

**The Fairfield Hills Authority held a Regular Meeting on Monday, May 19, 2014 in meeting room #3 at the Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT 06470.**

**These minutes are subject to the approval of the Fairfield Hills Authority.**

**Present:** Thomas Connors, Jim Bernardi, Andrew Willie, Renata Adler, Ross Carley and Terry Sagedy.

**Absent:** Michael Holmes, John Madzula.

**Also Present:** Elizabeth Stocker, Director of Economic and Community Development; George Benson, Director of Land Use; Jean Leonard, Chairwoman EDC; Joe Humeston, Secretary EDC; Paul Fadus, member EDC; several members of the public.

**Thomas Connors** called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

**Public Participation – Robin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road** – presented an idea regarding a museum project ([www.art4newtown.org](http://www.art4newtown.org)), an idea for a modern and contemporary art museum to possibly be located at Fairfield Hills. A local steering committee consists of: Jim Gaston, Bill Hart, Laura Lehrman, Arlene Spoonfeather, Lisa Berger, Jackie DiFlumeri and David Wheeler. **Marian Schwindemann, Redding CT** spoke regarding the project. Following 12/14, members of the art world were inspired to do something. This approx. 25,000 square foot, destination museum would be a not-for profit, permanent collection of world class art that would be presented through the eyes of a child with child appropriate art only. The hope is to raise \$25 million and an additional \$15 million or more for the ongoing operation of the facility. The plan is to have no admission fee. **Ms. Schwindemann** noted that she helped raise \$25 million in 12 months for a library for the Academy Awards in the past. The group is considering Woodbury Hall, but is open to ideas and other locations. **Ms. Fitzgerald** welcomed input from the FHA for the project to fit what people want FH to be. The group is beginning their process and considering FH first, but could also look at other locations if it makes sense. The group is very open to working with the town on this project. The next step will be a press release regarding the idea for the project.

**Mike Collins – Chief, Newtown Volunteer Ambulance** – was approached with an idea to build a playground to thank the first responders and Sandy Hook School teachers in Newtown. The Sandy Ground is the group that is hoping to build the playground. The group has spoken with Pat Llodra. They want to find a location that is off the beaten path and once approved, the project could be completed by October. **Thomas Connors** encouraged the project and appointed **Ross Carley** to work with the group to find a location on campus. Discussion followed and it was agreed to involve P&R in the process. Once a spot is chosen, the group should return to the FHA for approval.

**Deborra Zukowski, 4 Cornfield Ridge Road** – spoke regarding the EDC's endorsement of a zoning change that could allow residential rental units above commercial businesses. **Ms. Zukowski** suggested that the public be brought in for discussions prior to the public hearings on the change. **Ms. Zukowski** noted that she did not want to see divisiveness resurface on the issue of residential at FH and that the public should be involved in the most constructive way possible – perhaps using a facilitator for the public discussion. She noted that a good portion of the public supports some commercial use of the property that allows individuals to use the property. **Thomas Connors** noted that this proposal had not been approved yet, P&Z needs to approve any new uses on campus. A review of the development process at FH lead to

discussion regarding residential on campus. It was previously discussed what needed to be in place for the process to move smoothly if a developer came forward with a proposal, as it may streamline the process to have the zoning in place before any developer comes forward with any proposals. Public participation will take place. **Mr. Connors** noted that the EDC sponsored the amendment, there will be public discussion and a public hearing regarding the zoning, and encouraged public input outside the process. **Jean Leonard** noted that the EDC would like to see economic development take place on campus and would like the process in place before any developers present proposals that may include residential. **Ms. Leonard** also encouraged the public to speak at public hearings. **Ross Carley** noted that cost was the biggest stumbling block to developing the campus. Discussion took place among the group on the topic. **George Benson** said that developers have noted that banks sometimes require residential on the upper floors of commercial projects to lend funds to developers. **Mr. Benson** also noted that it is town land so the town can allow only ventures that it deems appropriate according to the Master Plan at FH.

**Review / Action on minutes – Terry Sagedy** motioned to accept the minutes of the April 28, 2014 meeting. **Andrew Willie** seconded the motion and the amended minutes passed unanimously.

#### **Chairman's report –**

**Developer's process** - tabled until June meeting

**F '13-'14 Budget** – balance and possible projects were discussed. A final decision on spending will be made at the June meeting. Streetscape design, making the entrance more attractive and tank removal were listed as possible projects.

**Farmer's Market** – the location of the market was discussed. It was decided to purchase signage to help direct attendees to the lot between the Municipal Center and Shelton House to minimize pedestrian traffic across D G Beers Blvd. **Jim Bernardi** motioned to approve spending up to \$500 for signage for the market. **Terry Sagedy** seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

**Single family house tank removal** – the current grant for the work on single family houses does not cover tank removal. It will cost approximately \$3250 to remove the tank. Are there other options to removing the tank, such as filling it?

**Campus Grounds report** – was handed out, is a list of ongoing maintenance issues on campus.

**Campus use / film requests** – the process was discussed. It was decided that staff will contact the chair if they think it is a request which should be brought to his attention. He will then bring it to the FHA if he feels that it is necessary.

#### **Director of Economic and Community Development –**

**Streetscape** – **Elizabeth Stocker** would like to have a comprehensive plan for campus created (parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, utility boxes, benches, etc.). This will help get an idea of costs for projects. CIP money could possibly be allocated to these projects in the future. It is being decided if the town will create the plan or if an outside group will be hired.

**Zoning amendment** – the EDC wants to support the amendment to bring developer's proposals forward.

#### **Member Items –**

**Plymouth Hall** – **Ross Carley** has been meeting with town departments and it appears that the town can do much to mothball Plymouth Hall by using its own personnel.

**Ross Carlery** motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Andy Willie** seconded the motion, it passed unanimously and the meeting ended at 9:16 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Christal Preszler