

230829 MEMO

RE: SchComm Update on Community Center

FR: Susan Taylor, School Committee representative on Community Center Building Committee

GOAL: School Committee preparation for Sept 30 SOTT discussion leading to endorsement/opposition or guidance to Lincoln voters at the Dec. 2 Special Town Meeting

Summer update:

As ICON Architects develop Community Center design schemes at 3 price points, attention has shifted from the spaces needed for the Town departments (Parks&Rec Dept and Human Services/COA) to balancing those needs with the on-going LPS functions (District offices, LEAP, Magic Garden, facilities maintenance workshop.)

This has meant trade-offs, but much progress has been made this summer that better addresses school operations and the surrounding pedestrian/bike access and green spaces. Parking and drop-off/pick-up arrangements are being adjusted with safety and wetlands considerations.

Generally, all schemes include:

- Existing LPS and PRD program, offices. and maintenance workshop space
- Added offices for Human Services and a COA kitchen/multipurpose room
- Upgraded parking lot
- The Hartwell Building largely untouched (perhaps location for maintenance)
- Additional parking located outside the quad along Ballfield Road and tennis courts
- New septic and utilities

The price variations depend mainly on concepts for the three pods – the amount of demolition, new build, renovation, energy efficiency, and deferred costs.

- **Option 1:** All 3 pods demolished. New build net zero for HSCOA/PRD and a wing for LEAP. Green spaces/playground restored. New parking and pedestrian/bike access.
- **Option 2:** Pods A & B demolished. New build for HSCOA/PRD net zero. Pod C renovated for LEAP. New parking. Some green space renovation and pedestrian/bike improvements
- **Option 3:** Pods A & B renovated. Pod C untouched. All three connected with exterior glazed corridor. (Leaves LEAP and Magic Garden remote from pick-up parking.) No green space or pedestrian improvements.
- **Option 4:** Do nothing. Defer today's estimates of renovating pods (@ \$3million), upgrading access, parking, septic and utilities (\$3.5 million), and detoxifying Stratt's Place (\$500K.) Leave HS/COA in woefully inadequate and inappropriate space.

Next steps:

The architects and planners will use feedback from the Sept. 30 State of the Town to develop the final three plans and cost estimates for Special Town Meeting consideration in December. Voters will choose to advance one option (or none) by majority vote. Two-thirds majority vote is needed for final approval at Annual Town Meeting in March and at the polls to authorize bonding.

The School Committee, as well as the boards of LEAP and Magic Garden, will be asked to endorse the final proposal.

Updated plans are posted regularly at www.lincolncommunitycenter.com

20 Questions -- Some of the variables in the plans that concern LPS:

1. All three pods renovated or rebuilt to current code (est. cost per pod = \$3 million)
2. All three pods at net-zero (even if Hartwell Building remains untouched)
3. Upgraded parking lot
4. Better separation of pedestrian/bicycle traffic from cars
5. Rehabilitation of existing green spaces and playgrounds (inc. former Stratt's Place)
6. District Office Building (Hartwell) left under LPS sole management.
7. Adequate space for LPS maintenance workshop, vehicles, dumpster
8. Safe drop-off/pick-up and sight lines from Magic Garden and LEAP
9. Meeting LEAP's needs for Early Educ Certification and separate space
10. Separation of LPS and Town technology and utilities
11. Accommodation for peak traffic
12. Reserve parking for LPS Central Office needs
13. Allowance for future expansion
14. Rehabilitation of stream-side green space and protection from parking run-off
15. Safe connection to remote parking along Ballfield Road
16. New septic system and utilities connections
17. Potential difficulty managing shared LPS/Town operations
18. Potential conflict over near parking spaces
19. Potential difficulty managing peak traffic and parking on Ballfield Road
20. Questions over School Committee's naming rights

A bit of political history

After the commitment to rebuild LSRHS (completed in 2008), Lincoln began planning in parallel three other building projects:

1. Renovation of Town Offices building (formerly the 1908 Center School)
2. Rebuilding/renovating Lincoln schools on Ballfield Road
3. Creating functional space for the Town's Council on Aging and Recreation Dept.s

Town Offices renovation was approved in 2011 and completed in 2013.

A new two-story school building narrowly was rejected by Town Meeting in 2012. A much more expensive, net-zero renovation school project was approved in 2018 and opened in 2022.

The third project – now called a Community Center – continued planning to combine facilities for HS/COA with PRD (separate offices with combined activity spaces) and began to focus on the former Hartwell School location:

- A Campus Master Plan, jointly authorized in 2015 by the School Committee and Select Board, determined that the campus could accommodate both “the contemplated school building and community center projects” and anticipated traffic.
- To quick slide presentation summarizing Campus Master Plan:

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/14044/SotT-Presentation-Nov-14-2015?bidId=>

- For full Campus Master Plan Report with sections on traffic, parking, etc.:

<https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/14133/Final-Report-With-Links?bidId=>

- March 2022 Annual Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved moving forward planning a Community Center on the school campus, and the Select Board appointed a Community Center Building Committee (CCBC).
- October 2022 at a well-attended public hearing, however, the CCBC’s \$25-million proposal met strong resistance.
- November 2022, Special Town Meeting authorized design fees and instructed the CCBC to provide options within a year at 3 cost ceilings -- the full \$25 million, 75% cost, and 50% cost -- on the Hartwell site.
- January 2023: The CCBC hired ICON architects of Boston to develop the three proposals.

Important to acknowledge: some stakeholders in the Community Center fear betrayal of their trust that if they agreed to throw support to the other projects first, then they would be supported in turn.