

The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at C.H. Booth Library, 25 Main Street, Newtown, CT 06470.

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

Present: Jim Bernardi, Michael Holmes, Thomas Connors, Ross Carley and Renata Adler.

Absent: John Madzula, Andrew Willie and Terry Sagedy.

Also Present: Elizabeth Stocker, Director Economic and Community Development, several members of the public and one member of the press.

Jim Bernardi called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Public Participation:

• **Pat Llodra, Newtown First Selectman**- spoke about General Electric's \$15 million donation toward a community center for the town. Ms. Llodra called the donation generous numerous times and noted that she was very thankful for the donation and noted that the idea was generated and made possible by the 150 GE employees who are Newtown residents as well as members of management. While not wanting to predetermine the design, use or location of the center, she noted that a possible location for the center could be FH and that a possible first focus could be a senior center and a possible place for some offices that are currently housed in the town building at the corner of Main Street and route 302. Ms. Llodra also noted that a full community center could take three phases.

Ross Carley asked if any of the donation could be used to demolish buildings at FH. **Ms. Llodra** noted that GE's intent was for the money to create, not demolish existing buildings, although buildings could be demolished, but not using the GE donation. **Mr. Carley** noted that he did not believe that the center should be only a senior center. **Renata Adler** agreed that the center should be a place to bring generations together.

• **Li Ping Wang, Realtor, Property World** – spoke representing a group of Chinese investors and interested parties (Jialin Wu, Yi Xia, Ge Tian – of Kai Lai Group; Wuming Chang-PhD candidate at Brown University). Ms. Wang said that the group is interested in FH (Canaan, Newtown, Stratford and Stamford buildings) for a Chinese nursing school. The school could eventually have 2000 students and teach nursing as well as Chinese arts. The school could possibly partner with UConn or another university. A number of the interested parties have toured buildings on campus and this is their number one choice for a location due in part to its proximity to NYC and Hartford. The group is aware of the design and landscape guidelines. Discussion ensued including the fact that the FHA planning committee has met regarding this possibility.

Michael Holmes noted that the next step would be for the investors to submit a letter of intent with more specifics. If the planning committee supports the proposal as outlined in the LOI, the topic will come back to the FHA. **Renata Adler** stated that the group was warmly welcome.

• **Frank Navone, owner Panificio Navona Bethel, CT** – stated that he is a Newtown resident and owns a commercial photography business and bakery in Bethel. He is interested in locating his businesses to

Stratford Hall. If the bakery relocates to Newtown, it could create ten additional jobs. The next step for this proposal is to present a letter of intent.

•**Mike McCarthy, Tree Warden** – summarized the results for the bid for tree pruning and removal around the Municipal Center. The firm chosen to do the work is Newtown Arbor. The gum tree should be taken down first as it presents the greatest safety concern. Mr. McCarthy noted that the work will be completed 60 days after the bid award. Discussion took place regarding what department would pay for the tree work. FHA and DPW will split the cost.

Thomas Connors motioned to approve \$5000 from the repairs and maintenance budget for the aforementioned tree work. Newtown Arbor should perform the most important safety work first. **Ross Carley** seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Thomas Connors motioned to approve the minutes from the October 16, 2013 meeting. **Ross Carley** seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Jim Bernardi motioned to acknowledge the minutes from the October 30, 2013 meeting of the FHA planning committee. **Thomas Connors** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Chariman's Report –

Jim Bernardi noted that he will attend the December 4 Legislative Council meeting to review the FHA activities for the last fiscal year.

2014 meeting dates were approved at the last meeting.

Planning Committee Report -

• **Chinese University** – the proposal will move forward with the letter of intent from the investor group as the next step.

• **Heroes Village- Renata Adler** noted that she did not believe that the FHA had the right to reserve property for the HV. **Jim Bernardi** stated that reserving the property was necessary for parties to take steps to get financing for projects. **Mr. Bernardi** stated that he believed that the property should be reserved until the commitment from the FHA expired.

Renata Adler left the meeting at 8:10 PM.

• **Everwonder (everw?nder) Museum** – **Elizabeth Stocker** said that **Steve Singlak** of the museum sent an email to her that noted that the museum study is moving forward. **Ms. Stocker** stated that the Cultural Arts Commission is interested in Plymouth Hall and had toured the facility.

Director of Economic and Community Development Report:

EPA Grant – **Ms. Stocker** will meet with **Fred Hurley, Director, DPW, John Poeltl, Building Inspector** and the LEP on 11/22. The hazardous material report is complete for the facility. The lead content of the building is such that it can be disposed of with the rest of the demolition debris. **Andrea Zimmerman** is writing a historic review of the buildings slated to be demolished.

Newtown Parent Connection – a public hearing was held on 11/18 for the draft lease. There were no comments from the public. The lease was written based on the terms that the FHA approved. Details are being finalized on the lease.

CIP – the order of projects in the CIP can be altered, for example, changing the order of which buildings will be demolished. **Ross Carley** noted that it might make sense to remove Canaan earlier than planned due to the community center that will be built.

Old Business –

•**RFP status** – Discussion took place regarding details of the RFP and \$1 lease for buildings at FH.

•**Drawings Scan project** – **Ross Carley** noted that there are no changes to the project. Digital files may be offered to the state library for their archives.

New Business -

•**Salvage Process of FH items** – discussion took place about what the proper procedure is for salvage of items at FH. **Elizabeth Stocker** noted that \$10,000 worth of items may be able to be salvaged from Danbury Hall. Discussion took place regarding how salvage had taken place in the past. **Ms. Stocker** will discuss the process in greater depth at the meeting on 11/22 with **Mr. Hurley, Mr. Poeltl** and the LEP.

•**Big Apple Circus** – **Ross Carley** said he had been approached by a promoter for the circus. The group wishes to hold a circus at FH in the summer of 2014 in the vacant area where Litchfield Hall used to be. The request will be reviewed by FH.

Tom Connors motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Ross Carley** seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Christal Preszler