

# A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER: THE FOUNDATION FOR A COMMUNITY CAMPUS IN LINCOLN

A Report Presented to the Lincoln Board of Selectmen  
From the Community Center Study Committee



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# 1

## THE CONCEPT FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER IN LINCOLN: APPOINTMENT OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER STUDY COMMITTEE

In May 2014, the Community Center Study Committee (“CCSC”) was appointed by the Lincoln Board of Selectmen (“BOS”) to assist the Town’s executive board in evaluating the options for addressing the long and short term facilities needs of Lincoln’s Council on Aging (“COA”) and Parks & Recreation Department (“PRD”), as well as approximately twenty-five smaller town and community organizations which currently utilize Bemis Hall, the pods within the Hartwell complex at the schools, and other town facilities for their programming and/or storage.<sup>1</sup>

As a component of its analysis, the CCSC was tasked with examining Lincoln residents’ desire for a new multi-generational Community Center both for those departments and for Lincoln residents of all ages, and to look at several of the most logical town-owned sites with that purpose in mind. A Community Center is a public facility that provides social, leisure, cultural, and health programs and services for everyone in the community under one roof. It typically has multi-purpose spaces: floor plans that can lend uses to both a senior center and a recreation center, spaces that can host an art class, a lecture, a performance, or a reception. It can accommodate other uses, too, such as the polling place for town voting, a fitness room, a meeting place for school-related groups, a health department, child and family services, after-school programs, a local food pantry, a fix-it shop, and a base for smaller community organizations.

This report from the CCSC is the comprehensive result of the committee’s work and a description of its process and progress to date, along with its findings and recommendations to the Selectmen.

### A. Brief Summary of Current COA & PRD Facilities

The COA currently conducts most of its programs and services at Bemis Hall on Bedford Road. Bemis Hall was built in 1892 as a Town Hall and lecture hall and, while it meets many COA needs of necessity, it has significant deficits that negatively impact the safety of Lincoln elders using it - especially those who are frail and most in need of assistance.

Compared with neighboring towns, the quality, size and condition of Lincoln’s COA facility is vastly inferior, and its physical deficits limit the programs and services which can be offered to elders. There is little parking at the building itself, and backing into or out of the few parking spaces in front can be hazardous. Elders who must park across the street cross a busy main road to access Bemis Hall. Areas of the building, including the front entrance, are not

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<sup>1</sup> The formal charge to the CCSC by the Selectmen appears in the Appendix to this Report.

handicapped-accessible. Many areas are in poor condition. The interior space does not allow for congregate meals, a significant drop-in area, adequate and confidential office space for staff and volunteers, private restroom locations, or all programming needed to meet the needs of Lincoln's growing population of older adults.

The PRD currently operates out of "pods," former temporary classrooms, in the Hartwell complex on the Lincoln School campus. While the square footage of the space is adequate for programs now, since the Lincoln schools control the space it is uncertain how long the PRD may have use of the facilities. In addition, the spaces get minimal cleaning and upkeep, and are in need of significant capital upgrading and repair. The buildings, including the bathrooms, are not ADA-compliant and can be difficult for adults to use due to their child-sized fixtures. The IT support is split between the Town and the Schools, and the PRD has no capital budget to maintain and upgrade its own space.

By necessity, both the COA and the PRD already hold a number of programs outside of their primary buildings in spaces owned by the Town and by private organizations, which is neither ideal nor always a safe way for these age diverse groups to proceed. Bemis Hall and the Hartwell complex pods are also used by the approximately twenty-five additional town and community groups, most of which are in need of additional meeting space or better conditions for their storage requirements. Those groups are listed in the Appendix to this report.

## **B. The Concept of a Community Center**

Consistent with Lincoln's tradition of integrating long-term planning with fiscal responsibility, the Selectmen recognized an opportunity to combine the conversation about appropriate facilities for two of its larger departments with the idea that a new facility might serve both the COA and PRD together with the rest of Lincoln's population. This concept grew out of an unmet need, long-discussed within Lincoln and recognized by current town leadership, to provide a central gathering place in town where residents of all demographic groups can meet on a drop-in or structured basis for coffee, conversation, lectures, classes, fitness activities, and more. The additional benefits of having a multi-generational center, where younger and older residents intermingle on a daily basis, have been discovered by many other towns which have combined their COA and PRD departments in recent years.

The crux of the Selectmen's charge to the CCSC, then, was twofold: to look at the facilities needs of the COA and PRD, but also to examine them in the broader context of a new Community Center on a town-owned site which would serve all residents of Lincoln regardless of their age or group affiliation.

The subject had been discussed in some detail at the 2013 State of the Town Meeting. With broad support expressed during that meeting to further examine the Community Center

concept, the BOS followed up with a warrant article at the 2014 Annual Town Meeting which proposed its appointment of a Community Center Study Committee and a \$75,000 appropriation for that committee to hire a consultant. The article was approved by the Town.

### C. Appointment of the Community Center Study Committee

Following the March 2014 Town Meeting vote, the Selectmen solicited membership interest and then appointed the members of the CCSC to follow up on the next steps in the Town's important discussion surrounding a Community Center.

The following persons were selected by the BOS to serve on the CCSC, with the three town staff members appointed in a non-voting capacity. Many of the members have significant and lengthy experience in Lincoln's government, either as resident volunteers or as staff. Once appointed, the committee members elected their Chair.

	<b>Member</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
1	Penny Billings	Chair; At-Large member
2	Renel Fredriksen	Board of Selectmen Representative
3	Dilla Tingley	Council on Aging Representative
4	Doug Carson	Parks & Recreation Committee Representative
5	Steve Gladstone	At-Large Member
6	Nancy Marshall	At-Large Member
7	Tim Higgins	Town Administrator (non-voting)
8	Carolyn Bottum	Council on Aging Director (non-voting)
9	Dan Pereira	Parks & Recreation Director (non-voting)

The Selectmen tasked the CCSC to examine both the current conditions of the facilities now used by the COA, the PRD and the other organizations, along with their present and future needs, and to look at various town-owned sites in Lincoln which could be used for a new Community Center or, short of that, for facilities to house the COA and PRD separately. Those five sites, informed by 2012 report summarizing the work of the predecessor Community Center Feasibility Committee, are:

1. Bemis Hall on Bedford Road,
2. The Pierce House on Weston Road,
3. The Hartwell complex at the schools,
4. The town-owned commuter lot at the rear of and adjacent to the RLF-owned parking lot at the Lincoln Mall, and
5. The Department of Public Works site on Lewis Street.

While it was left to the CCSC to determine how best to structure its meetings, hearings and discussions with the Town, the Selectmen indicated that they planned to use the November 2014 State of the Town Meeting to provide a status report and to elicit the Town's preliminary input on whether residents want a Community Center and, if so, what form it should take. The CCSC's final report and recommendations were to be submitted to the Selectmen by February 2015, to provide sufficient time for the Selectmen to prepare their findings and any recommendation to the Town at the March 28, 2015 Annual Town Meeting.

All committee members have worked diligently in their meetings and research, on their several formal presentations to the Town's residents and on this final written report to the Selectmen, which is respectfully submitted to fulfill the chief executives' charge to them.

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## SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER STUDY COMMITTEE'S PROCESS

For the duration of its appointment, the focus of the CCSC has remained on its charge: to examine the short and long term facilities needs of the COA, the PRD and other town organizations. Yet it was the BOS's expectation that its newly-appointed committee would also familiarize itself and build on the work done by the prior Community Center Feasibility Committee ("CCFC"), itself tasked with evaluating the programmatic and space needs of the COA and PRD. The CCFC issued its own comprehensive report in 2012.

The CCFC had found, among other things, that neither the COA nor the PRD have space appropriate for even their current needs, and that to serve Lincoln's present and future senior population, the COA needs about 9,700 sq. ft. of gross floor area, allocated to activity rooms, offices, a reception/ registration area, an auditorium, cooking and dining facilities, informal gathering spaces, and common areas (hallways, restrooms, storage, etc.). It found that the PRD needs approximately 14,600 sq. ft. for existing and near-term future programming requirements. It further found that appropriate facilities for community recreation programs include administrative offices, small rooms, a large multi-purpose room, a fitness center, cooking facilities, an arts and crafts studio, informal gathering spaces, and common areas.

In a co-located facility, or Community Center, the COA and PRD would need only about 19,300 sq. ft. instead of the 24,300 total that they would need in separate locations. This reduction is achieved by the COA and PRD sharing an auditorium, multi-purpose room and various other spaces. The CCFC also felt that Lincoln needed to encourage more public discussion about the program opportunities that a Community Center could offer, since many residents who attended meetings seemed unfamiliar with the rationale for a multi-purpose, inter-generational facility. Perhaps most significantly, it found that "whether the Town prefers separate COA and PRD sites or a shared Community Center, at some point – fairly soon – Lincoln will face capital costs to house these organizations in adequate and appropriate facilities." The CCFC concluded that deciding against a multi-purpose Community Center does not mean the Town has a "no-cost" option, even if both agencies stay in their present locations indefinitely. This is increasingly true for the COA and its current antiquated location.

Following up on that 2012 report, our committee looked more closely at, and sought a great deal of public input on, the five most appropriate town-owned sites which could be used for either a Community Center or to house the COA alone. Of those sites, only the Hartwell complex has a close enough proximity to the schools and town fields for the PRD to serve its recreational mission.

Since its appointment, the CCSC has met on a regular schedule every other week in Town Offices with their public, posted meetings generally attended by various interested members

of the public and liaisons from some town boards and committees.<sup>2</sup> At the outset, the CCSC also reached out to all town board, committee and relevant organization heads by email, seeking names and contact information for their liaisons to the CCSC and notifying them of the CCSC's task ahead.

A budget of \$75,000, appropriated by the 2014 Town Meeting, was made available to CCSC to retain the necessary architectural and engineering support to accomplish its work. Once appointed, the CCSC promptly solicited RFQs from architects to act as consultants on this project and, after interviewing several firms, unanimously settled on Abacus Architects & Planners, based on that firm's experience, oral and written presentations, and quick understanding of how Lincoln operates as a town on major projects. Abacus Principal David Pollak has acted as our point of contact since the firm's selection, and has attended all of the CCSC's meetings and assisted with the various outreach events in town.

In order to make informed recommendations the BOS, the CCSC has spent a great deal of time and effort to inform Lincoln residents of our role and process, and to solicit public views and responses to our presentations. A key goal of the CCSC has been to determine, based on public response, whether the Town wants a new Community Center at all and, if so, what Lincoln residents want to see it contain in terms of facilities and programming. To this end:

(1) We have worked with the greatest possible public transparency. In addition to our posted public meetings every other week, we have created a robust presence on the Town website with updates at least weekly. That site contains, among other things, a description of and purpose for the CCSC, the names and affiliations of committee members, our charge, links to all of the prior reports and other relevant historical documents (starting in 2006) upon which we are building our own work, our meeting agendas and minutes, our progress, press releases, announcements of our town-wide presentations, an on-line survey, videos from relevant presentations, State of the Town Meetings, and the 2104 Annual Town Meeting, and results of the survey taken at the 2014 SOTT Meeting.

(2) We visited and researched local Community Centers to see how they are structured and what they contain in terms of programming and facilities.<sup>3</sup>

(3) We familiarized ourselves with the five potential town-owned sites in Lincoln, including those currently used by the COA (Bemis Hall) and the PRD (Hartwell Pod A), learning of their potential benefits and limitations.

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2 The CCSC's agendas and minutes for all of their meetings can be found on the Town website and are referenced in the Bibliography to this report.

3 The power point presentation made by the CCSC before the fall 2014 State of the Town Meeting, discussed below, is referenced in the Bibliography to this report. That presentation contained written descriptions and photographs of several Community Centers from other regional towns.

(4) We reached out from the start to Lincoln School officials and the Parent Teacher Organization. We have been very pleased with the regular attendance at our meetings, and consistently helpful questions and suggestions from, our liaisons from the PTO and the School Committee.

(5) We contacted the chairs of all of relevant Town boards and committees, as well as other organizations which use town facilities, sought liaison assignments to our own committee from those who were interested, and invited their direct participation in our process.

(6) We held a town-wide Charrette in October at Hartwell Pod B, during which we made presentations on current COA & PRD conditions and programs, identified the five sites under consideration for a possible Community Center, sought and answered all residents' questions, and engaged in a hands-on planning exercise. Attendance that evening alone exceeded 120 residents.

(7) We made two additional presentations open to the general public: one at the COA in late October and one before the PTO in early November. Both were well attended.

(8) Following each of those three presentations, as well as on the CCSC page of the Town website, we sought additional public input through a written survey on the whether residents want a Community Center in town and, if so, where they would like to see it located and what should be contained in it.

(9) We made a formal presentation at the State of the Town Meeting on November 15, 2014. At its zenith, the head count there reached approximately 350 residents – perhaps the highest of any SOTT Meeting in Lincoln. The three-hour discussion was shared between the CCSC and the School Building Advisory Committee which was also soliciting public input on its own proposed building project. The SOTT Meeting included a hands-on survey during which residents could vote for their favored location for a new Community Center.

(10) Following the November SOTT Meeting representatives of the CCSC reached out to, and have met several times with, representatives from the schools to discuss possible building, facilities and programming integration and coordination should the two projects go forward, including the possible development of a Master Plan for the Hartwell complex and other school grounds.

(11) We have retained and received a report from the Town's traffic engineers regarding the feasibility of a new curb cut on Lincoln Road to accommodate traffic directly to and from a new Community Center at the Hartwell complex, in order to improve access to and egress from the entire community campus.

(12) We have asked our consultant to complete a schematic design for a freestanding Community Center at the Hartwell complex. That design will be completed after this report.

### A. Description of the Council on Aging

The Lincoln Council on Aging (“COA”) provides a wide range of programs and services to residents of all ages, with a special emphasis on residents sixty years of age and older, and their families and caregivers. The mission of the COA is to assist older residents to live safely and independently in our community for as long as they choose. The COA accomplishes this goal by enabling still-active seniors to remain healthy physically, emotionally, mentally and cognitively and to obtain the information and counseling that they need to make legal, financial, and personal choices which enhance their independence and quality of life. Most COA programs, however, are open to, and many times attended by, residents of all ages. Many of the COA’s social service programs are also available to residents of all ages, especially those going through extreme financial crisis.

In Lincoln, as in most small towns, the COA is the only social services agency operating under the purview of local government. The COA’s staff consists of a full-time Director, a full-time Assistant Director/Social Worker, and a part-time Bemis Hall Coordinator to oversee the scheduling of Bemis Hall by outside organizations. Many of the COA’s administrative functions, activities and one-to-one services, like medical transportation and Meals-on-Wheels, are provided by the COA’s 150 volunteers. The COA is funded by the Town, a state grant, and private grants and donations. Most of the COA’s senior programs and activities take place during weekdays, mainly at the COA’s present home in Bemis Hall.

Overseen by a Town board appointed by the Selectmen, the COA offers a range of activities such as educational presentations on medical, legal and other issues, health clinics, fitness and dance classes, social events and recreational activities, support and discussion groups, trips to historic and cultural sites, art and music classes, musical and dramatic performances, lectures on the humanities, science, history, and travel, information on and discussions of current national and local events, wellness clinics for all ages, and more.

The primary benefit of COA activities is to provide social support and a sense of community, which are inextricably linked to physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being and to a consequent reduction in morbidity and mortality. In addition, the COA provides significant support for elders and younger residents who need assistance to remain safely in the community. These services include, among other things, care and crisis management, information and referral, transportation, medical equipment loans, home safety evaluations, well-being checks, financial emergency and benefits assistance for residents of all ages, health benefits counseling, and tax counseling.

Consistent with national demographic trends, Lincoln’s senior population has grown significantly in recent years. When the COA moved into Bemis Hall in 1983, the Town had

1,019 residents who were 60 years and older. Since then, the number of older residents has grown to 1,900 as per the 2014 Town Census. Participation in COA events has increased as well. Between FY07 and FY14, the number of visits from senior residents increased from 5,600 to over 10,000.

**B. Existing and Projected COA Space Needs at Bemis Hall**

Bemis Hall, a historic building in Lincoln Center, contains the COA’s administrative and social service offices and most of its program space, although some COA events take place at other locations by necessity. Constructed in 1892, the two-story Bemis Hall served as Lincoln’s Town Hall until the 1980s when it first became home to the Parks & Recreation Department (“PRD”) and other town departments, and subsequently to the COA and a number of community groups and organizations.

The COA’s offices, consisting of a small kitchen, two general activity rooms, two staff/ counseling offices and one small computer training room, are located on the first floor. The second floor is a single auditorium/multi-purpose room which is used for COA and other events. The PRD, other Town departments, about twenty-five community groups and organizations, and private residents also use that upstairs room on about half of the annual weekday evenings and weekend days. The mostly unfinished Bemis basement is used for storing medical equipment loaned to seniors by the COA, for the Friends of the Library book sale, and for general storage for the PRD, the Lincoln Minute Men, the



*Bemis Hall*

Lincoln Historical Society, the Friends of the Lincoln Council on Aging, and the Lincoln Garden Club.

The amount of space currently available to the COA is less than half of that recommended by the state for a senior population the size of Lincoln’s. With the projected demographic trend, and based on the ages of its current residents, Lincoln will require more than three times that available space in a mere five years. The net floor area in Bemis Hall is approximately 7,290 net square feet<sup>4</sup> of which the COA currently uses 4,270 square feet.<sup>5</sup> The rest of the space is either unusable for programs and services (the backstage area, for example) or used

4 Office of Michael Rosenfeld, Inc., Town of Lincoln Building Needs Assessment Updated and Comprehensive Planning Options: Bemis Hall and Town Offices (February 2008).

5 Carolyn Bottum, COA Director, to Community Opportunities Group, Inc., September 2011.

for programming and storage by other town departments and organizations. To support current and future program requirements, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs recommends that senior centers have five-to-six square feet per resident over the age of sixty. The 2014 Lincoln Town census listed 1,900 residents who are age sixty or older. If the senior population continues to grow at current rates, the population will reach about 2,200 in five years. Thus the COA now needs at least 9,500 square feet for its programs and services, and will likely need up to 13,000 square feet, in the next five years.

### C. Existing Safety and Structural Deficiencies at Bemis Hall

Bemis Hall has several safety and structural deficiencies which make it unsuitable in its current state for a senior center.

A 2006 MK&A study identifies numerous essential needed repairs to Bemis Hall.<sup>6</sup> At the time, MK&A estimated the total cost of these repairs at \$1.36 million (in 2006 dollars). In 2008, Michael Rosenfeld reported that a full renovation of Bemis Hall would run approximately \$3.6 million at that time. He identified the following major improvements: “providing a fully accessible front entry, improved handicapped parking and a safety island for persons crossing Bedford Road, a second egress from the lower level, accessible restrooms for both genders, new mechanical and electrical systems, and thermally efficient and architectural replacement windows.”<sup>7</sup> Since 2008, Lincoln has installed a new roof at Bemis Hall, replaced the windows, enhanced the entryway for safety, some accessibility and attractiveness, and made other repairs. But some of the most significant deficiencies remain there today. The issue of most urgent concern is the physical safety of seniors using COA services, especially those with mobility impairments.

Parking for Bemis Hall is the first obstacle. Because the building only has eleven parking spaces in front, most seniors who come to the COA must park in a lot across the street and cross Bedford Road, a major thoroughfare. While a newly installed flashing pedestrian light has made the crossing somewhat safer, cars still go through the crossing at great speed even when the light is flashing. It only takes one distracted or careless driver to cause a fatal accident. The distance from the parking lot across the street to Bemis



*Many seniors must cross busy Bedford Road to Bemis Hall.*

6 MK&A, Bemis Hall Cost Estimates, Building Needs Assessment, (July 24, 2006).

7 Rosenfeld, Building Needs Assessment (2008), 2.



*The distance from parking across Bedford Road to Bemis Hall is a barrier.*



*Cars parked in front of Bemis Hall must pull out into traffic.*



*The only ADA-compliant entrance is not ideal.*

Hall is also a real barrier to those with mobility impairments who may not be able to walk that far, or who may fall down on the parking lot, sidewalk, or main road on their way to the COA.

The front parking area’s proximity to Bedford Road, though closer, also poses a safety problem. There is not enough space for a dedicated entrance or exit to that parking area, leaving limited space for cars to maneuver into and out of spaces. This is a particular concern for exiting vehicles because they cannot turn around without backing out into the main roadway and blocking it.

While renovations in recent years have addressed some needs – such as installing the building’s first elevator to the second floor - many significant issues of accessibility and restrictive use remain.

First, the main entrance to Bemis Hall is not ADA-compliant for wheelchair accessibility. The only handicapped-accessible entrance is a side door, which has a ramp but no automatic door so that help is still required. Entering Bemis Hall through that side door also requires a handicapped person to enter a back hallway, then pass through a second fire door into another hallway, and then through one of the two activity rooms which are likely to be in use at the time before that person can access any other part of the building including the main foyer and offices.



*The Women's Room is not ADA-compliant.*



*Anyone who falls in the only handicapped bathroom must wait for help.*

Second, both single-person bathrooms open up directly into the main foyer and create regular opportunities for personal embarrassment and humiliation. The women's bathroom is not handicapped accessible and is thus difficult for residents with mobility impairment to use. Women can use the men's/handicapped bathroom of necessity, but many elderly women do not feel comfortable doing so. In addition, because the men's/handicapped bathroom is too small for a stall, its main door must be locked when in use. Should a resident fall while in the bathroom, as happens, they must yell loudly or make their way to an emergency bell, ring the bell, and then wait to be rescued by COA staff with a key, all in full view of everyone in the main lobby.

Finally, the second floor auditorium stage, stairs, and landing railings do not comply with state architectural access regulations and are thus off-limits to those with any mobility issues.

#### **D. Inadequate and Improperly Configured Space for the COA**

Of equal concern is the simple fact that Bemis Hall lacks appropriately configured floor space, which in turn reduces the quantity and quality of programs and services the COA can provide. For example, Bemis Hall's three activity rooms often support multiple events every day. This results in frequently setting up and taking down room configurations, limiting the time activities can take place, and pushing people out who would like to socialize after an event.

The core of senior centers, both architecturally and programmatically, should be "social space" - sometimes called "drop-in space" - given the many benefits of social contact for elders. In



*Bemis Hall's multi-use Map Room.*

In addition, a senior center needs a variety of program spaces to accommodate a range of activities: fitness rooms with appropriate floors in order to avoid injuries, small rooms for discussion groups and larger rooms for presentations, art rooms with a water source for cleaning up, and many more. A senior center needs enough of these spaces so that COA activities can be scheduled in a way which both encourages participation and meets the demand for a range of activities by an increasingly diverse senior population.

A senior center also needs to be designed to accommodate those with impaired mobility. The spaces have to be welcoming and logical, especially for those with cognitive impairments. Having natural light and adequate acoustics are important for people with sensory impairments. Bemis Hall offers some of these features in some spaces, but will never be able to meet most of the needs presented by the COA's population.

Based on the experiences of other towns, for all of these reasons many seniors in Lincoln do not currently participate in COA activities; the current difficulty of access and lack of properly-configured space for people of their age keeps them away.

Bemis Hall lacks the privacy required for myriad social services that seniors take for granted in other towns. Space for these services needs to be arranged to ensure confidentiality, not only to meet professional ethics requirements, but so that those who most need COA services are not deterred from using them. Currently, those wishing to speak with the COA's social worker must enter through the frequently crowded lobby (or activity rooms, if they use the side entrance) and state the purpose for their visit in front of others milling around because there is no place else



*Bemis Hall's lobby does not provide confidentiality.*

for them to socialize, many of whom may be friends and neighbors.

The Director's office and social worker's office are both directly adjacent to an activity space and the hallway leading to it, and any conversations between them and senior clients can be overheard. The small office used for confidential veterans' counseling and health benefits counseling is directly off the lobby and also lacks any real privacy.



*Seniors gather in the hallway outside the social worker's office.*

The 2008 Building Needs Assessment Update determined through meetings with user groups and Town staff that "Bemis Hall [should] not be the long-term home of the COA."<sup>8</sup> That assessment was shared by the Community Center Feasibility Committee in 2012, which found that "Bemis Hall is not well suited for a senior center."<sup>9</sup> The COA Board and the Friends of the COA Board, at their joint meeting in April 2012, supported and voted to move ahead with planning for a co-located, multigenerational Community Center.

The growing number of seniors in Lincoln, and the COA's goal of helping seniors stay in their own homes for as long as possible, mean that Bemis Hall – already severely deficient - will become even less adequate for the COA's needs as time passes.

<sup>8</sup> Rosenfield, Building Needs Assessment (2008), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Community Center Feasibility Study Committee Final Report (2012), at p. 2.

## 4 EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS OF THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT



*Parks and Recreation Department Office*



*Painting Studio*



*Chess Club*



*Preschool*

### A. Description of the Parks & Recreation Department

The Parks & Recreation Department (“PRD”) promotes the benefits of parks and recreation generally, and builds community in Lincoln by providing quality opportunities for residents of all ages to socialize and develop interests, skills and healthy lifestyles.

Toward these ends, PRD offers a wide range of programs for adults, school-age children, and preschoolers. Its programs include summer camps, fitness classes, school dances, arts and crafts programs, basketball leagues, ski lessons, ballroom dancing, STEM programs, adult education, middle school trips, special events such as July 4th festivities, Memorial Day remembrances, summer concerts, and the Lincoln Winter Carnival, as well as coordination with the Town’s various athletic leagues. In addition, PRD maintains Lincoln’s parks and athletic fields, and coordinates scheduling for athletic facilities and the school gyms after school hours.

In 2014 alone, for example, PRD provided over 100 programs to 1,500 different individuals ranging in age from 8 months to 93 years, and enrolled over 3,500 participants in their activities, with many additional residents being served through their public events. Preschool age programming accounted for 6% of enrollment, school age programming accounted for 64% of enrollment, adult

programming accounted for 14% of enrollment, and family programming accounted for 16% of enrollment. Annually, PRD runs approximately 60 weekend programs, 660 daytime programs, 450 afterschool programs and 375 evening programs. In addition to these many pre-school, school-age and adult classes run by the PRD, special events include Winter Carnival Weekend, July 4th Celebration, Memorial Day Remembrance (Partnering w/ the Girl Scouts), Patriot's Day Celebration (in support of the Minutemen), Summer Concert Series, Kids Triathlon, Trunk-or-Treat, Haunted Barn and the Fishing Derby.

The PRD is run by two full-time staff (Director and Assistant Director) and one part-time staff member, with support from more than thirty program instructors, fifty-five seasonal employees and more than fifty volunteers. Its overall policy direction and supervision comes from a Parks and Recreation Committee composed of six Lincoln residents: three elected members and three appointed members. The PRD runs some programs on weekdays during school hours, such as exercise classes for adults, but most of its offerings are held for children after school, on weekday evenings, and on weekends.

## B. Existing PRD Facility Conditions

The PRD occupies Pod A in the Hartwell complex at the Lincoln Public Schools. The three existing one-story "pods" were built to serve as temporary classrooms in the mid-20th century. Each building was designed to hold four classrooms which could be subdivided with an accordion partition, along with two restrooms and office space. Students moved out of the pods in the mid-1990s, when the schools completed its "link project" and brought all grades from K-8 under one roof in the connected Smith and Brooks school buildings. The schools then used the temporary pods as overflow space and made them available to the Lincoln community for general use.



*Music Together*



*Town Events*

Each pod contains approximately 4,900 square feet of usable space. The PRD office moved from its prior location at Bemis Hall to the Hartwell complex in 1998. It currently occupies all of Pod A. One-half of Pod B serves as a maintenance shop and storage for the schools. The other half of Pod B is available for overflow and community programming, particularly from the Lincoln Preschool and Magic Garden preschool located in the Hartwell Main administration building. The Lincoln Extended-day Activities Program (“LEAP”) currently occupies Pod C.

The current PRD facility issues are not as acute as those of the COA, but their office and primary programming space are located in buildings which were meant to be temporary classrooms for children, and which are now more than fifty years old and well past their intended lifespan.



*Degraded Finishes*



*Exterior Doorway Condition*



*Asbestos*



*Low sinks*

While the Lincoln Public Schools Master Plan found the pods to be structurally sound back in its 2006 study, that study also identified several building deficiencies. Major problems include leaking roofs that have considerably passed their design lifetime, degraded interior finishes that are difficult to keep clean, asbestos-containing materials (ceiling tiles and flooring), pests, inadequate lighting systems, and the lack of a fire suppression system. The Pods also have accessibility deficiencies, including non ADA-compliant door hardware, inaccessible restrooms (with low, child-sized fixtures), and inadequate signage.<sup>10</sup> They are maintained at a minimal level to keep them usable, but need significant capital improvements to continue to house PRD programming, as evidenced by comments from Lincoln residents who refuse

10 SMMA, Lincoln Public Schools Master Plan Study (September 29, 2006), 2.6A/1-2.6C/4, 2.6C/1-2.6/C-2.



to participate in programs held there because of poor and/or inaccessible conditions.

An improved layout is also needed to create a greater variety of rooms, additional storage space for program supplies and equipment and improved building circulation and security.

For instance, the roughly 4800 square feet available in the A and B Pods provide only three programming spaces; two in the A Pod which are contiguous and one in the B Pod by itself. The large activity room in A Pod, which holds the majority of the fitness and tumbling equipment, is too small for adult fitness activities because it loses so much space to storage. The adjacent classroom is often larger than needed and could provide square footage for storage, but is not configured for that.

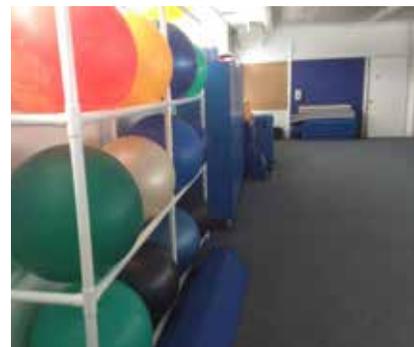
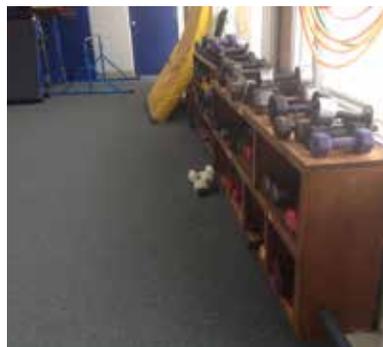


*Non ADA-compliant doors.*

Since all of these spaces open directly outdoors, building security is challenging and there is no way to passively use them. Parents waiting to pick up their child need to either enter the classroom and risk disruption, or stand outside on the sidewalk and wait.

As indicated, the main fitness room is lined with equipment for both adult fitness and children's tumbling, which creates a challenge for all users. The stored equipment eats into the programming space significantly, limiting the 2400 square foot area's capacity to about twelve participants. The heavy adult weights and tumbling mats must be stored within view and reach of many young children, creating the potential for dangerous misuse.

Due to exposed lighting fixtures and large glass windows, the fitness room cannot be used for indoor ball games and is limited to very controlled activities only.



*Fitness Room*

Bathrooms and sinks are not only ADA non-compliant, but they are sized for toddlers, making them difficult for adult participants to use.

Parking at the Hartwell site is often inadequate, especially during the early morning hours when many activities overlap. The 68-space parking lot serves approximately 15 town and school administrators, 35 preschool faculty and 10 afterschool program staff, in addition to dozens of community members who use the buildings routinely, or the more than 150 parents looking to drop off or pick up their children from programming.

Finally, the PRD is a tenant-at-will in its current location, since the schools control use of the pods. Consequently, the PRD lacks the control necessary to address these ongoing maintenance and compliance issues. Moreover, and perhaps of equal or greater concern, if a school building/renovation project is approved by the Town, the pods are likely to be needed for temporary classroom space again during the duration of that project, thus resulting in complete displacement of the PRD for a lengthy period of time, or even permanently.

### C. Ideal Location for the PRD

The PRD is very happy with its current location adjacent to the schools and playing fields, the indoor gyms in the schools, and the Codman Pool. Aside from the comments above, there is space for most of its current activities – though not projected ones. Being located close to the school, preschools, and LEAP after-school program has many obvious advantages for PRD's school-age participants. When PRD moved from Bemis Hall to its



*Non ADA-Compliant Bathrooms*



*Inadequate parking for PRD.*

location at the Lincoln School campus, its programming blossomed and participation increased measurably. Students can walk to PRD activities at the end of their school day, and need not rely on transportation to other sites.



*Ballfield Road Campus.*

The image above illustrates PRD's ideal siting on the Ballfield Road campus. The buildings highlighted in red represent their primary office and indoor programming space, the locations in light green represent facilities that they maintain such as the clay tennis courts, the athletic fields, playgrounds and the Codman Pool (not pictured but located just north of the image), the locations in blue are buildings that provide valuable programming access such as the two school gyms for sports classes and basketball league play, the auditorium for afterschool and summer camp productions, the library for afterschool drop-in programs, classrooms for STEM programs, the Hartwell multi-purpose room for staff training and parent meetings and the C Pod, which doubles as the Town's summer camp facility.

Additionally, department programs continue to occupy other spaces around town including Bemis Hall, the Pierce House, the Library, the Ryan Estates and the First Parish Church.

**5****REFINED PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND SPACE NEEDS FOR THE COA, PRD & OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Evaluating and refining its own programs with an eye towards a possible move to a new Community Center by the COA and PRD, the representatives from those two departments on the CCSC undertook an extended and collaborative process with representatives from other Lincoln groups and the Lincoln School administration. Their goal was to determine as accurately as possible the total square footage required, and types of rooms needed, in a new Community Center for the COA, PRD and other community groups and organizations which currently use Bemis Hall and the pods at the Hartwell complex, as well as any potential overlapping class-related use by students during the school day.

This analysis included the uses, attributes and size requirements for needed space. The COA and PRD first analyzed their own current programming, and then projected increases in attendance and numbers of activities and services offered, based upon:

- Current needs which are unmet;
- Anticipated population growth in town;
- Experiences of other towns which have recently opened enhanced COA and PRD facilities;
- Results of formal and informal surveys and focus groups of Lincoln residents about their needs and desires;
- A programming survey distributed at the various public forums this past fall, via the town website, and at Bemis Hall.

The resulting base programs provide for some spaces that are designated as requisite administrative space exclusively for the COA and PRD as full-time permanent tenants in the facility. The COA, in addition, has confidential social service spaces near its administrative space to be used by its staff and volunteers for one-to-one services. All other spaces, including activity and drop-in space, will be shared in a mutually-agreeable schedule to be worked out between the COA, PRD and other organizations to use the facility. The scheduling agreement will take into account not only what rooms are best suited for a particular purpose, but also the overall population density of the building at any one time, changing parking needs, and traffic concerns.

Based on information from community organizations currently using Bemis Hall for their storage, the program assumes that these organizations would continue to do so except for occasional activities or meetings in the new Community Center. Many activities now hosted in the Bemis Hall upstairs space by community organizations and private individuals will most likely continue to be held in Bemis Hall, though some might choose to use the new facility if space is available.

The CCSC then added potential use by community organizations and the schools to the program. Community use was determined by evaluating data from a meeting held in 2012 by the Community Center Feasibility Committee with community groups, from our own discussions at the fall 2104 public forums, at a CCSC meeting to which the community organizations were invited, and from individual meetings held with a variety of Lincoln groups and organizations.

The ideal program analysis strives to strike a balance between “overbuilding” (and overspending) and ensuring that a new Community Center building will provide adequate space for the next thirty years. The CCSC representatives spoke to directors of programs in other Community Centers in our region and strove to avoid two common problems that they discovered: underbuilding in the first instance and creating rooms that were too specialized for multi-use. The neighboring directors emphasized that attendance at programs will increase considerably once a new facility is open and so “space to grow” should be included. In addition, since programming needs change over time, rooms that are as flexible as possible are best. This means that rooms must not only be able to be extended or divided with moveable walls, but also designed to accommodate a range of different activities.

The CCSC compared the results of this space analysis with statewide and regional standards and found them to be reasonable. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs suggests that senior centers have five to six gross square feet per resident over 60. This recommendation is based on their experience with over 350 Councils on Aging in Massachusetts. As of the 2014 Town Census, Lincoln had 1,900 residents over 60. The senior population grows by about 50 to 60 persons each year. Accordingly, by 2019 Lincoln should have about 2,200 senior residents. The space required to serve them would therefore need to be 11,000 to 13,200 gross square feet. No state guidelines exist for recreational facilities. However, two gross square feet per resident is comparable to other recreational facilities in Massachusetts. So, the combined square footage of the proposed program, about 22,000 gross square feet, is well within these guidelines.<sup>11</sup>

With the above analyses in mind, the COA and PRD developed the following chart, which specifies the number of rooms and square footage requirements for a new multi-generational Community Center in Lincoln:

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11 A sample weekly calendar of activities is included in the Appendix to this report.

Use	NFA	# of Rooms	Area Total
<b>CORE PROGRAM SPACES</b>			<b>9150</b>
Subdividable (into 3) movement/fitness space	2500	1	2500
Fitness equipment room	450	1	450
Multipurpose/media room	2000	1	2000
Classroom/meeting room	900	3	2700
Small presentation/media room	800	1	800
Small meeting/quiet room	350	2	700
<b>SPECIALTY PROGRAM SPACES</b>			<b>4300</b>
Teaching kitchen (attached to café)	500	1	500
Sound studio	500	1	500
Arts/crafts/fix-it studio	800	1	800
Atrium/Lobby/café/Gathering (on two floors)	2500	1	2500
<b>COA ADMINISTRATION</b>			<b>950</b>
Director's Office	150	1	150
Ass't Director's/Social Worker's office	200	1	200
General volunteer office	100	1	100
Social Service volunteer office	100	1	100
Staff/volunteer workspace	200	1	200
Confidential waiting area	100	1	100
Health clinic	100	1	100
<b>PRD ADMINISTRATION</b>			<b>830</b>
Director's office	180	1	180
Open office/workspace/reception	500	1	500
Conference	150	1	150
<b>STORAGE/MECHANICAL BATHROOMS</b>			<b>2900</b>
Movement/fitness dedicated storage	300	1	300
COA medical equipment storage	200	1	200
COA other storage	500	1	500
PRD other storage	500	1	500
Mechanical/Electrical/Tel-data/Sprinkler	800	1	800
Bathrooms	600	1	600
<b>TOTAL NET SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>			<b>18,130</b>
Grossing Factor (wall thickness, circulation, Closets, etc) @20%			3626
<b>TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE</b>			<b>21,756</b>

The above program has been graphically illustrated at the end of Section 8 of this report, in connection with the Hartwell complex site analysis.

## 6 OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE TOWN-OWNED SITES CONSIDERED

As noted earlier, the CCSC was charged by the Board of Selectmen with evaluating five different options utilizing different town-owned properties to meet the needs of the COA, the PRD, and other community organizations. These specific options had been previously generated through discussion with Town residents during the 2013 State of the Town Meeting and the work of the 2012 Community Center Feasibility Committee.

Four of the sites were considered for Community Centers that could include the Council on Aging and other community organizations, but not Parks & Recreation because PRD should ideally remain at Ballfield Road for programming reasons and direct access to the fields and other athletic facilities. Only the Hartwell complex site at Ballfield Road was considered for a Community Center that could accommodate all of the user groups.

The results of these evaluations, and the information provided for each site below, were presented in detail to Lincoln residents at the fall 2014 State of the Town Meeting. At the conclusion of the presentation, residents participated in a sticker survey and the results are shown here. Each resident was given two stickers with which to express their preference or preferences for the site of a new Community Center in town. An estimated 350 residents attended that meeting.

	Bemis Hall	Pierce House	Hartwell/Ballfield Road	Commuter Lot/Lincoln Station	DPW/Lewis Street
Preference Stickers	25	5	354	33	14



Each of the five sites is described below, along with concept level options. The estimated cost range of constructing a new Community Center on that site, or renovating the existing building, has been provided by the CCSC's consultants Abacus Architects & Planners.



### A. Bemis Hall

Bemis Hall currently houses the Council on Aging, provides meeting space for many community activities, and storage space for several community organizations in the basement including the Library Book Sale, the Lincoln Historical Society, Minutemen and PRD. In order to adequately meet the needs of the COA, the building would require renovation, significant expansion and improved drop-off and parking.

The site presents significant challenges in relation to the historic building, historic landscape, location in the Lincoln Historic District, open space use of the town green, and traffic and pedestrian safety.

The concept design would renovate the basement level and expand it to approximately double the size by extending it to the south along Bedford Road. This basement level addition would gradually emerge from the grassy park slope so that it would be directly accessible for both drop-off and a new fully handicapped-accessible main entrance for the COA. The at-grade landscape would be carried onto the roof of the addition.

The main level of Bemis Hall would also be renovated with an emphasis on historic restoration. A new drop-off drive would be provided and parking would be configured along the adjacent sides of Bedford Road and Old Lexington Road so that visitors would not have to cross traffic.

The cost of these improvements at Bemis Hall is estimated at \$5.5-\$6 million. In addition, since the PRD would have to remain in its location at Hartwell, the cost to renovate A, B and C Pods at the Hartwell complex is estimated to be between \$2 million for deferred maintenance/code compliance and \$4.5 million for a full renovation of the three buildings.

Cost range: \$7.5 - \$10.5 million.



## B. The Pierce House

The Pierce House would require renovation for code compliance along with significant expansion to meet the needs of the COA.

The site presents significant challenges related to the historic building, its location in the Lincoln Historic District, the historic landscape and view shed, and wetlands on three sides of the building. In addition, the building is extensively used as a function facility – both by the Town and external rental – and any Community Center use would have to be coordinated with those functions.

Two options were prepared for Pierce House – a renovation/addition and a free-standing Community Center building. In both cases, the PRD is assumed to stay at its present Hartwell location and these options are for the COA and other community groups alone.

In the renovation/addition option, a two-story 6,000 square foot addition is proposed on the back of the Pierce House including a handicapped- accessible drop-off entry and nearby accessible parking. The addition would include offices and a large function room, bathrooms, stairway and an elevator that would make both the addition and the Pierce House wheelchair accessible on two floors. With renovations to the Pierce House itself and site improvements, including a new parking lot, the project would cost \$6 - \$6.5 million not including renovation work at the Hartwell complex for the PRD.

Cost range: \$8 - \$11 million.



A second option was investigated where a separate 10,000 square foot Community Center building would be constructed elsewhere on the site. This option would require further investigation to find a feasible location behind the Pierce House that would be permitted by the Conservation Commission in relation to wetlands constraints. It could be equally challenging to find a location in front of the Pierce House that would be allowed for the same reasons or acceptable to the community because of historic considerations. This approach, because it would not alter the Pierce House, has a lower estimated cost of \$5 - \$5.5 million. Again, it would only serve the COA and other community groups.

Cost range: \$7 - \$10 million.



**C. The Hartwell Complex**

The Hartwell complex at the schools on Ballfield Road includes four buildings, extensive outdoor play areas and a large parking lot. The Hartwell main building now houses the Lincoln School Administration, the Lincoln Preschool and the Magic Garden Preschool. Hartwell Pod A houses the PRD, Pod B houses the Lincoln school and town maintenance shops, and Pod C houses the privately funded LEAP after-school program.

Because of PRD’s programmatic connections and needs, the Hartwell complex area provides the best opportunity to address the needs of all user groups associated with this study.

Site constraints include wetlands and the need for additional parking to accommodate a joint COA and PRD facility.

Three conceptual approaches were prepared for Hartwell to demonstrate the opportunities available at the site. Each illustrates a 20,000 square foot two-story facility<sup>12</sup> with additional parking:

A new free-standing Community Center could be placed close to Ballfield Road, providing short walking distances to the schools and a strong link to the greater community campus. Parking behind the building would be screened from view. A disadvantage of this approach is that outdoor play areas are distanced from the school and placed beyond traffic and parking facilities.

<sup>12</sup> As noted elsewhere in this report, and after discussions with the schools, the COA and PRD estimate the need for closer to 22,000 square feet of space in a co-located facility.



Building more on the center of the site, a two-story addition to Hartwell School would provide a compact footprint and the opportunity for a shared elevator and other facilities. The larger combined total building footprint might also allow for additional future flexibility.

A new building on the east side of the site close to Lincoln Road could be built into the slope so that both levels could be roll-in accessible directly on grade with seniors more centered on the upper floor and kids' programs closer to LEAP and the schools.

A new driveway entrance off of Lincoln Road could be added to serve both the community center and potentially the entire Ballfield Road complex.

The cost of these proposed options at the Hartwell Complex is estimated at \$9.5-\$13.5 million. Extensive renovations to the Pods would not be necessary and therefore are not included in the final cost range.

Cost range: \$9.5- \$13.5 million.



#### D. Lincoln Station Commuter Lot

The Lincoln Station MBTA commuter rail parking lot owned by the Town currently provides 99 spaces adjacent to the train platform. It is also adjacent to, and reached by a right-of-way across, the privately-owned parking lot for Donelan's and other businesses. The commuter parking lot provides an emergency vehicle right-of-way connecting through residential Lincoln Woods.

A 10,000 square foot single-story Community Center, which could not include the PRD because of its location, is proposed for the south end of the site. This would leave approximately 50 parking spaces - slightly less than the 60 required for COA's programming.

It would also eliminate half of the parking spaces now available for commuter rail passengers. If the commuter parking were to be replaced on site, it could be configured in an underground facility (above-ground is difficult because of the need for headroom clearance for fire apparatus).

The cost of a new Community Center at Lincoln Station is estimated at \$4.5-\$5.0 million, not including the cost to renovate the pods for the PRD. Optional underground parking would add \$4.5-\$5.0 million to the project cost.

Cost range: \$11.0- \$14.5 million.



### E. Department of Public Works Site

The current Lincoln Department of Public Works (“DPW”) site on Lewis Street, at approximately 3.5 acres, is ample for a new Community Center but would require the relocation and construction of a new DPW facility elsewhere in town. That site could not provide facilities for the PRD because of its location away from the fields and other facilities used by the PRD for its programming.

A 10,000 square foot Community Center and associated landscape and parking would occupy about half the site. The remaining parcel would be available to the town for another use, or could be sold to offset project cost.

Constraints include the unknown related to both environmental remediation at the site and the challenge associated with finding and permitting an alternate site for the DPW.

The cost of a new Community Center on the DPW site for the COA and other community groups is estimated at \$6.0-\$6.5 million, not including the cost to renovate the Hartwell pods for the PRD and any additional unknown costs to clean up the site. The relocation of the DPW is estimated to cost an additional \$5.0-\$7.0 million. The sale of half of the site is estimated to generate \$1.5-\$2.0 million.

Cost range: \$11.0- \$16.5 million.

**Community Center Site Options: Cost Comparison of Preliminary Concepts**

	Bemis Hall Expansion	Pierce House Addition	Pierce House Separate	Hartwell Combined Facilities	Lincoln Station	DPW - Lewis Street
Base Cost	\$5.5 - 6.0	\$6.0 - 6.5	\$5.0 - 5.5	\$9.5 - 13.5	\$4.5 - 5.0	\$6.0 - 6.5
Renovate Pods	\$2.0 - 4.5	\$2.0 - 4.5	\$2.0 - 4.5		\$2.0 - 4.5	\$2.0 - 4.5
Underground Parking					\$4.5 - 5.0	
Relocate DPW						\$5.0 - 7.0
Residual Land Value						(\$1.5 - 2.0)
<b>Total Project Cost</b>	<b>\$7.5 - 10.5 mil.</b>	<b>\$8.0 - 11.0 mil.</b>	<b>\$7.0 - 10.0 mil.</b>	<b>\$9.5 - 13.5 mil.</b>	<b>\$11.0 - 14.5 mil.</b>	<b>\$11.0 - 16.5 mil.</b>

**A. Types of Outreach**

In order to fulfill its charge the CCSC, in its outreach, worked to solicit response from the widest possible range of ages and facilities users in Lincoln. The means used to alert residents to CCSC activities and information are listed below.

- Website - Creation of a robust website link on the Town website, updating at least weekly with meeting information and materials, minutes of meetings, links to press releases, general information/updates and publication of town outreach activities.
- Public Comment – Public attendance at our meetings was routine and typically included appointed liaisons to the CCSC from both the LPTO, the K-8 School Committee, and Lincoln residents. We also had representatives of the SBAC, the Planning Board and FOMA join us occasionally.
- CCSC meeting locations – Meetings were held in Bemis Hall, Town Offices, and at the Hartwell complex to allow the CCSC and the public in attendance to more clearly understand the current function and spatial needs for the COA and PRD in particular as well as other town user groups of each facility. Tours of other community centers, Hartwell and Bemis were offered as part of the meeting agendas during the fall.
- Periodic Press Releases – Sent to the Lincoln Journal, The Lincoln Squirrel, and the Lincoln School PTO Minilink.
- Direct Mail and Online Communication – Postcards were sent to all households as an invitation to the Town to attend our Charrette in October. Online communication and direct mailing were also utilized by the CCSA via the COA's inclusion of articles and inserts in its town-wide monthly newsletter and the PRD's use of its online listserve, as well as by the Selectmen in their town-wide newsletters and publications regarding the fall State of the Town Meeting.
- Banners and Sign-boards – Were placed over Lincoln Road, on Ballfield Road, at the Five Corners, and at Lincoln Station.
- Town-wide planning Charrette – Held on Wednesday, October 8, as explained in the following pages.
- Small Group Gatherings – The CCSC hosted two additional gatherings, facilitated by the COA on October 17 at Bemis, and by the LPTO on November 14 at Donaldson

Auditorium. Each event had over 50 citizens in attendance representing a significant cross-section of ages and stages in Lincoln.

- State of the Town Meeting - Held on Saturday, November 15 in the Donaldson Auditorium, as explained in the following pages.
- Ongoing CCSC meetings, along with communication and planned future discussion with the SBAC and appropriate Town committees/boards – COA/PRD representatives on the CCSC, together with the COA and PRD Directors, are working with on-campus stakeholders, particularly with the SBAC and school administration to ensure that information and conversation is considerate of the SBAC process and requirements of other organizations and groups such as Magic Garden, Lincoln Preschool and LEAP. The CCSC will also work to communicate in a timely basis procedurally with all necessary agencies (Planning, Conservation, Traffic, etc.) to facilitate moving the project forward should that be the will of the Town.
- List of Impacted Community Groups – Fully listed in the Appendix, each group was invited to attend a CCSC meeting on Friday, January 9, 2015, to offer an account of their space, storage and frequency of use needs. Seven organizations, the Minutemen, LEAP, Historic Committee, Garden Club, Lincoln Family Association, Lincoln PTO, Lincoln Republican Town Committee and Lincoln Preschool, joined the meeting and offered feedback about their current circumstances and suggestions of how a Community Center might better serve their needs.
- Town-wide Survey Results – This is explained below.

## **B. Town-Wide Planning Charrette**

On the evening of Wednesday, October 8, in Pod B of the Hartwell campus, the CCSC held a town-wide planning Charrette workshop. The purpose of the Charrette was to elicit residents' views on what form a Community Center might take in Lincoln and where, if desired, a Community Center might be located.

In preparation for the Charrette the CCSC's consultants, Abacus Architects & Planners, prepared satellite images, drawings, and topographically accurate images of the five selected town-owned sites. Building blocks in various sizes and shapes were provided for participants to simulate a Community Center of various sizes on any site they chose. The Charrette was well publicized, with articles in the *Lincoln Journal*, in the *Squirrel*, the Lincoln School MiniLink, signage around town and a town-wide postcard mailing.

The Charrette workshop consisted of three parts:

1. An overview of the CCSC's charge, a discussion of current programming and needs going forward for the COA and the PRD, a listing of community groups that utilize current COA and PRD facilities and presentation of the five sites included in the charge.
2. Small group discussions of what a Community Center might include, each of which included a member of the CCSC taking notes and reporting back to the larger group in attendance at the conclusion of this part. A survey was distributed for participants to fill in after their discussions. Survey questions<sup>13</sup> allowed participants to rank options for inclusion in a potential Community Center, designate a site they saw as optimal, and offer comments if desired.
3. Manipulation of models with building blocks representing potential Community Center components. Participants could "build" a Community Center, with related parking and playgrounds, on the five sites, allowing them to try out possible placements and view site limitations.

Satellite images of the five sites and related buildings were displayed on the walls prior to starting. Additional satellite images, with movable models of existing buildings, were set up on tables for the second activity.

The Charrette was well attended, with more than 120 Lincoln residents actively participating for the entire evening.

Information and feedback gleaned from that workshop on October 8 was then used by the CCSC and its architects to present the most viable options and elicit discussion at the 2014 State of the Town Meeting on November 15.

Paper surveys were distributed to everyone in attendance. Online surveys were made available after the conclusion of the Charrette.

The satellite images and models were then moved to the Town Offices, where they remained on display until after the State of the Town Meeting.

The presentations were recorded and can be accessed on the CCSC page of the Town web site.

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13 That survey and survey results are included in the Appendix to this report.

**C. Survey & Results**

In the course of gathering as many views as possible from Lincoln residents regarding a Community Center, the CCSC created a survey to solicit input from the entire Lincoln community. That survey posed three questions:

- Do you support the creation of a new community center in Lincoln?
- Rank each of the six options on a scale of 1 – 6.
- What elements or amenities would you like to see included in a Community Center? (16 items were listed)

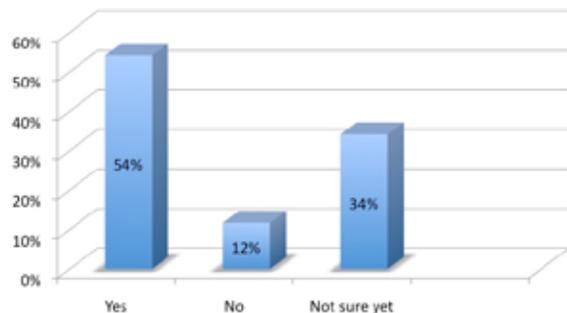
Each of the questions and options also had a space for comments. (See Appendix).

That survey was available both on paper and online from October 8 through November 9, 2014. The CCSC created the questions and the format. Paper copies were handed out at all public events; the online version was publicized on the Community Center web site, and in other forms of communication.

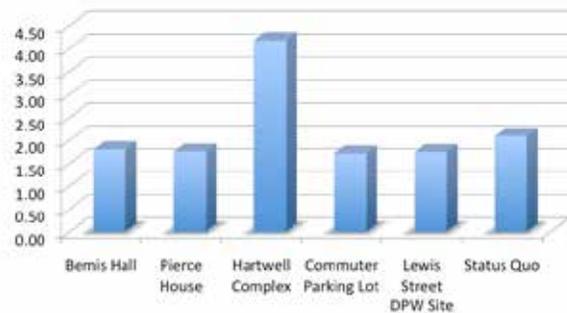
The online version was restricted to one response from a single source. All paper responses, including comments, were manually entered into the online version so that results could be summarized.

The CCSC then complied and presented the results at the State of the Town Meeting on November 15, as follows:

**Do you support the creation of a new community center in Lincoln?**



**Average Rankings**



The complete survey and the data results from the survey appear in the Appendix to this report.

## D. State of the Town Meeting

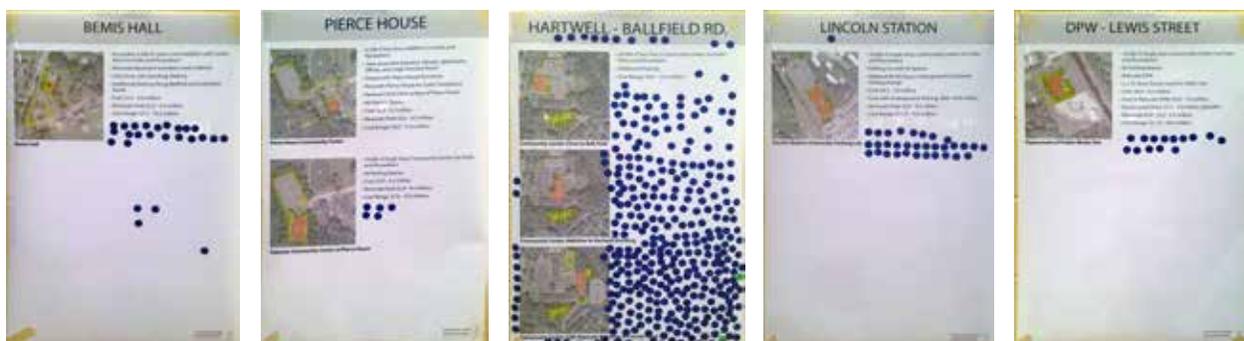
On Saturday, November 15, 2014, the annual Lincoln State of the Town Meeting (“SOTT”) was held. An estimated 350 residents were in attendance with, as at our Charrette, a wide demographic range represented.

The two main topics of discussion were updates on the Community Center study and the School building project. The presentations, conversations and outreach prior to the SOTT were summarized by members of the CCSC, and included:

- a presentation of options and reports from the COA and the PRD about their facilities, needs and programs
- results from the CCSC surveys taken following the October town-wide Charrette, other presentations, and online
- other information gathered from residents at the CCSC presentations held at the COA and PTO earlier in the fall
- visual illustrations and descriptions of peer town Community Centers

Following the formal presentations, time was made available for further comment and questions from residents. A great deal of support was voiced for a Community Center in Lincoln generally. At the conclusion of the SOTT meeting, residents were invited to express their preferred location for a new Community Center through a sticker survey. Five large posters were exhibited on the wall of the auditorium, each showing one of the five town-owned locations included in the study. Each poster had an image and description of the location, with cost range estimates to build or renovate there. Stickers were offered to each attendee to indicate their first and second choice, or the two stickers could be applied to a single choice.

The outcome of the sticker poll reinforced further the discussions of that morning as well as the prior outreach events, including the survey discussed above, concluding that the Hartwell complex was by far the first choice of Lincoln residents for the most suitable location to site a new Community Center. The sticker results are shown in the following photographs taken at the conclusion of the State of the Town Meeting.



### A. Hartwell Complex Existing Conditions



#### (1) Description of Site and Current Use

The Hartwell complex is made up of four buildings and numerous outdoor play spaces arrayed around a heavily used parking lot. Hartwell Main, the oldest school building at Ballfield Road, now houses the School Department's offices as well as the Lincoln Preschool and the Magic Garden Preschool. The three "pods," originally built as temporary classroom buildings more than 50 years ago, house the PRD in A Pod, the school/town maintenance facility in B Pod, and the Lincoln Extended-Day Activities Program (LEAP) in C Pod. Remaining spaces in the buildings are heavily used for a broad range of programming as well as the Lincoln Summer Camp.



The Hartwell complex site utilization thus consists of traffic and parking, school and town building uses, and numerous outdoor active play areas. All of these are surrounded by wide areas of passive use woodland and wetland.

## (2) Existing Site Topography

The topography at Hartwell is characterized by three distinct conditions: the perennial stream bed at the west and north edges of the site, the relatively flat center of the site occupied by parking, the pods and the outdoor play spaces, and the wooded eastern half of the site with steeper slopes. The extent of subsurface ledge on the site is unknown.



### (3) Wetland Constraints

The perennial stream running along the north and west edges of the site and dividing it from Ballfield Road and the school is a significant feature. Existing development on the site including all four buildings and the drives and parking encroach into the 200-foot riverway protection zone, the 100 foot wetland buffer, and (in the case of the parking lot) the 50 foot buffer. New development would need to address these issues through mitigation and construction away from the buffers.



## B. Concept Plans for a Community Center Location Within the Hartwell Complex

Three location concept plans for a Community Center located within the Hartwell complex were also prepared and presented to Lincoln residents at the 2014 State of the Town Meeting. The third location option – a freestanding building at the rear of the Hartwell complex – was preferred by residents overall per the sticker survey at that meeting, a view consistent with that voiced during earlier meetings of and presentations by the CCSC. That option is described below, as well as several other more refined design incarnations for that rear location site as shown in sub-section (C) below.

### (1) Location Option 1: A Free-Standing Community Center Close to the Center Field

A freestanding Community Center closest to Ballfield Road activates the streetscape, screens the parking from view, links to the school campus and allows short walking distance to the school. However, the parking behind the building separates outdoor play from both the Community Center and the schools, and places it on the other side of moving cars in the lots and on the driveways.



## (2) Location Option 2: Community Center Addition to the Hartwell Main Building

An addition to the Hartwell School would provide the benefits of elevator access to the existing facility and maximum programming flexibility within the total combined footprint. Preschool children could access Community Center spaces without going outside in rain or winter. This efficient land use would leave the greatest land area available for other purposes including active play, parking or passive woodland.



### (3) (Preferred) Location Option 3: Freestanding Community Center at the Rear of the Hartwell Complex with a Separate Entrance off Lincoln Road

A freestanding Community Center built into the slope at the eastern side of the Hartwell area would allow the retention of all of the existing outdoor active play areas and all three pods. The pods could be left in service or used again as temporary classrooms during the school improvement project. The COA and other adult-oriented programming could have direct on-grade access from the upper level, while the PRD and more school-oriented programming would benefit from direct on-grade access to the lower level and the central outdoor play area.



### C. More Refined Options for a Community Center at the Rear of the Hartwell Complex

As noted above, Lincoln residents appear to prefer a freestanding Community Center at the rear of the Hartwell complex. The following site options for that concept therefore follow. A new entry from Lincoln Road would allow access to both the Community Center and the two preschools on the upper level of the Hartwell main building through several possible site plan designs. Those designs, along with their pros and cons, are described in the sub-sections below, with a strong CCSC preference for the last option.

#### (1) Additional Site Access from Lincoln Road

Significant interest has been expressed in the possibility of opening up a second vehicular access road into the community/school campus in order to relieve congestion, increase convenience and facilitate public safety. A final report by the town's consulting traffic engineers indicates that a new curb cut could safely be made off Lincoln Road at the southern end of the Hartwell complex property line, which could then be used to direct traffic directly to the new Community Center location and away from Ballfield Road. The report from those



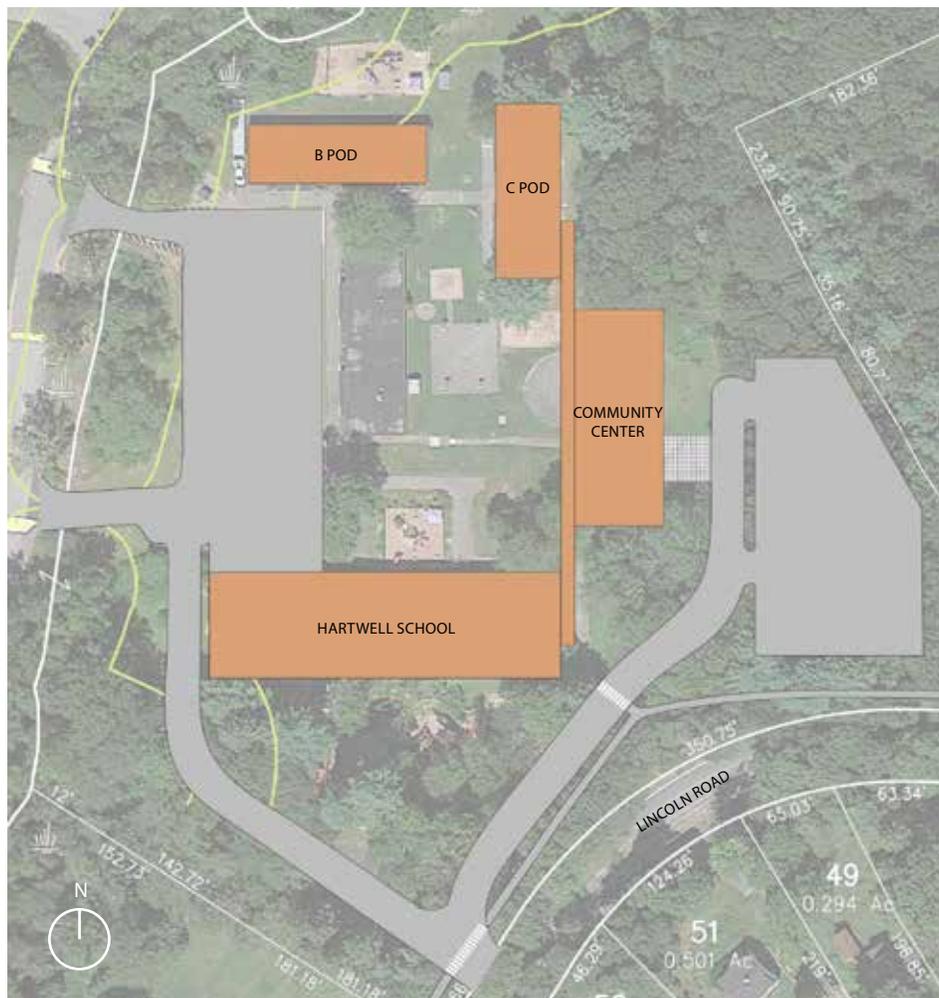
engineers proposed two alternative site plans for an access road, as well as traffic calming measures which the Selectmen could employ to enhance safety there.<sup>14</sup> The Selectmen determine the feasibility of and approve curb cuts on public roads in town.

This new entrance could therefore serve the Community Center, associated (new) parking for it, and could also assist with traffic to and from the preschools. There are three possible routes to connect this new entrance through to Ballfield Road: south of Hartwell, between Hartwell and the Community Center, and north of the Community Center and the Hartwell pods.

<sup>14</sup> That engineering report is included in the Appendix to this report.

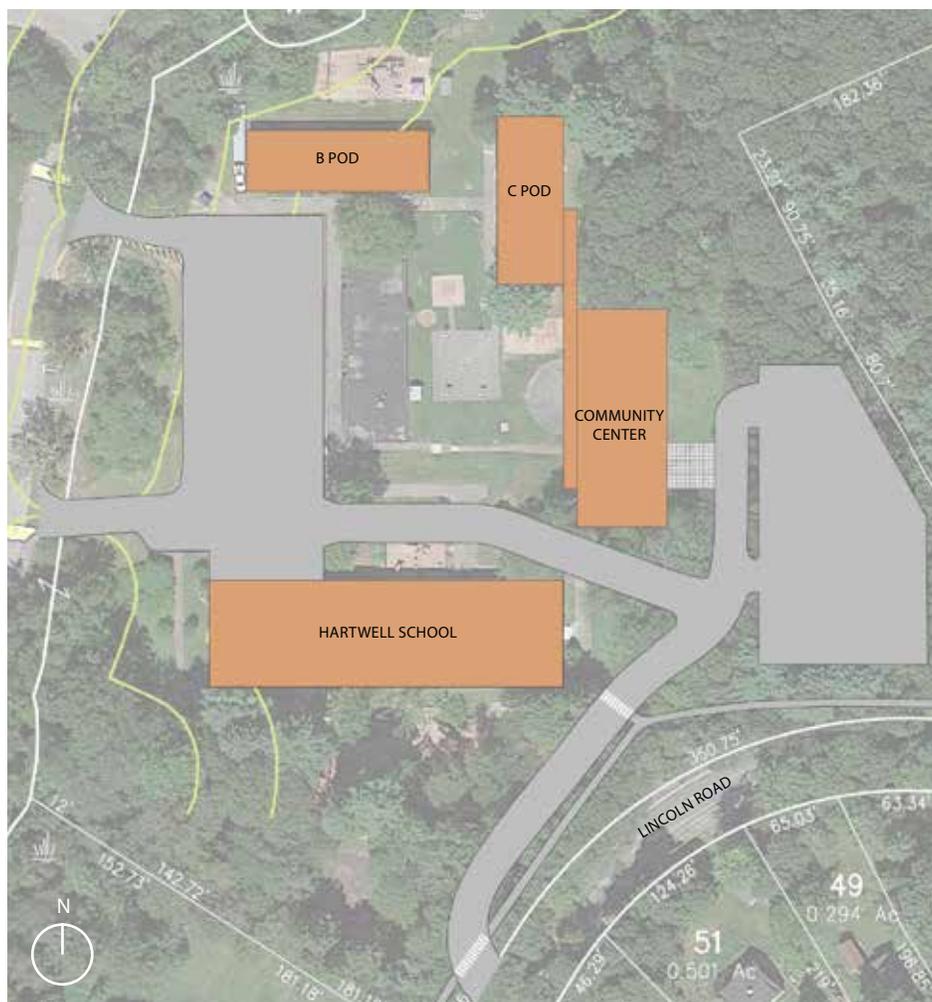
## (2) Community Center with South Access Road

The new curb cut at Lincoln Road could connect directly to the existing Hartwell parking lot by looping south of the former location of Strat's Place and the Hartwell School Building. This connection would be very direct, but would have a significant wetlands impact. An additional driveway would connect to the new Community Center parking as shown.



### (3) Community Center with Center Access Road

The next alternative would be to connect the new site entrance to the existing Hartwell parking lot with a road along the north side of the Hartwell School building. This option is direct and avoids wetlands impact, but presents two concerns: it would be steeply graded and it would place traffic between the pre-schools and the Community Center.



#### (4) Community Center with North Access Road Inside B Pod; Remove C Pod

Three options are presented which loop the access road around the north end of the Community Center. The most direct route would connect directly to the existing stream crossing at the north end of the Hartwell parking lot. This option would require the removal of C Pod.



**(5) Community Center with North Access Road Around C Pod; Remove B Pod**

The next option again connects to the existing Hartwell parking lot by looping around C Pod and following a path across the current B Pod site. This plan would necessitate the removal of B Pod.



**(6) (Preferred Plan) Community Center with North Access Road around B and C Pods:  
“Cars on the Outside, Community on the Inside”**

The final option creates an access road looping north to a new stream crossing, which would then align directly with the section of Ballfield Road that runs east to west in front of the school. This has the advantage of keeping all the current Hartwell buildings while simplifying and clarifying overall site circulation at the complex. Any or all of the pods could be removed later at the discretion of the Town, or kept and renovated as needed. This plan preferred over all others by the CCSC, creates the feel of a campus-within-a-campus. It provides for safer pedestrian passage through the site, safer and more efficient vehicular passage around it, and safer and more contained play areas within its protected center.



The new stream crossing would involve significant wetlands impact. Therefore, removal of the existing crossing at the north end of the Hartwell parking lot in substitution would be proposed as a wetlands mitigation measure.

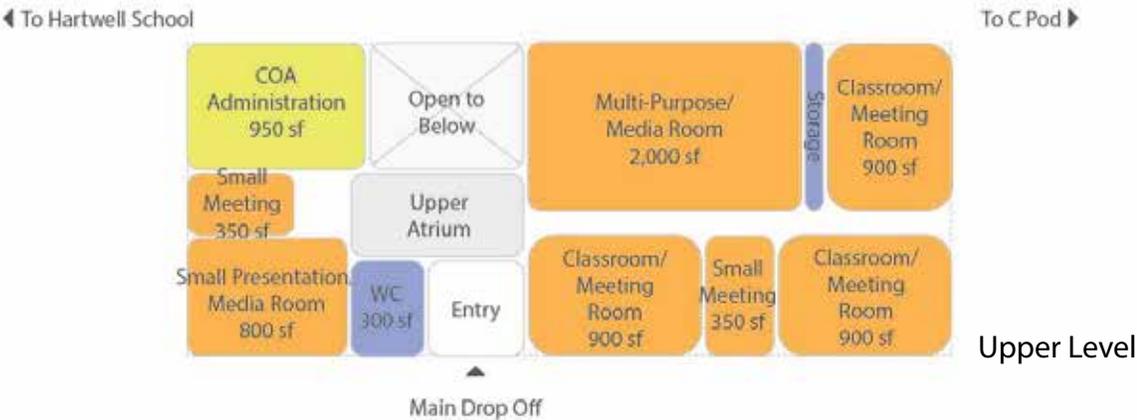
A new entrance and loop road off Lincoln Road which connects down to Ballfield Road from the north side of B Pod would allow traffic and parking to be organized away from children and other community members, including seniors, who could then freely and safely move through the buildings and active walk and play spaces without crossing vehicular pathways. An outdoor covered walkway linking the main Hartwell building, the Community Center and C Pod, would provide open-air cover while also allowing free movement between all buildings and landscape areas.



D. The Community Center’s Interior Program Organizational Diagram

A preliminary organizational diagram for Community Center interior space has been developed. This diagram represents the actual space needed under the refined program analysis developed for the COA, the PRD and other town groups and organizations provided in Section 5 of this report, as that space might be organized in a two story, 22,000 square foot building at the preferred Hartwell complex location.

- A two-story atrium at the center of the building connects entrances at the upper and lower levels and brings all Community Center users together.
- COA offices, meeting rooms and classrooms are organized on the upper level with the large multi-purpose/media room overlooking the outdoor active play areas.
- PRD offices, fitness and “lab” type spaces (teaching kitchen, arts/crafts fix-it studio and sound studio) are organized on the lower level with the large movement space (sub-dividable into three rooms) opening onto the outdoor active play areas.



Upper Level



Lower Level

**A. Coordination To Date***Committee Liaisons*

A representative of the CCSC has been a regular attendee at the meetings of the SBAC. The Lincoln Parent Teacher Organization and the K-8 School Committee have had representatives in attendance at most of the CCSC's own meetings, both of whom have participated actively in discussions.

*State of the Town & Follow-up Meetings*

The CCSC and the School Building Advisory Committee ("SBAC") worked with the Selectmen to develop the agenda and presentations for the fall 2015 SOTT Meeting. Both groups received town residents' input on their projects and heard the general view articulated that the two potential building projects should be integrated to the extent feasible.

Following that town-wide meeting, representatives of the CCSC reached out to and met with the chairs of the School Committee and the SBAC. The CCSC chair proposed a coordinated, cost-saving approach for construction: namely, that the Town build the new Community Center at the Hartwell complex first, so that facilities in that complex (Community Center/ Pods) could then be available to the schools for temporary classroom or other "swing" space during its own construction/renovation project and thus avoid expensive temporary classroom trailer rentals. Representatives from both groups have met several times since the SOTT Meeting to share impressions and consider possible next steps.

*Program Planning Meetings Between COA, PRD & Schools*

Since the SOTT Meeting, other members of the CCSC have also met with the school superintendent and business manager to identify potential school uses within new Community Center space, as well as general Lincoln community use of school spaces. The CCSC has learned that the schools would make use of a new fitness space in a Community Center which contained exercise equipment for their middle school "Wellness" program. An Arts/Crafts/Fix-It shop might also be used by school personnel with particular talents and skills for education extension programs, as would a teaching kitchen. The schools have sound equipment in an 8th grade science classroom, but would utilize a more fully equipped sound studio if that were to be included in a Community Center.

## **B. Opportunities for Continued Coordination**

The Board of Selectmen (“BOS”) and the K-8 School Committee (“SC”) are considering the joint sponsorship of a warrant article for the upcoming 2015 Town Meeting which would seek consultant funding to help develop a master plan for the School/Community campus. Such a plan is supported by the CCSC.

That master plan, which could be overseen by representatives appointed by the BOS and SC and retained consultants, should include a close examination of traffic, safety, site accessibility, parking, septic, wetlands and building locations. The resulting investigation could generate the data and planning perspectives necessary for an efficient coordination of both building/renovation projects.

Additionally, as noted above, there may be a potential for significant financial savings to Lincoln taxpayers if a Community Center is built before a school building/renovation begins. That new building on the same “community campus” could provide activity space for school activities, a temporary lunchroom, or some classroom space while a school project is then under construction. The PRD could move out of its current location in Pod A to the Community Center, thus freeing up all of Pod A and half of Pod B for temporary classroom use so that expensive classroom trailers need not otherwise be rented by the schools.

The feasibility and cost savings of this scenario warrants further study.

## 10 POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES FOR A COMMUNITY CENTER

As discussed herein, we have developed two conceptual models for a new Community Center facility at the Hartwell complex. The first option consists of a free-standing building of approximately 22,000 square feet that would be located behind C Pod. The second option would be a 22,000 square foot addition to the Hartwell administrative building, including necessary renovations to the Hartwell administrative building. The total project cost of these options ranges from \$9.5 to \$13.5 million. It is hoped, however, that the projected cost to Lincoln taxpayers would be mitigated by obtaining some funding from other sources as discussed below.

Should the Board of Selectmen determine to bring one of these proposals forward for a vote, the main funding request would most likely take the form of a Proposition 2 ½ debt exclusion. A debt exclusion, which requires a two-thirds vote of approval by Town Meeting and a majority vote of approval at the polls, would give the Town the authority to raise taxes over and above the annual two and one-half percent limit solely for purposes of servicing the debt on bonds issued to finance the design and construction of a Community Center. The debt exclusion would be extinguished once the bonds are fully repaid.

The bonds would likely be issued for a thirty-year term so that the cost to the taxpayers would be spread out over the expected life of the facility. At current interest rates, we project that the median property tax bill would increase annually by approximately \$310 for every \$10 million of debt that the Town issues.

There are other potential funding sources available to help defray that tax impact of the project, which cannot be discounted:

- Debt Stabilization Fund - At the recommendation of the Finance Committee and Selectmen, the Town Meeting has been appropriating funds to a Debt Stabilization Fund, in anticipation of the possibility of taking on additional debt for new capital projects. The current balance in the Debt Stabilization Fund is \$2.4 million. The Finance Committee, with the assistance of the Town's Finance Director, has been evaluating various financing strategies designed to minimize the tax impact of new debt for a Community Center, School building project or other priority capital project. Appropriations from the Debt Stabilization Fund require a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting.
- Community Preservation Fund – In 2003, Lincoln voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act ("CPA") and to authorize the Town to levy a three percent surcharge on property taxes. Our CPA dollars, which are matched by the Commonwealth (at a rate that is dependent upon property deed excise collections – between

34% and 100% in Lincoln’s experience), are accounted for in a separate CPA fund. Appropriations from the CPA fund are made by majority vote of Town Meeting and are limited to certain CPA-eligible expenditure types (i.e., open space, affordable housing, historic preservation and certain recreational purposes). We have explored preliminarily the possibility of using CPA funds to help fund the recreational component of the proposed Community Center building. While this potential source should continue to be examined, the Act appears to restrict expenditures for recreational purposes to outdoor, land-based uses and facilities such as playgrounds, fields and courts. It is thus likely that, at a minimum, CPA funds could be used for the new outdoor recreation areas developed in conjunction with a Community Center. We will continue to evaluate the possibility of using CPA funds to cover certain components of the project as the plans for the Community Center evolve.

- Private Gifts & Grants – The Town of Lincoln has benefited greatly in the past from generous individual gifts and grants from charitable and community-based organizations. The Selectmen have indicated that they intend to explore private gift and grant possibilities to help defray the tax impact of this project.
- Avoided Cost Opportunity – As discussed below, the Selectmen will be working with the School Committee to determine the feasibility of constructing the Community Center to assist with needed temporary space while school buildings are under construction. The School Building Committee has estimated the cost of renting classroom trailers at between \$2 and \$3 million, which would not be necessary if a Community Center were built first to help absorb some of those temporary school needs.

**Community Center Project Cost Breakdown**

Building Construction (Hard Cost)	21,756 sf @ \$345/sf	\$7.5 million
Community Center Parking	75 spaces @ \$6,000/space	\$0.5 million
<b>Total Project Cost: Building and Parking Only</b>	<b>\$8.0 million x 1.3 (30% Soft Costs)</b>	<b>\$10.4 million</b>
Repairs at Hartwell Pods	\$0.5 million	
Additional Site Development: Loop Road, Stream Crossing, Active Play Areas and Play Structures, etc.	\$1.5 million	
<b>Total Project Cost: Throughout Hartwell Complex</b>	<b>\$10 million x 1.3 (30% Soft Costs)</b>	<b>\$13.0 million</b>

Soft costs include A/E fees, Owners Project Manager, Clerk-of-the-Works, survey and geotechnical investigation, other investigation and testing, and other administrative costs.

## 11 FINDINGS OF THE COMMUNITY CENTER STUDY COMMITTEE

The public process of the CCSC from June 2014 to January 2015 has resulted in our committee making the following key findings:

(1) The need for a new or upgraded facility for the Council on Aging is immediate. Current COA conditions at Bemis Hall are extremely poor and significantly below the standard of other towns, and result in unsafe conditions for seniors both inside and outside the building. The COA facility is inadequate in size under state-recommended requirements for senior centers, is of the wrong configuration for elderly use, is partly inaccessible for handicapped persons, and does not serve either the current or projected programming needs of Lincoln's increasing senior population.

(2) The facility needs of the Parks & Recreation Department are less urgent than those of the COA, but still significant. It is important for the PRD to be located on or contiguous to the Lincoln School campus in order to serve the school-age population and maintain convenient access to the sports fields, playgrounds, indoor play space, and Codman Pool. The PRD's administrative and programming presence in the outdated Hartwell Pod B is now at the will of the Lincoln School. A school building/renovation project would disrupt or displace the PRD there, since the pods are likely to be used for temporary classroom or other needed space during such a project.

(3) There is very strong support in Lincoln for a newly constructed, centrally located multi-generational Community Center which would both house the COA and PRD, and provide programming and facilities for community organizations and for the residents of all demographic groups in Lincoln.

(4) The overwhelmingly favored choice for a location by Lincoln residents is at the Hartwell complex, where it would help to anchor an entire "community campus" consisting of the Community Center, the Lincoln Public Schools, the Town playgrounds and playing fields, and the Codman Pool. Of the three Hartwell location options presented at the SOTT Meeting, the stickered preference of residents was for a new freestanding Community Center building at the rear of that complex.

(5) A new curb cut on Lincoln Road to serve a Community Center directly at the Hartwell complex is feasible as a matter of traffic engineering, would improve overall access and egress to the "community campus," and appears to be of interest to residents.

(6) To the extent possible, the Town should work to integrate planning for the new Community Center with a school building/renovation project for overall efficiency of use and to reduce costs to taxpayers.

**A. Proposal for a New Community Center in Lincoln**

This proposal is made by the Community Center Study Committee in accordance with its charge from the Board of Selectmen and following its intensive public investigative process and outreach to Lincoln residents.

Based on its work summarized in this report, the needs of the COA & the PRD, and the findings set forth above, the CCSC has voted unanimously to recommend to the Board of Selectmen that a new, freestanding 22,000 square foot Community Center be constructed at the rear of the Hartwell complex. The CCSC further recommends that a new curb cut be made on Lincoln Road per the final report of the town's engineer, to serve both the Community Center and to improve traffic access and egress on the campus as a whole.

The CCSC believes that Lincoln residents desire, and will be served well now and in the future by, a centrally located multigenerational Community Center which shall form the foundation for a true "community campus" in town.

**B. Proposed Development of a Master Plan for the Community Campus**

The CCSC recognizes the value inherent in performing a careful examination of Lincoln's entire central "community campus," which now encompasses the Hartwell complex with its buildings and play areas, the Smith and Brooks school buildings, the Donaldson auditorium, the gym, the Codman Pool, the tennis courts, the center field, the various playgrounds, playing fields, water lines, septic systems, and the roads and parking lots connecting them all.

It is understood that the Board of Selectmen, the School Building Advisory Committee, the K-8 School Committee, and others, are also discussing the notion of developing a master plan for this "community campus" which would look at current and projected use of the land and buildings there, as well as traffic access, egress and flow within the entire campus.

Since the CCSC believes that this should be the first step taken before design and construction of the Community Center, it has voted to recommend that the Selectmen sponsor and publicly support a warrant article at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting, and an attendant motion on the written ballot at the polls for the Monday following that Town Meeting, to request that the Town appropriate funds in the amount of \$50K, or in the amount determined to be necessary to be used in the development of a master plan for this central "community campus."

It is further recommended that a new committee to be known as the Community Campus Master Plan Committee be appointed to undertake that task, with the members to be appointed jointly by the Board of Selectmen and the K-8 School Committee. The funds appropriated should be used by that committee to retain consultant(s) as needed to assist them in their task, and a final report of the Community Campus Master Plan Committee should be presented to the 2016 Town Meeting.

### **C. Proposed Timelines for Appropriations: Community Center Design & Construction**

#### **(1) Appropriation for Design (2015 Town Meeting)**

The CCSC recommends that the Selectmen sponsor and publicly support a warrant article at the 2015 Annual Town Meeting, and an attendant motion on the written ballot at the polls for the Monday following that Town Meeting, to request that the Town vote to appropriate funds in the amount of \$2M to be used in the development of design plans for a new freestanding 22,000 sq. ft. Community Center to be located at the rear of the Hartwell complex, and for associated administrative costs.

The reason to seek appropriation of design funds at the 2015 Town Meeting is a practical one for three reasons:

- (1) First, a “community campus” master plan is unlikely to take an entire year to complete. If it does not take the entire year, there will be unnecessary delay imposed by asking the Town to wait until the 2016 Town Meeting to start even the design process for a new Community Center. The alternative to waiting is, of course, for the Selectmen to call a Special Town Meeting in the fall for that purpose. Special Town Meetings are both costly to taxpayers and inconvenient and, historically, have not resulted in the same high attendance numbers and consequent resident representation as do the Annual Town Meetings in March;
- (2) Second, if a Community Center is to be helpful in assisting the schools with their space needs during a construction/renovation project of their own -- in a true integration of the two projects as articulated by Town residents in public forums -- that building must be built and ready to be occupied well before the schools start their own construction.
- (3) Third, completed design plans for a Community Center will inform the construction costs for that new building, in preparation for the 2016 Town Meeting.

The actual release of the appropriated Community Center design funds should follow the completion of the master plan for the “community campus” described above, as well as the public bid and selection process required to choose and retain an architectural firm to create the Community Center design.

## (2) Appropriation for Construction (2016 Town Meeting)

Finally, the CCSC recommends that the Selectmen sponsor and publicly support a warrant article at the 2016 Annual Town Meeting, and an attendant motion on the written ballot at the polls for the Monday following that Town Meeting, to request that the Town vote to appropriate funds in an amount to be determined to to be used for the construction of the Community Center.

The CCSC further recommends that, at the 2016 Town Meeting, the Selectmen present design plans for the Community Center in accordance with the prior year's appropriation. The Town's residents will certainly appreciate seeing concrete proposed plans over an abstract concept, and having those designs developed fully beforehand will inform the projected costs of construction.

## (3) Conclusion

Under these proposed timelines, the construction of a Community Center for all residents in Lincoln would likely be completed as early as 2017 and as late as 2018, and the integrated vision of a true "community campus" in our town can finally be realized.

Respectfully submitted,

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Tim Higgins

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Penny Billings, Chair

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Renel Fredriksen

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Carolyn Bottum

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Nancy Marshall

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Doug Carson

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Dan Pereira

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Steve Gladstone

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Dilla Tingley



## APPENDIX

A.	Selectmen's Charge to the Community Center Study Committee	A1
B.	List of Lincoln Organizations Which Use Bemis Hall & Hartwell Pods	A4
C.	CCSC Public Outreach	A5
	• Press releases	A5
	• Town- Wide Mailings	A9
	• Website Home Page	A10
	• Town-Wide Survey	A14
	• Town-Wide Survey Results	A17
D.	Traffic Engineer's Report	A20
E.	Sample Weekly Calendar of Activities	A38

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- Minutes of the Community Center Study Committee Committee  
<http://www.lincolntown.org/AgendaCenter/Community-Center-Study-Committee-33>
- 2014 State of the Town Meeting: Power Point Presentation of the Community Center Study Committee

