, etc.).

⁵ This lease payment is intended to offset the additional costs associated with the town’s responsibility to provide infrastructure, parking, and sidewalks.

Newtown	Comm/Res.
2009	10.3%
2009 + 40 FFH	11.1%
Build-out, 200 Comm.	11.8%
BO, 200 Comm + 40 FFH	12.4%
Build-out, 300 Comm.	13.3%
BO, 300 Comm + 40 FFH	13.8%

If there is no commercial development in Newtown other than at Fairfield Hills (40 acres), then the percentage increases 0.8%. For a budget of \$110,000,000, that equates to roughly \$91 per dwelling per year (9669 dwellings in 2008). However, at build-out the percentage drops to 0.6%, provided 200 acres of other available commercial land is also built out when all dwellings are built out. Assuming the budget grows proportionately to the number of dwellings (i.e., to 138,000,000), this equates to roughly \$68 per dwelling per year (12104 dwellings projected at build-out). Should 300 acres of commercially-zoned land be developed, the number becomes \$57 per dwelling per year. Note that these calculations have assumed the lower bound on build-out, i.e., current 2008 zoning. The diversity zoning would likely include apartments (i.e., commercial development). Thus, the mix of development types would change. This change cannot be modeled directly with this method, though key assumptions on the mix hold for both Newtown and Trumbull. Final disclaimer: The numbers are illustrative. They are rough estimates that can be used to help salt the discussions. The numbers should be considered rough, at best, but should show the general scale of the tax benefit per household.

In summary, every household would have to pay, on average, about \$2000 (total, over 20 years) to enable to town to maintain control over the Fairfield Hills campus. Should the town decide to develop the equivalent of 40 acres on the campus, then every household would additionally gain roughly \$100 in tax relief every year, at the cost of losing control over that part of the campus. Again, note that the current buildings slated for reuse – i.e., Newtown, Woodbury, Stratford, and the Duplexes – remain standing for the town to use as it determines best. There would also be added revenue, potentially several hundred thousand dollars per year in common charges, should the town succeed in leasing the buildings slated for reuse or several million dollars for every 10 acres the town sells off.

Types of Development

There are five types of non-municipal development that should be open for debate:

- Commercial Development - encourages commerce (the trading of money for goods/services) - e.g., what we see in the Big Y complex and South Main Street
- Economic Development – businesses that provide jobs, e.g., like the reuse of the PB building and for things like office parks, corporate offices, and community college satellite campuses
- Apartment Buildings – mid to high density, small 1 to 2 bedroom units
- Multi-family age-restricted dwellings – either luxury or targeted for occupants with low/mid income levels.

A companion discussion is how such future development should be guided. For example, what should the zoning be re: types of businesses? Should there be a design district of some form? Should the land targeted for development be zoned as a single large parcel (one developer) or several smaller parcels (e.g., develop parts over time)? Should there be an Authority, and if so, what should its role be? This discussion on guiding the development will likely be taken up in full during the follow-on effort(s) needed for completing the updates for the existing master plan.

The following paragraphs try to call out issues for each type of development, along with a few notes as to why Fairfield Hills may make sense, where applicable. Please consider this just a seed for discussion. As other issues and FFH rationales get discussed, we will add them to this document.

Commercial Development

Points to Ponder

- More likely to get such development done in today's economy
- Serves the needs of the people who work at the Municipal Center, NYA, and any other building occupant (e.g., copy center, dry cleaners, coffee shop / café)
- Serves the needs of recreational users (informal restaurant)
- May require a housing component to make sustainable (according to FHA realtor)
- Benefits limited portion of community
- Potentially will have look similar to that of other retail centers
- Generally retail requires frontage on main roads, i.e., Wasserman
- May introduce conflicts with local businesses

Why FFH

- Serves those who work at FFH
- Provides an alternative retail center for southern Sandy Hook neighborhoods

Economic Development

Points to Ponder

- Provide high-level jobs to members of the community
- Generally more amenable to a "campus-like" look
- Does not rely on a housing component for sustainability
- Does not rely on frontage on main roads as much as retail
- Unlikely to happen in the short term

Why FFH

- Close to 84
- Requires infrastructure

Apartment Buildings

Points to Ponder

- Provide housing options to a more diverse population, e.g., young adults and families and seniors
- Helps increase affordable housing stock
- Burden on town resources less per dwelling
- Helps provide sustainability of retail development
- Depending on the density, burden on town resources may be more per acre. For example, if 160 apartments placed on 2 acres, and there is one child per 10 dwellings, then 16 children will need to be schooled per two acres, as opposed to 4-6 children for 1 acre zoning.

Why FFH

- Close to 84
- Requires infrastructure
- How would this play out re: focus on village centers in Dodgingtown, Hawley, Sandy Hook, etc? Would this use add to the overall health of the town enough to warrant such use at FFH?
- FFH is large enough to handle the bulk of the apartments needed across the town

Elderly Housing – Luxury**Points to Ponder**

- Brings new taxpayers into town, who generally use low amount of town resources
- Residents generally come from other, higher cost towns, and so have limited history with Newtown
- Often restricts access to allow only residents and their guests

Why FFH

- Potentially very high revenue from selling land for such developments

Elderly Housing – low/mid income**Points to Ponder**

- Provide a way to help long-time residents afford to stay in Newtown
- Residents will generally sell existing houses in town to families, and so overall increase burden on town resources could happen. The amount of increase depends on how many would have been forced to leave town vs. staying put.
- Currently, there are about 150 residents of Nunnawalk, and a waiting list of about 150.

Why FFH

- Close to an existing development (Nunnawalk)

Manner of development

Currently, the Master Plan emphasizes maintaining ownership of both the land and the buildings, leasing the building for a specific term (currently 30 yrs, though this could be changed). Tenants are responsible for refurbishing the building for their use. Given that many of the buildings are not likely to be salvaged in the upcoming years and that the plan calls for “in fill,” a second option is for the town to maintain ownership of the land, and allow tenants to build their own buildings, as was done by NYA. A final option is to re-parcel the land, and sell specific pieces that are targeted for development outright to a developer. Note that this assumes that the parcels are zoned for the type development that has been determined best for the campus.

Lease both land and building**Points to Ponder**

- Town maintains long-term ownership of land and buildings
- Town ultimately may get useful real estate when tenant departs
- Refurbishing a building is as expensive as tearing it down and building fresh
- Tenant may balk at cost of refurbishing in light of terms of lease – though this may be able to be negotiated by reducing the overall price of the lease
- Town is in the business of property management, which requires certain skills
- Government process for leasing may be clumsy (e.g., required to gather bids) unless overseen by an Authority.... I’m not sure about this – we should double check this with town attorney. I’ve gotten both yes and no.
- Infrastructure must be made available to each building

Lease land, tenant builds**Points to Ponder**

- Town maintains long-term ownership of land
- Town ultimately may get useful real estate, including building, when tenant departs
- If a building already exists, it needs to be torn down. Would likely stifle interest

- Tenant may balk at potentially losing his investment in the building at the end of the lease. Would leasing have to include something like a “guarantee” to re-lease? If so, then what would we gain over just selling the property outright?
- Town is in the business of property management, which requires certain skills
- Government process for leasing may be clumsy (e.g., required to gather bids) unless overseen by and Authority.... I’m not sure about this – we should double check this with town attorney. I’ve gotten both yes and no.
- Infrastructure must be made available to each building

Re-parcel and sell land

Points to Ponder

- Reduces need for town to provide extensive infrastructure, i.e., could make parcels larger and take infrastructure to the edge.
- Reduce capital costs for building demolition, if sold with building on it
- Potentially more tax revenue
- Uses a more standard way for getting development done
- Town no longer property manager
- If infrastructure only taken to the edge, may reduce price per acre
- If sold with building on it, will likely greatly reduce price per acre
- Loss of long term ownership of a part of the campus
- Less able to leverage shared parking – i.e., more land will be consumed by parking

Sources:

[1] Fairfield Hills Authority, Board of Finance Meeting, October 22, 2009.

[2] Fairfield Hills Authority, “FFH Capital Appropriations Calculations & Assumptions, Rev #3,” received via email from Walt Moytyka.

[3] Personal email from Robert Tait.

[4] Newtown 2009 Grand List, printout from Chris Kelsey

[5] “Like” town 2009 Grand List information, email from Chris Kelsey

[6] Planimetrics, “Newtown Buildout Analysis & Population Projections”

Appendix A

The following calculations are an attempt to understand how adding commercial development at Fairfield Hills augments recurring (tax) revenue from a town-wide perspective. The model is an initial attempt at helping to bring such perspective into our public participation process, and is very much in ROUGH DRAFT form. These calculations would be added to an appendix, for showing the overall approach.

Part I - Real estate 2009 grand list of Taxable property for the town of Newtown [1]		
TYPE	GROSS ASSESSMENT	NOTES
Residential	3,205,798,357	
Commercial	212,700,152	
Industrial	64,697,930	
Vacant land	127,156,261	
Use Assessment (Farm)	1,128,550	
Apartments	12,945,549	
Total Commercial	290,343,631	Includes Apts, Industrial, and Commercial
Total: Other	3,334,083,168	
Total	3,624,426,799	

Motor Vehicle/Personal Property		
TYPE	GROSS ASSESSMENT	NOTES
Personal (i.e., Business)	110,561,554	According to Chris Kelsey, this is all commercial
Total Motor Vehicle	207,771,612	
Motor Vehicle: Comm.	5,870,639	
Motor Vehicle: Other	201,900,973	

First, assuming that personal property can be modeled , in general, as a reasonably static percentage of the associated real estate tax, figure out the percentage for more residential and commercial properties	
Motor Vehicles as a percentage of residential real estate	6.1%
"Personal" + Commercial Motor Vehicle as a percentage of total commercial real estate	40.1%

Rough Model for Build-out: For this model, assume all residential dwellings, provided for in the 2008 zoning - as estimated by the Planimetrics report have been built. Then, model commercial build-out with two scenarios, 1) where 50% of available commercial land has been built out, similar to the existing mix of development and 2) where 100% of the available commercial land has been built out, again, similar to existing development.

From Planimetrics [2]	
Existing Residential Dwellings	9669
Potential Residential Dwellings, based on 2008 Zoning	12104
Percent increase in number of dwellings	25.2%

From Stocker email [3]	
Number of commercial acres currently developed	500
Number of commercial acres currently undeveloped	500
First Example of additional acres developed	200
Second Example of additional acres developed	300

Determine the addition to the different components of the grand list, based on the growth assumptions above. Note that the absolute numbers do not mean that the grand list will be that amount. However, the ratios (see below) will be maintained, provided all property is taxed at the same Mill Rate.

	Res. Real Estate	Res. Prop. (6.1%)	Comm. Real Estate	Comm. Prop (40.1%)
2009	3,334,083,168	201,900,973	290,343,631	116,432,193
Build-out, #1 Comm.	4,013,133,035	243,021,971	406,481,083	163,005,070
Build-out, #2 Comm.	4,013,133,035	243,021,971	464,549,810	186,291,509

Now add in 40 acres from FFH to see the difference. 40 acres adds an additional 8% to the commercial property figures

	Res. Real Estate	Res. Prop. (6.1%)	Comm. Real Estate	Comm. Prop (40.1%)
2009 + FFH	3,334,083,168	201,900,973	313,571,121	125,746,768
BO, #1 Comm + FFH	4,013,133,035	243,021,971	429,708,574	172,319,646
BO, #2 Comm + FFH	4,013,133,035	243,021,971	487,777,300	195,606,084

Figure the totals and the ratios (placed here to fit on page)

	Total	Comm/Res.
2009	3,942,759,965	10.3%
2009 + FFH	3,975,302,031	11.1%
Build-out, #1 Comm.	4,825,641,160	11.8%
BO, #1 Comm + FFH	4,858,183,226	12.4%
Build-out, #2 Comm.	4,906,996,325	13.3%
BO, #2 Comm + FFH	4,939,538,391	13.8%

Like Town Information

	Madison 2009* ⁶	Trumbull	Glastonbury
Residential	3,215,359,700	4,232,371,760	3,196,026,990
Commercial	221,999,678	912,440,568	681,862,240
% Comm	6.5%	17.7%	17.6%

Trumbull Details

Part I - Real estate 2009 grand list of Taxable property for the town of Newtown [1]		
TYPE	GROSS ASSESSMENT	NOTES
Residential	3,935,949,240	
Commercial	486,635,600	
Industrial	144,141,900	
Vacant land	45,097,900	
Use Assessment (Farm)	50,800	
Apartments	20,216,900	
Total Commercial	655,593,000	Includes Apts, Industrial, and Commercial + utility (4,598,600)
Total: Other	3,981,097,940	
Total	4,636,690,940	

Motor Vehicle/Personal Property		
TYPE	GROSS ASSESSMENT	NOTES
Personal (i.e., Business)	253,821,551	According to Chris Kelsey, this is all commercial
Total Motor Vehicle	254,299,837	
Motor Vehicle: Comm.	3,026,017	
Motor Vehicle: Other	251,273,820	

First, assuming that personal property can be modeled , in general, as a reasonably static percentage of the associated real estate tax, figure out the percentage for more residential and commercial properties	
Motor Vehicles as a percentage of residential real estate	6.3%
"Personal" + Comm. Motor Vehicle as a percentage of total comm. real estate	39.2%

⁶ Town did not provide breakdowns of Motor Vehicles. Assume similar to Newtown, i.e., 2.8% are commercial

Preface

During the original master plan activities that lead to the 2005 rendition of the plan, Plymouth Hall was designated as a potential future home for an Arts Center. The final representation for support of the arts on the campus is indicated in Note 1 on page 8 of the 2005 Master Plan executive summary.

“Includes Town Hall, High School Academy and Parks & Recreation – Cultural Building (either Plymouth or new building).”

The plan also includes an addendum, Exhibit B, describing the various buildings. The description for Plymouth Hall includes:

“Plymouth Hall certainly has unique attributes relative to the remaining campus. The auditorium space and the arts and crafts related spaces lend this structure to be a community based Cultural and performing Arts Center. The renovated auditorium could help fill the need for such space within the community. Although this building lacks some of the character and richness in other Fairfield Hills buildings, a tastefully done renovation could define an enjoyable experience. The court within the gymnasium at Plymouth, however, is far smaller than a regulation size. Furthermore, this part of the structure is in need of repair. This is an area of the building that could be demolished and rebuilt to serve a similar purpose correctly.”

As of 2009, the focus for implementing the arts portion of the plan appears to be to provide a Band Stand in the West Meadow (the intersection of Wasserman and Mile Hill South), at an estimated cost of \$3,750,000, based on the October 22, 2009 handout for the Board of Finance meeting. Jennifer Johnston, the chair of the Cultural Arts Commission, is requesting that the original plans for an Arts Center be addressed again. From an arts perspective, the money identified for the bandstand in the Fairfield Hills Authority CIP request is better used for the Arts Center, because of both its ability to operate year round and its support of a wider array of arts, including performance, classes, galleries, etc.

Current arts groups that would likely be interested in participating with the Arts Center include:

- Friends of Music
- Society of Creative Arts of Newtown (SCAN)
- Flagpole Photographers
- Perhaps, Town Players (already have venue, though)

The model envisioned for the Arts Center is based on the Ridgefield Playhouse, both in terms of audience (regional) and economics (ticket sales). This revenue is expected to offset costs in a very short time period (5 years). [Jennifer will gather more information on the current revenue model and amount that the Ridgefield Playhouse garners and will talk with regional arts organizations re: the competitive environment.] In addition to funding the construction of an Arts Center through the town’s CIP processes, funds can also be raised via state/federal grants and local fundraising – though the cost of local venues typically takes a big bite out of fundraising profits.

Why Fairfield Hills

- Centralized location
- Access to 84 – the Arts Center is intended to have a regional scope
- Plymouth Hall has an auditorium with about 800 seats that can be leveraged

Status Quo

- Mission: Support the arts in Newtown, includes helping local non-profits. Manage an arts calendar – with budget of \$2000 per year.
 - Cultural Arts Commission arose as a “byproduct” of the involvement with FFH. At the time, other area towns were studied, re: organizations to support the arts.
- Use of Edmond Town Hall.
 - Current costs prohibitive, in part due to conflicts with movies. It costs \$3200 per day on weekends and \$2500 per evening on weekday evenings.
 - Size is inadequate, both stage and seating
 - Infrastructure (electrical, lighting) insufficient
 - Timing difficult, given Edmond is highly utilized

Needs

- 800-1000 seats
- Large indoor stage
- Theater as opposed to an “auditorium.” I.e., architecture, esthetics, infrastructure
- Access to highway, given regional focus
- Parking
- Quiet location (away from Wasserman), for both the Arts Center and an outdoor venue
- Full time person to manage scheduling

Points to Ponder

- Potentially long-term revenue generation
- Improves access of community to wide assortment of arts
- Act as an anchor for an annual arts festival modeled on the Common Ground Country Fair of Maine (??, see <http://www.mofga.org/TheFair/tabid/135/Default.aspx>)
 - Local artists
 - Music
 - Dance
 - Organic Farmers
 - Recycled arts contest
 - Fireworks
- Synergistic with other uses, re: space, schedules, etc.
- Needs a full-time person to manage scheduling
- Need to work out the numbers, re: costs and expected income

Extensions

The Performing Arts Building could be supplemented in two ways to further increase the opportunities for bring the arts to the campus. First, an outdoor venue could be added on a town green for outdoor concerts and art shows. Such a venue should be away from Wasserman, given traffic noise issues. Second, the campus could be the home for a wider “Arts Campus” that would include the Arts Center at Plymouth (or a replacement building), Stratford, the duplexes for “artists in residence” and an outdoor area extending into West Meadow.

**Education Subcommittee
Of The
Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee**

Objective

The objective of the Education Subcommittee was to identify the future needs and requirements for space at Fairfield Hills included in the current Master Plan and to gain public input. In consideration of this objective, members of this subcommittee attended several meetings of the Facilities Subcommittee, of the Board of Education, as well as meetings of the full Board of Education. Utilizing the information obtained from the Board of Education, including its Facilities Subcommittee and in combination with information from our Review Committee's Demographics Subcommittee the following report is submitted.

Background

The Board of Selectman established a Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review Committee (FFHMPRC) with the purpose of reviewing the Master Plan, which "*should be consistent with the Plan of Conservation and Development*" and of gaining public consensus regarding the needs and uses planned for Fairfield Hills. The FFHMPRC, in turn established several subcommittees, this Education Subcommittee being one of them.

The Plan of Conservation and Development, updated in 2004, (page 57) stated:

"To meet the need for additional high school space the Board of Education has expressed a preference for building a new High School Academy on the Fairfield Hills campus, with an enrollment capacity of 500 students."

The Fairfield Hills Master Plan – Executive Summary, 2005, stated:

"The Master Plan for Fairfield Hills contains the following attribute(s) intended to benefit the Newtown community."

"Opportunity for a high school academy on the Kent House site and an alternative high school program at a location to be determined by the size of enrollment."

The Fairfield Hills Master Plan – 2005, (page 17)

[The Kent site for the academy] "has several advantages including proximity to the proposed playing fields; a location on the campus closest to the existing high school; the site can be developed without impacting other components of the plan; shared parking with the playing fields would be possible; and a new access road from Wasserman Way to the east of the existing structure is a possibility to directly serve the site. However, it is important for the Board of Education to make the policy decisions as to the purpose, size and design of such an academy. This decision should be presented to the Newtown community in the level of detail and subject to community dialogue which has been the case with the planning effort for the entire campus."

Enrollment Projections (based on the Demographics Subcommittee working document)

While the Chung report indicated a near-term school population decline, information gathered from Planimetrics, “Newtown Buildout Analysis & Population Projections” and other sources indicates that build out would require additional educational space. While it is difficult to determine what Newtown’s population will be in numbers and demographics during build out, it is important to plan, educationally and fiscally, for sufficient land at Fairfield Hills for the upper build out as noted in the *Table A below*:

Table A - Projected 2030 to 2050 Build Outs Under Various Zoning regulations

Categories	Assuming 2008 Zoning	Assuming Zoning For Affordability
Number of dwellings	12,104	13,314
Build-out Population	33,770	37,150
% Increase from 2008 Estimates	22%	34%
Estimated Seniors	6,010	6,690
Senior as a % of Population	18%	18%
Non-Senior Population	27,760	30,460
Total School Age	5,550 - 6,940	6,090 – 7,620
Elementary	1,890 - 2,360	2,070 – 2,590
Intermediate	940 - 1,180	1,040 – 1,300
Middle	940 - 1,180	1,040 – 1,300
High	1,780 - 2,220	1,950 – 2,440

Board of Education (BOE) Facilities Subcommittee Recommendations

The Facilities Subcommittee of the Board of Education has indicated that elementary schools should be located in neighborhoods and upper level schools should be centrally located. Fairfield Hills land (at least 60 acres) should be preserved for upper level schools. At the Board of Education meeting, December 7, 2010 D. Leidlein, Chairman of the Facilities Subcommittee reported reserving land at Fairfield Hills for future school needs (2030 – 2050). The purpose, size and design of the facility should be determined by future Boards of Education.

At the same December 7th meeting D. Nanavity reported that the current high school, having experienced two additions, is currently maxed out, meaning that there is not enough land (47.5 acres) to support any further additions. The state’s move to increase graduation requirements could use classroom space in a manner not anticipated previously when the addition was first proposed. Additional classroom space may be required to accommodate the 25 graduation credits proposed by the state.

The BOE facilities subcommittee is in support of reserving 60 acres of land at Fairfield Hills. The demographic information provided below in *Table B* is in support of this recommendation.

Table B – Current and Projected Student Populations

2010	October 1, 2010	Build-out: 2008	Build-out: Affordable
Elementary (K-4)	1,840	1,892 – 2,360	2,070 – 2,590
Intermediate (5&6)	896	940 – 1,180	1,040 – 1,300
Middle (7&8)	897	942 – 1,180	1,040 – 1,300
High School (9-12)	1,729	1,780 – 2,220	1,950 – 2,440
Total	5,362	5,554 – 6,940	6,090 – 7,620

Discussion

Currently, there is some discussion about reducing the need for in-classroom space via online education and other methods of delivering instruction. We cannot tell if these are viable. According to the superintendent, experience with alternate education methods such as unguided or minimally guided online learning has not been successful to date. Planning with the assumption that large-scale versions of it will be successful in 30 years is not prudent. Likewise, should the build out population trend to the higher ranges or the effective capacity be reduced because of added graduation requirements then the current high school will not be suitable. The discussion of any additional school buildings should be reserved for future Boards of Education.

The BOE Facilities Subcommittee recommends a conservative approach in reserving 60 acres for an additional high school. If we make this assumption and the student population follows the lower estimates, then the land will become available for other uses based on the needs of the community at that time. If, on the other hand, we do not bank the land for a high school and the upper estimates are reached and alternate education methods are not realized, then the town will have difficulty finding the appropriate acreage, even for a second high school, since the bulk of the town will have been built out.

Points to Consider

- Reserving 60 acres of reasonably contiguous land supports building a new high school, should the higher end of the demographics range occur. This allocation would ensure that the land would be available, and not acquired via another, less desirable and costly method, e.g. eminent domain.
- Alternatively, should the high school enrollment remain at or below current student levels, then, 30 acres of the banked land could be used for a middle school, should that enrollment become inadequate for current middle schools. The remaining acreage could be used as deemed appropriate at that time.
- Reserving 60 acres limits other uses for a significant portion of the campus
- If build out occurs, and a future Board of Education determines that a second high school is preferred, then a central location could be considered less desirable.
- Reserving the land for a high school is a conservative approach, one that minimizes the potential of future disagreement.
- The campus environment of Fairfield Hills is most appropriate for educational purposes.

Preface: The selectmen are currently working with Kevin's Community Center to help them establish a permanent home on the campus. At this time, Kevin's Community Center is considered a part of the ongoing implementation of the current master plan and so will be considered "existing" with regards to future planning. However, as part of this conversation, the selectmen (Pat in particular) are exploring the possibility of creating a "Social Services Enclave," that would be a centralized place where all families in need could find services. This would, as Pat said, create a "continuum of support for families under stress." Currently, the other social services that could be a part of the enclave include Newtown Youth and Family Services and the Newtown Social Services town department. Kevin's Community Center is included in this document as a potential member of such an enclave because, being first to locate at Fairfield Hills, it would likely influence the location for the enclave.

Note that frequent moves for social services organizations are a big headache since the organizations are often licensed by numerous state agencies. For example, the Newtown Youth and Family Services is currently licensed by four state agencies, meaning a lot of paperwork must be done per move.

Why Fairfield Hills

- Centralized location – easy to get to
- Ability to co-locate multiple organizations
 - Access more than one service within a single stop
 - Become aware of other services that might be useful

Status Quo

- **Kevin's Community Center**
 - Current footprint: 2600 sq ft
 - Town budget allotments from 2007 – current: \$45,000 - \$50,000
 - Current Leasing: End date is 11/2011, though there have been discussions about extending it monthly or quarterly. It is possible that the lease could be extended up to a year.
 - \$500,000 grant for "a building on Fairfield Hills Campus." One assumption behind grant is that KCC will grow. There is some uncertainty about the grant, given that all potential state funding is on the table during ongoing budget discussions. However, the discussion about the merits of various alternatives should continue, independent of this uncertainty.
 - Hours are 1-5 PM Wednesday afternoons. Hope to go to 3 days per week
- **Newtown Youth and Family Services (NYFS)**
 - Current footprint: 5200 sq ft – via two leased buildings. Planning on closing down the lease on one of those buildings. Current lease costs \$10,500 per month. Closing one lease cuts that to \$6,500.
 - Lease for remaining building ends Aug, 2012.
 - Town budget allotments from 2007 – current: \$214,000 – \$270,000
 - Use of services has been expanding 15% per year for the last few years. Note that closing one of the current leases means that new clients will not be able to be served.
 - Hours: Mon – Thurs, 9AM – 8PM; Fri, 9AM – 4:30PM. Saturday hours as needed (occasional).
 - NYFS has more requests for services than they have clinician time available. They are limited to how many clinicians can work at one time due to lack of space.
- **Newtown Social Services Department**
 - Current footprint: 800 sq ft (Need to double check this)
 - Co-located with police station
 - Provides financial assistance programs and food bank

Needs

- **Kevin's Community Center**
 - 3,000 sq ft
 - Room to grow to 4,000 sq ft
 - Handicap parking and accessibility
 - At this time, privacy concerns or issues relating to potential neighbors do not appear to be a limiting factor, re: location on the campus. However, this topic needs to be addressed more fully by the KCC board.
- **Newtown Youth and Family Services**
 - 7500 sq ft (min is 6000 sq ft). This gives them enough space to be able to proactively encourage members of the community to use the service. That is, currently, clients come to them via word of mouth. They want to be able to advertise to ensure that more who have the need will use their services. This means they need the requested space.
 - Handicap parking and accessibility
 - Privacy very important, given type of service provided. Need to ensure that the clients do not accidentally bump into neighbors.
- **Newtown Social Services Department**
 - 2000 sq ft
 - Handicap parking and accessibility
 - Some privacy preferred
 - Others??

Discussion

At this time, the Board of Selectmen is reviewing options for where a social services enclave may be placed. Such discussion is outside the scope of this document. By co-locating core social service organizations at Fairfield Hills, the selectmen (Pat in particular) are trying to better support members of the community in need, given the available money at hand. Over the past few years, the town has provided financial support between \$45,000 and \$50,000 for Kevin's Community Center and between \$214,000 and \$270,000 for Newtown Youth and Services (see: http://www.newtown-ct.gov/Public_Documents/NewtownCT_Finance/2010-11Budget%20summary.pdf). Much of this financial support has been needed to offset space rental. By co-locating at Fairfield Hills, the operational costs for the organizations will be less, and more money can be made available for the programs they provide.

Points to Ponder

- The town current supports charitable organizations in the budget. Reducing the operational costs for those organizations means either that the existing money can be spent on providing programs and/or that the overall money can be reduced without impacting program offerings.
- Depending on the location of the enclave within Fairfield Hills, it may not fill all needs of the potential members of the enclave. Either such organizations may not become part of the enclave or other means may be needed to ensure that their needs are met.
- The status-quo, i.e., separate locations throughout town can meet the needs of individual organizations, but likely mean additional operational costs.
- When the police department moves, the building will likely be repurposed. At that time, the two remaining town departments, Social Services and Parks and Recreation, will likely have to move. At this time, the Parks and Recreation is planning to move into a Parks and Recreation building, currently planned for the campus. The Social Services department then becomes the sole town department not housed at Fairfield Hills.



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TOWN OF NEWTOWN

To: Inland Wetlands Commission

January 13, 2011

From: Newtown Conservation Commission

Re: Evaluation of Fairfield Hills Land by Conservation Commission. January, 2011

The Conservation Commission has evaluated the land at Fairfield Hills and commissioners have walked all of the undeveloped land. We are providing recommendations for open space set asides at Fairfield Hills under our charter to “Conduct researches into the utilization and possible utilization of land areas in the Town of Newtown” and to “Recommend to the First Selectman, the Legislative Council or the Planning and Zoning Commission such plans and programs (including the acquisition of conservation easements) for the development and use of open areas within the Town of Newtown”

The following features were noted:

- Rolling contoured land
- Scenic vistas from many perspectives
- Scenic Town corridor along Wasserman Way and Mile Hill South Road
- A network of actively used trails, some improved
- Meadow habitat
- Hay fields
- Areas of young deciduous forest
- Pine and spruce stands
- Wolf trees
- Waterways
- Rock walls
- Chimney ruins
- Wildlife corridors
- Many bird species (bobolinks, warblers, woodcocks, blue birds, screech owls, turkey vultures and red tailed hawks have been observed.)

This large tract of land is highly visible upon entering Newtown. Thus visitors to the area and residents of Newtown are greeted by beautiful, rolling vistas. This has been documented as being very important to Newtown’s citizens: in a recent survey, residents voted maintaining the rural character of the town as priority number 2.

Because development causes many environmental problems due to forest fragmentation, preserving a large uninterrupted tract of land such as this could alleviate some of these, such as decreasing biodiversity of flora and fauna, increasing incidence of zoonoses, etc.

The diverse habitats that are represented (meadow, deciduous and coniferous forested areas, edge habitat) support many different species. Birds of prey are important given the increase in small disease carrying rodents that occurs with development and forest fragmentation. Migrating birds depend on large, visible areas of undeveloped land as they fly to summer or winter habitats.

The Fairfield Hills campus is a natural site for a Newtown trails hub connecting several already existing trails including Al's trail, the Rail Trail extension from Monroe, and Town property southeast of the junction of Wasserman Way with Nunnawauk Road.

The property supports passive recreational activities such as hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, dog walking, horse riding, biking and wildlife study.

The already developed land in Fairfield Hills is already used for running, walking, dog walking, tricycling, etc. and makes a natural connection to the undeveloped areas. We would suggest that this be taken into account in future planning to ensure that sidewalks are continuous so that foot traffic can be kept safe from automobile traffic.

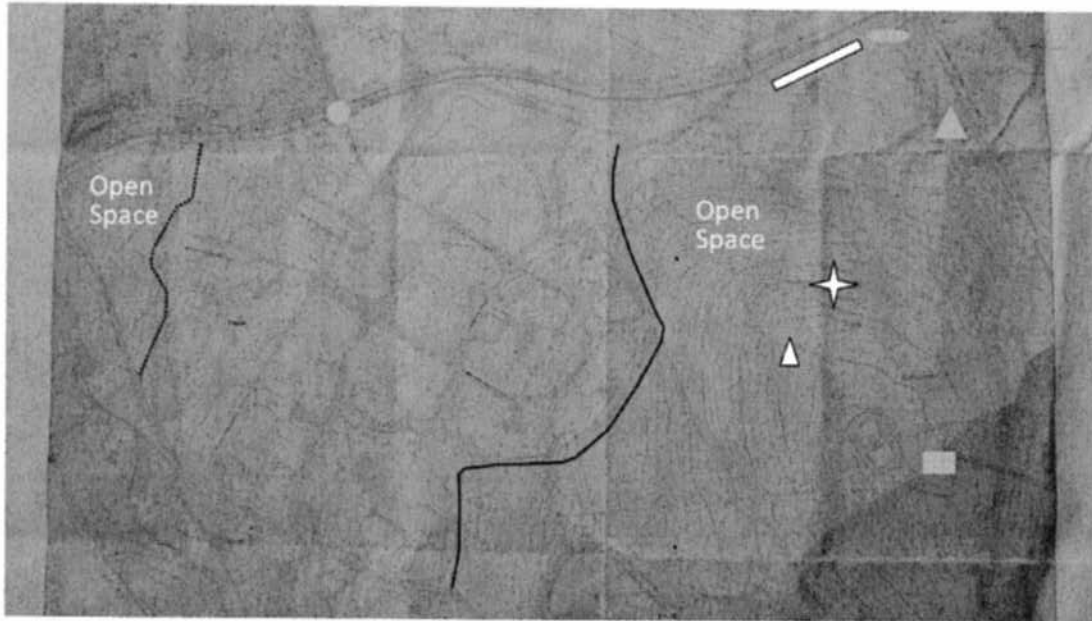
Land at Fairfield Hills would be ideal for a community garden. This is an idea that has been developed in other communities to provide low cost, locally grown produce. Plots could be rented to residents with a sliding scale to allow for access for low income families. Some of the land is flat, fertile and sunny and would be suitable for this use.

The conservation commission recommends preserving the large undeveloped tracts of land as marked on the accompanying map as open space in perpetuity, either through zone change or deed restriction.

We welcome the opportunity to work with you and other Town Boards and Commissions on this important issue. If there are any questions please contact Commission members Marj Cramer at 203-426-5212, Adria Henderson at 203-816-7170, Mary Wilson at 203-426-6518, or Rob Sibley at 203-270 4276.

Appendix (added by Deb Zukowski, Fairfield Hills Master Plan Review member)

Image of map provided by the Conservation Commission. Notes they made during their property review have been called out by the shapes and lines added over the image.



- | | | | | | |
|-------|--|---|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| ——— | FFH Property Boundary | ● | Connects to Al's Trail | ▲ | Pines Trail |
| | West Meadow Boundary | ■ | Trail to Nunnawalk | ■ | Yahoo Hill |
| ——— | High/East Meadow Boundary | △ | Conifers ? | ▭ | Scenic Corridor |
| ★ | Wildlife Corridor, Nesting Habitat, Meadow Habitat | | | | |

Note that all markings are approximate.