



TOWN OF NEWTOWN
Fairfield Hills Authority

MINUTES

The Fairfield Hills Authority held its regular meeting on Monday May 23, 2016 in Council Chambers, Newtown Municipal Center, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown CT 06470
These minutes are subject to the approval of the FHA at their next meeting.

Present: Tom Connors, Andrew Willie, Ross Carley, Terry Sagedy

Absent: Renata Adler, Curt Verdi, Phil Clark, Jim Bernardi

Also Present: Patricia Llodra (First Selectman), Christal Preszler (Grants Coordinator), George Benson (Director of Planning)

There were not enough members present to call a formal meeting, however Ms. Llodra began a tour of the Parent Connection Duplex (63 Washington Square) at 6:32pm.

First Selectman's Update: Ms. Llodra and Ms. Preszler gave the Authority a brief history of the duplex, which served as two doctor's houses. Currently, the center wall is removed to open the space, allowing the two 2,400 square foot sides to become one. Ms. Llodra estimated that the cost to renovate the building is \$750,000, and called it a very valuable project.

Ms. Llodra spoke to the Authority about the direction of their work, and what projects she believed would work best with the CIP funds for the Campus. Given the varying sizes of the buildings, she thought it would be smart to look into renovating more duplexes. She also talked to the Authority about the work that is being done interdepartmentally to coordinate activity and maintenance on the campus. Ms. Llodra advised the Authority to revisit their Master Plan and possibly revise a version to reflect new changes and needs for the campus. Mr. Willie and Mr. Carley spoke about parking issues and buildings, such as the police department. Mr. Willie suggested to create a full plan involving all aspects of design for the campus.

Mr. Connors explained to the Authority that he appreciates all the work that necessary departments do for the Campus, stating that no one has over-stepped with bad intent. Ms. Llodra and Mr. Benson agreed, stating that the charter was made in a time much different to now. The purpose of the FHA, which Mr. Carley mentioned, was to develop the area. Mr. Benson said that originally all the roads were private, and the entire area was handled by the FHA. Now that the roads are public, it is treated like a hybrid zone in the town, which makes it complicated to organize under one department or commission.

A brief discussion ensued regarding High Meadow, which Ms. Llodra clarified to be a hay field. She and Mr. Benson spoke about the history and current plans for the field. Some changes may be made, but will need to be done slowly. Many faculty are becoming educated about meadow preservation to try and make a universally satisfying decision.

Public Participation: Andrew Mangold joined the Authority to give a follow up presentation after meeting with the Board of Selectman. He has now finished a design based on public input, has volunteers, and monetary donations. Mr. Mangold explained that he has worked diligently to arrange plans with local garden centers for the desired plantings. Instead of spreading out the plantings to surround the entire trail, Mr. Mangold proposed focusing on two adjoining sections, between the Ambulance and the Victory Garden. The Victory Garden already has a spigot, so it would be a valuable resource to have close by.

Mr. Carley was concerned about falling fruit and pests. Mr. Mangold assured that the majority of fruit trees have small fruits which stay on the limb for longer than larger fruits that typically drop. The idea is also that the public will come to pick the fruit before it rots. Upon confirming that Parks and Rec is able to handle some of the regular maintenance, the Authority all seemed to agree with their original position, and wished to move forward to approve. Since there were not enough members present, the Authority decided to arrange a Special Meeting to take a vote, allowing Mr. Mangold to begin planting this summer (date of Special Meeting TBD).

The Authority requested two items from Mr. Mangold; all information on design and plantings to be filed, and a memo from Parks and Rec confirming their assistance with the project. Mr. Mangold also told the Authority that his website; www.newfruittrail.com has valuable information and updates.

Minutes: No action was able to be taken.

Staff Report: Ms. Prezler said that Canaan House demo was moving along as planned and still expects it to be down at the end of July. The Scope of Services for the STEAP Grant Streetscape Project had been sent to Mr. Carley and Mr. Sagedy to review, and would be sent back to the State within the week. Ms. Prezler presented a sign to go near the off ramp from I-84, showing an arrow, reading "Fairfield Hills Campus". Signs like this are being used to show "Sandy Hook Village" and "The Borough", as recommended from the Connecticut Main Street Grant. The Authority was not able to vote, however seemed favorable to the idea.

She also spoke about a Brownfield's conference that she attended earlier in the month. Ms. Prezler was delightfully surprised at the new ideas that are being circulated, and the big projects that are happening in other cities. The Authority was glad to hear that there was some new inspiration and movements for Brownfields.

Business: Mr. Benson took a moment to apologize to the Authority for the lack of communication between Planning and Zoning and FHA. Depending on the project, only certain approvals are necessary, and the process is now very different than it had been previously. He revisited the idea that Fairfield Hills is a very unique area and has had many changes in the last decade.

Mr. Connors continued the conversation, saying that the Authority seems to disappear until something dealing with the Master Plan comes forth. Mr. Willie believes that the Authority should vote on every project that comes to them. Mr. Connors agreed and said that voting had been previously encouraged. Mr. Carley is concerned that the ordinance has not been updated since being written, and maybe needed to be modernized. Talk was also continued about suspending the funds for the water fountains, which was not voted on at the last meeting due to less members than a quorum. The discussion will be continued to the next meeting again.

Adjournment: The meeting was informally adjourned at 8:29pm.

*Respectfully Submitted,
Georgia Contois, Clerk.*