

**Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission
Newtown Municipal Center – Council Chambers
3 Primrose Street, Newtown, Connecticut
Thursday, April 14, 2016 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Minutes

Present: Kyle Lyddy, Alan Martin, JoAnn Bacon, Joanne Brunetti, Steffan Burns, Brian Engel, Daniel Krauss, Sarah Middeleer, Donna Van Waalwijk

Absent: Agni Pavlidou Kyprianou, Tricia Pinto

Also Present: Gary Sorge, Stantec

Mr. Lyddy asked that everyone take a moment of silence as a reminder of why they were there.

Mr. Martin made a motion to accept the minutes of the March 10, 2016. Seconded by Mr. Burns and unanimously approved.

Mr. Lyddy reminded everyone of some protocols. Commission members make sure to speak into microphones. The only public participation will be next on the agenda and limited to 3 minutes for each individual. If anyone has questions or comments during the rest of the agenda they are to save them for after the meeting or to communicate with the Commission via email.

Public Participation: Ann Astarita, P.O. Box 352, briefly reviewed the restrictive covenant pertaining to the high meadow that was filed on 2/23/16 by officials. Ms. Astarita is in favor of keeping the high meadow as open space; any habitat destruction will be harmful to wildlife. The money to be used on the memorial is for healing purposes and not meant to divide the community. She encouraged the commission to stop plan development of the high meadow.

Holly Kocet, 2 Karen Boulevard, asked the commission whether the plan is for all the people in Newtown. If not, she asked that they rethink their position.

Mary Wilson, 12 Whippoorwill Hill, stated that a number of clubs and organizations have voted in support of keeping the high meadow as is. People are not opposed to the memorial, just to the location.

Stantec Entranceway Discussion: Mr. Lyddy stated that members of the commission had a great walk through of the high meadow with members of Park & Rec. Several options resulted, some of which can be done without a lot of disruption to the meadow.

Gary Sorge of Stantec presented an overview of different concepts which would provide access to the proposed memorial site (Att. A). Two vantage points along the existing walking trail were studied in order to measure how high the memorial could be without being visible from the trail. The maximum heights were 14' and 22'.

Option A

- Desirable parking location.
- No impact on the upper meadow.
- Meandering path through woodlands leading to parking area including handicapped spaces.

Option B

- Utilizes existing pedestrian path.
- Direct route to memorial site.
- Accessible pedestrian route is a maximum 2% slope.
- Lowest impact to meadow.

Option C

- Utilizes old farm road.
- Waling path provides visitor experience.
- Separates existing path from memorial path.

Option D/D1

- Utilizes lower meadow for visitor experience.
- Minimal woodland construction.
- Route utilizes both meadow and wooded areas.
- Stormwater measures to create buffer between trails.

Option E

- Walking path provides visitor experience; zig zag throughout woodlands.
- Path allows pedestrians to navigate grades.
- Route preserves lower meadow.

Option F

- Route utilized both meadow and wooded areas.
- Route may eliminate portion of existing path and provides more visitor interest.

After reviewing the concepts, Mr. Sorge clarified that options can be mixed and matched.

George Benson, Director of Planning for Land Use Department, reviewed a memorandum which he sent to Mr. Lyddy (Att. B). The memo included a list of criteria which he suggests the commission follows if the high meadow is chosen for the memorial site. These are not regulations but what Mr. Benson feels needs to be looked at in order to get approval of the site. The list includes: no buildings allowed; structures limited to 4 foot walls; minimum driveway

required by zoning and maximum parking limited to two handicapped and two conventional parking spaces; no lighting allowed; memorial hours from dawn to dusk; and overall plan should take into consideration the existing meadow.

Mr. Benson explained these were his thoughts and that he would be open to how things progress. It is the Board of Selectman who will be making the decision on the proposal.

Mr. Benson said that he is working on a meadow management plan where the main goal is to make the hay field into a meadow. Right now a farmer mows the hay field and takes the hay – some of which is contributed to the Governor's Horse Guard.

Discussion of Design Selection Guidelines: Mr. Lyddy said that an RFP is being crafted; feedback from the families, first responders, and others is being considered. Once the specific parcel of land is identified for the memorial, a survey needs to be done for designers to know slopes, etc. The public survey results will be reformatted into something that will be useful to the designers. Mr. Burns stated that designers would likely want to know where the "experience" starts, from what vantage point, which is why it will be important to identify which entranceway is best to proceed with.

The next step is to work with Mr. Benson and Mr. Sorge on reviewing what options were presented, understand if they can be evolved after looking at them for the first time, and in turn coming back with a recommendation to the Memorial Commission. It will be important to consider options that have minimal disruption to the land.

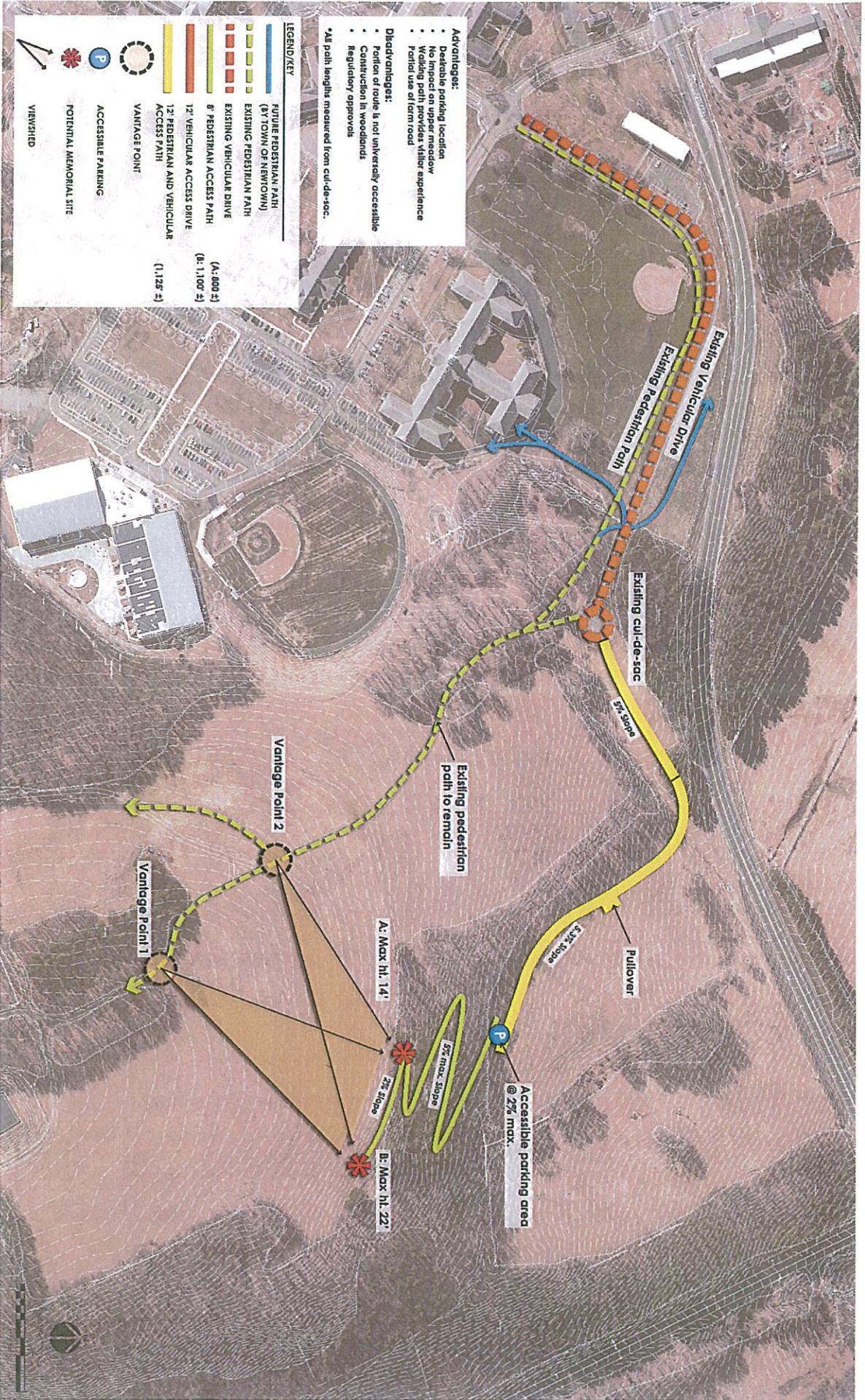
Miscellaneous: Two letters were sent to the commission in support of protecting the high meadow (Att. C). Letters have been published in The Bee as well. Mr. Lyddy said that we all have similar goals and should work together towards an end result.

Mr. Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Mr. Krauss seconded and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

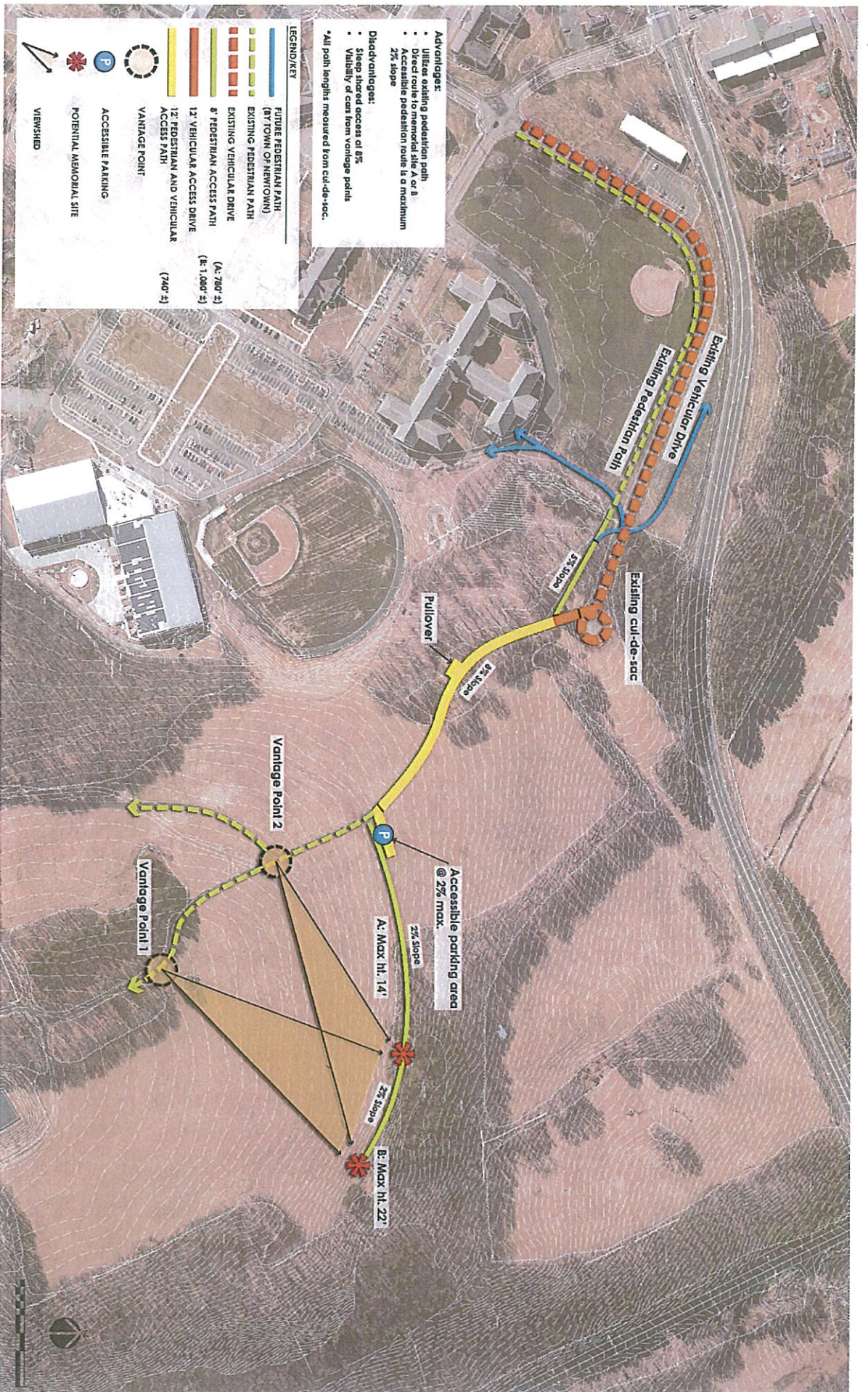
Ann M. LoBosco
Clerk

HH, A



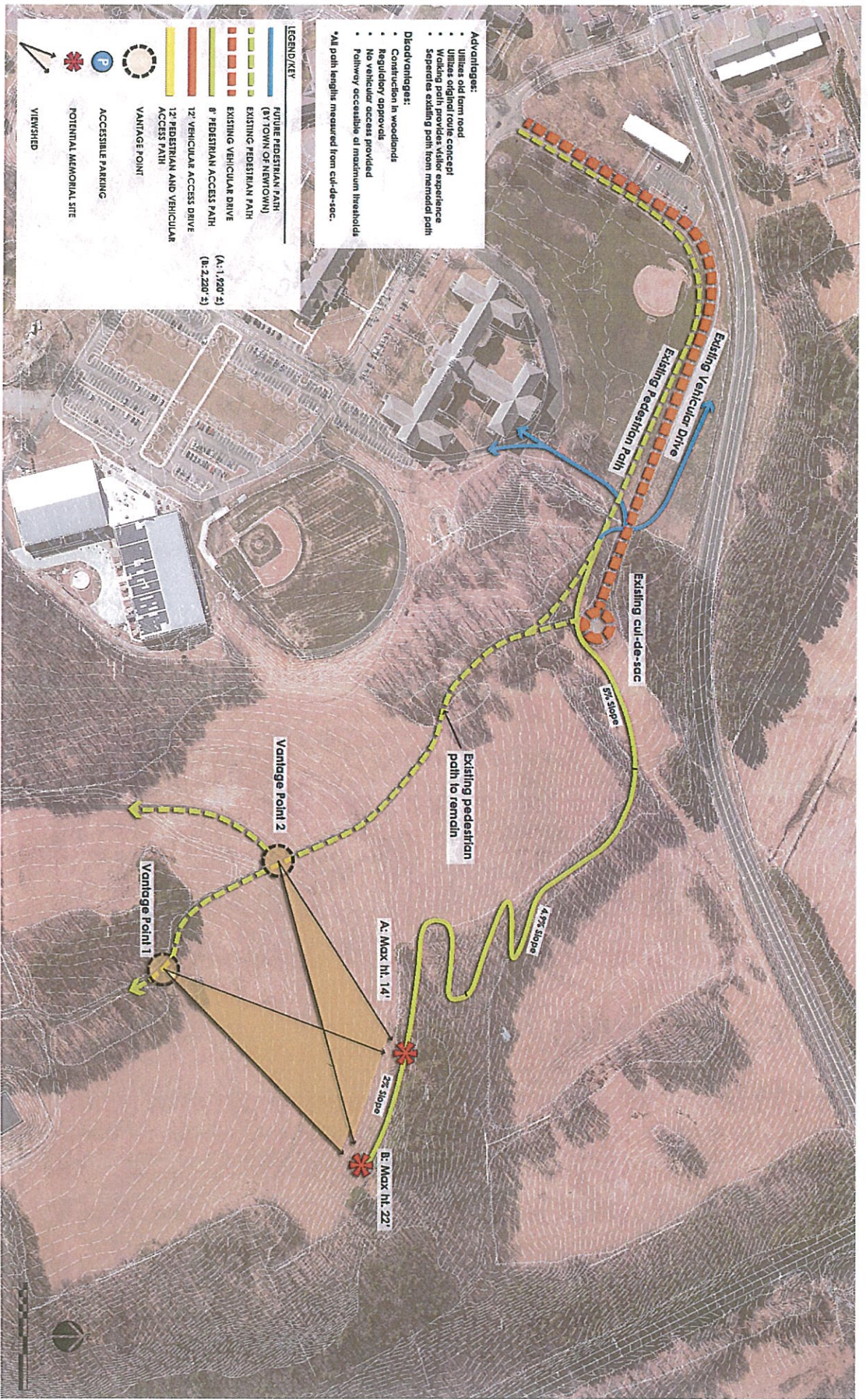
PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITE ACCESS DIAGRAM Option A

NEWTOWN, CT
04.14.2016



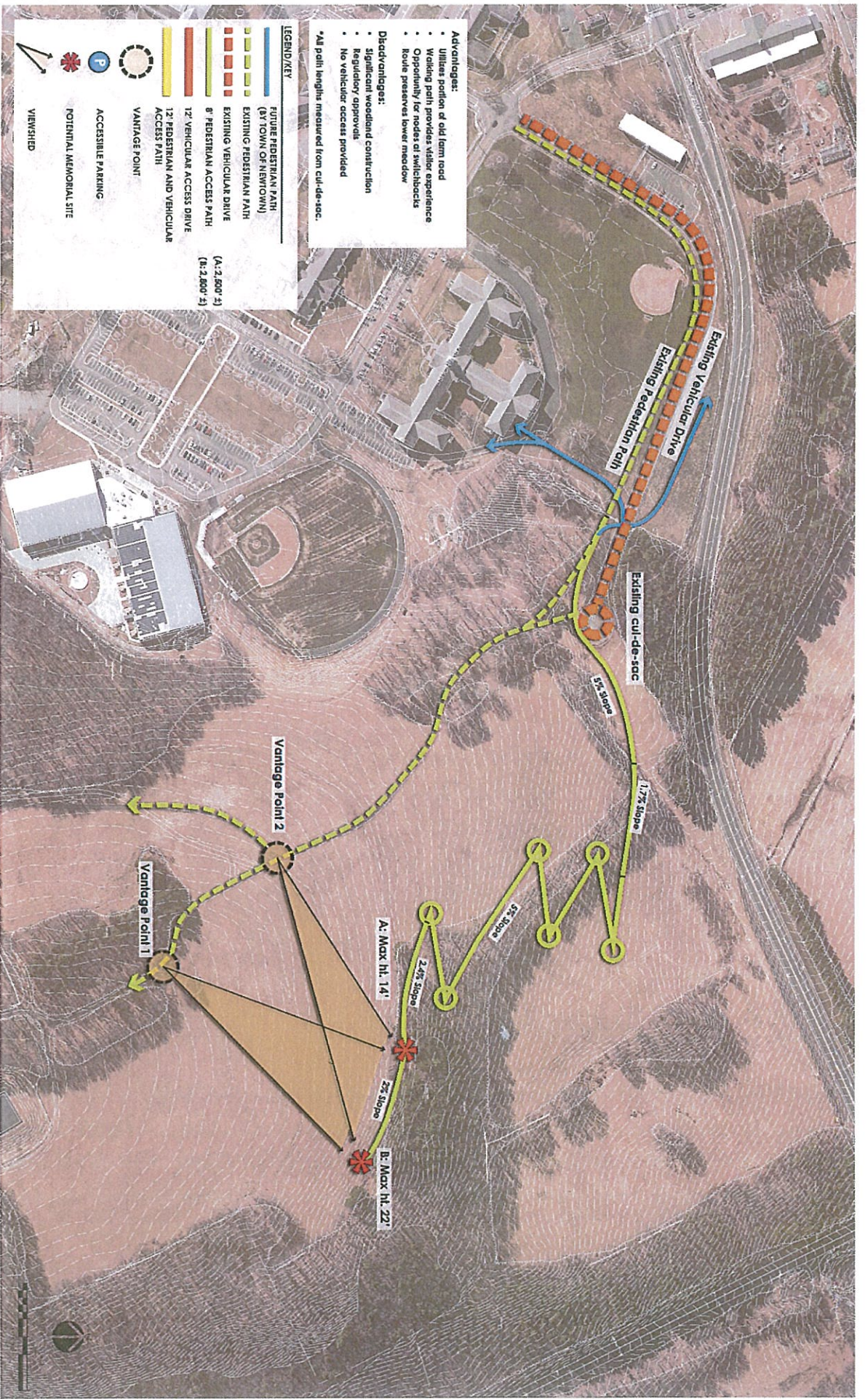
PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITE ACCESS DIAGRAM
NEWTOWN, CT
 04.14.2016

Option B



PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITE ACCESS DIAGRAM
NEWTOWN, CT
 04.14.2016

Option C

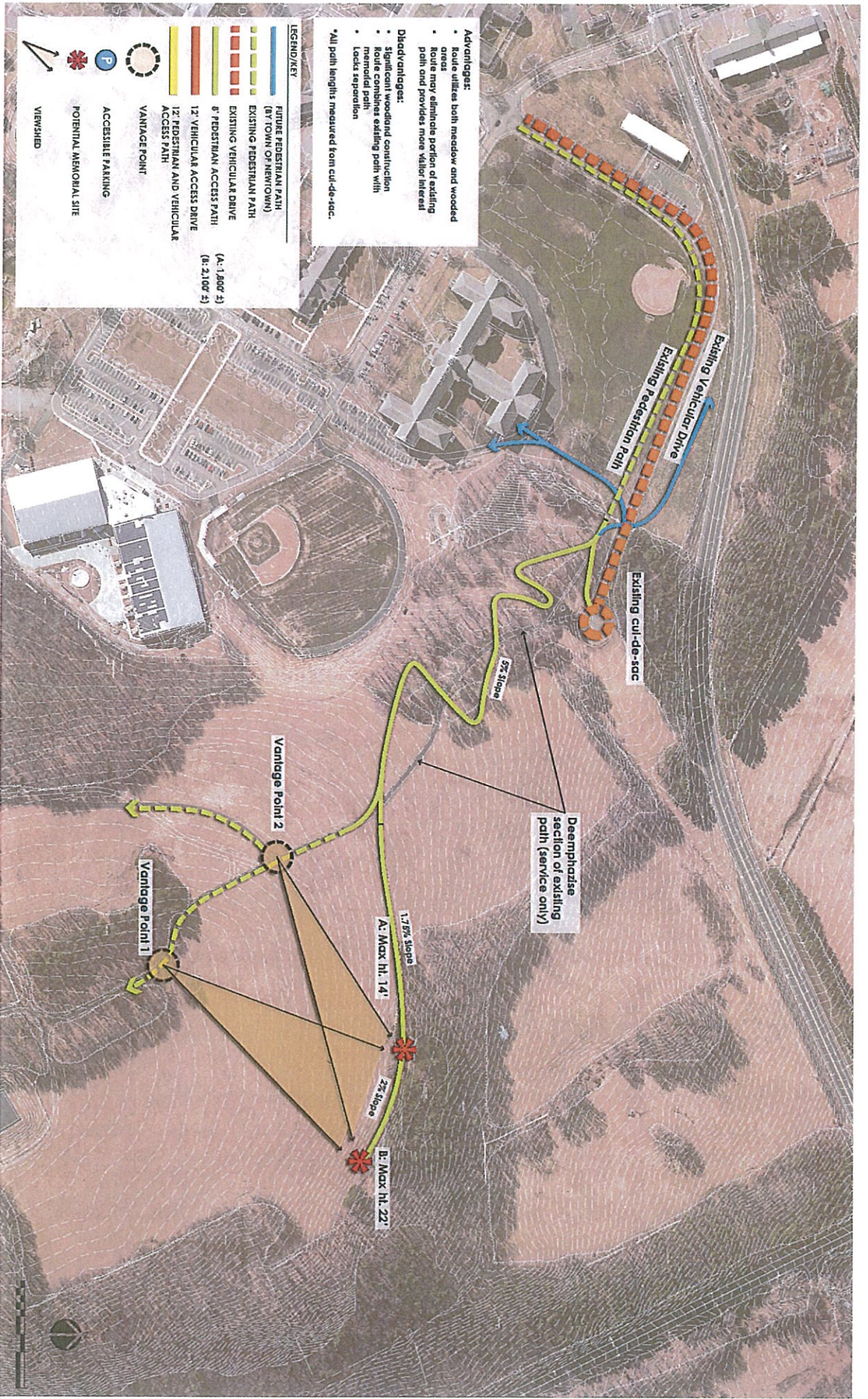


PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITE ACCESS DIAGRAM
NEWTOWN, CT
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Option E

PROPOSED MEMORIAL SITE ACCESS DIAGRAM
NEWTOWN, CT
 04.14.2016

Option F



3 Primrose Street
Newtown, CT 06470
Tel. (203) 270-4276
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George Benson
Director of Planning

AH, B

TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Land Use Agency

MEMORANDUM

March 9, 2016

Kyle Lyddy, Chairman
Sandy Hook Permanent Memorial Commission

The following is a list of design criteria that should be incorporated into the Memorial if the High Meadow is chosen as the site. Following these criteria does not guarantee the final approval of the Memorial location. To comply with the passive recreation requirement of the open space declaration the design would at the very least have to comply with these criteria. This is a list of suggestions including but not limited to the following;

1. The first criteria is, "The Newtown Conservation Commission, acting as stewards of open space resources supports in principle, the Memorial Commission's use of lands adjacent to and within an area referred to as the "High Meadow", *providing appropriate sensitivity to the important ecological value of this area be taken into consideration during design and development of the permanent memorial.*"
2. No buildings would be allowed.
3. If proposed, structures would be limited, for example 4 foot walls.
4. The proposal could include the minimum driveway required by zoning and maximum parking limited to two handicapped and two conventional parking spaces.
5. No lighting would be allowed.
6. Memorial hours would be from dawn to dusk.
7. The proposal would include a conceptual site plan integrating the memorial into the surrounding landscape, with possible enhancements to the meadow habitat.

AH. C

To the Editor:

The mission statement of the Horticulture Club of Newtown organized in 1954, is “to promote interest in horticulture; to encourage and assist projects involving horticulture; to further the conservation of natural resources, especially soil and water; and to increase the knowledge of the artistic use of plant material, both indoors and out.”

In accordance with this mission, our board has unanimously voted for the preservation of the High Meadow in its current undeveloped state. It is a place for birds and wildlife to flourish, a quiet place for reflection and gratitude, and a place for nature’s beauty to present itself with native flowers, grasses, and butterflies.

While the Horticulture Club recognizes that a memorial for the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy is an important and necessary tribute, we respectfully request that it not be located within the High Meadow. It would be a disservice to the town and to the values that many of us have towards preservation and conservation of our natural resources to have this protected open space developed.

Joan Cominski, President
Horticulture Club of Newtown
21 Ashford Lane
[203-364-1139](tel:203-364-1139)

March 30, 2016

To the SHPMC:

For 60 years, members of the Garden Club of Newtown have come together for the common purpose of stimulating community interest in town beautification and to support conservation of our natural resources, environment, and wildlife.

While the Garden Club recognizes that a memorial for the victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy is an appropriate activity, we do question the wisdom of developing such a memorial in the 65 acres of open space known as the High Meadow at Fairfield Hills. At a recent meeting the Garden Club of Newtown board voted to maintain the High Meadow in its current undeveloped and pristine condition, recognizing its unique habitats, ecological importance, and its value as a place to enjoy nature's beauty as a respite from the busy world in which we live.

These undeveloped, open fields provide an important refuge for migrating birds and native wildlife that require a rare and rapidly disappearing grassland habitat. Their various grasses and wildflowers offer a source of nectar for important pollinators such as honey bees, native bees and butterflies including the endangered Monarch butterflies.

The High Meadow is a protected Open Space parcel, set aside for its environmental value and passive recreation purposes. Development at this site, which would include a road and a parking area, is not consistent with those goals.

It is our hope that this rare meadow habitat will be protected and preserved for now and for the benefit of future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of the Newtown Garden Club

Diane Baumer, President

Vicki Boccuzzi, Vice President, Queen Street

203-364-0360

Cc: Patricia Llodra

Will Rogers

Herb Rosenthal

Kyle Liddy