

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 at C.H. Booth Library, 25 Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

These Motions are subject to the approval of the Fairfield Hills Authority.

Present: Jim Bernardi, Thomas Connors, Ross Carley, Renata Adler, Andrew Willie and John Madzula

Absent: Michael Holmes, Terry Sagedy

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic and Community Development; Paul Fadus, EDCmember; several members of the public and two members of the press.

Jim Bernardi called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Public Participation :

Bruce Walczak, 12 Glover Avenue – Thanked the members of the FHA for their service and then asked what the plan was to reuse and secure the buildings at FH. **Ross Carley** explained why the buildings are in the state that they are, including the fact that the State of CT did not properly mothball them. The larger buildings were used for dormitories and opening the rooms into bigger rooms is not feasible. **Mr. Carley** stated that buildings that are feasible to be reused are being maintained by other departments as the FHA does not have the funds. **Mr. Walczak** then asked if the FHA had entered into contract with the town for the work. **Chairman Bernardi** said no but it is economically more feasible for the town to do the work and that the FHA has the authority to have the town do the work at FH. Extensive discussion ensued as to what powers were given to the FHA with **Chairman Bernardi** stating that the elected officials of the Town may direct work to be done, especially in the case of a safety hazard.

Renata Adler then asked by what right the FHA has to reserve properties for six months without a lease. She then noted concerns that she has regarding the Heroes Villages proposal for a restaurant and greenhouse. **Mr. Bernardi** noted that the reserving of property is necessary for a prospective tenant to get financing and a lease and that the FHA is not in existence to say bad things about individuals, but to review proposals brought to them. **Ms. Adler** noted that when motions pass unanimously too often, it raises suspicions.

Jami Murdoch, 114 Hanover Road – noted that family members of hers had been patients at FH and stated that she has a vision for FH, a botanical garden, horticultural therapy, festivals an amphitheater and trails. **Jim Bernardi** noted that many of these ideas are being or had been entertained for the campus. **Ms. Murdoch** stated that Newtown should not be in the property management business but should create a non-profit that can obtain grants from corporations for projects at FH. **Thomas Connors** noted that a non-profit, Everwonder (everw?nder) Museum is looking to be located at FH.

Ross Carley motioned to approve the minutes from the August 21,2013 FHA meeting. **John Madzula** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ross Carley spoke about having located drawings of the FH buildings with the State. He would like to have money reserved in the future to pay for scanning of the buildings for historical purposes and noted that plans had been helpful in taking down some buildings on campus. Copies of plans in the town's possession have been damaged by water and vandals.

Mike McCarthy, Tree Warden – was granted permission by the FHA to look at the trees on campus. He submitted and discussed tree work that he recommends be done on campus, beginning with trees around the Municipal Center and parking areas surrounding the MC. Mr. McCarthy recommends the work be done by private tree companies due to the numerous projects that the DPW has going.

John Madzula motioned to authorize Mike McCarthy to obtain at least three bids for the recommended tree work, including grinding stumps and placing topsoil and grass seed. **Ross Carley** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Andrew Willie asked Mr. McCarthy to include a list of dangerous trees around campus. **Mr. Bernardi** noted that the FHA would address the trees around the Municipal Center first and begin planting after the removals, then go from there.

Discussion took place regarding the benches that had been purchased during last year's Arts Festival. It was discussed that the benches offered for sale were not ones that had been approved for placement on campus. It was generally agreed that these unapproved benches should not be placed on campus as they were not an approved design.

Victory Garden update – a letter was written by Amy Mangold and Harvey Pessin stating that they understand that the Victory Garden is in a temporary location and may need to be moved at some point. It is generally understood that Parks and Rec will move any planted trees if necessary.

Upcoming Events – an update was given on upcoming events at FH including a Pumpkin Festival, Blood Drive, Water Walk, and Arts Festival.

Parent Connection – project for the duplex has been sent onto the BOS. Discussion happened regarding the historical status of the duplex and it was discussed that the duplex was not designated, but possibly eligible for historical status. **Elizabeth Stocker** noted that the State Historic Preservation Office had signed off on a previous porch removal. An application for the grant for the Parent Connection has been received, the BOS will review the PC proposal and then if approved, it will go onto the attorneys for approval. In addition, the State has signed off on the abatement project concerning Danbury Hall.

Renata Adler noted that she would like to see the Planning Committee expanded. **Jim Bernardi** noted that if the committee membership was increased in number, the meetings would become regular meetings. **Thomas Connors** noted that anyone could attend but not participate.

Ms. Adler also noted that she would like to see votes put off for a month so information can be reviewed prior to voting. **Mr. Bernardi** stated that if there is a vote that is complicated it would be put off to the next meeting. **Ms. Adler** stated that the First Selectman would like the FHA meetings to take place at a time when she can attend. **Mr. Bernardi** noted that the meetings had been moved from 7:30 to 7:00 PM so that the First Selectman could attend and that if he was approached by the First Selectman to change the meeting time, he would consider it at that time.

RFP – Ms. Adler stated that FH is a beautiful property and that by offering the property at a \$1 / year lease, it appeared that the property was being offered as a ‘fire sale’. **Mr. Bernardi** noted that the properties are worth what the market will bear. **Ms. Adler** reiterated that the RFP was tabled in June for reconsideration at the July meeting. **Mr. Bernardi** noted that it was ok to postpone RFP discussion until the Everwonder (everw?nder) and Heroes Village proposals had been decided and also noted that if there was question as to whether or not an entity could complete a project on campus, then the group could be asked to put up a bond.

NBC movie request – the FHA was approached regarding using FH to film part of a movie on mental health. This request has been turned down.

Campus Trails update- the CIP has \$300,000 in a future year to expand the trails. **Andrew Willie** stated that he believes that the public enjoys these trails and that it is money well spent. **Elizabeth Stocker** will check for specs on phase II of the trail project.

Alcohol Policy – there was little discussion regarding the draft alcohol policy for FH.

Master Plan update – Discussion regarding an update to the Master Plan took place. Up to 30 units of residential housing may be included in proposals for FH. These units would be on the second story of other businesses. **Thomas Connors** noted that this would allow people to present plans that include housing and will allow the FHA to hear out these proposals. **Elizabeth Stocker** noted that it was premature to discuss the plan as it needs to go to P&Z first. **Deborah Zukowski** (a past member of the Master Plan review committee) noted that the update would allow discussion of limited residential proposals.

Ross Carley motioned to adjourn the meeting. **John Madzula** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:14 PM.