

# SELECT BOARD NEWS

The newsletter of the Lincoln, Massachusetts Select Board

**Annual Town Meeting: Saturday, March 23 @ 9:30am (sharp!)**

Donaldson Auditorium/Todd Lecture Hall, Reed Gym, & Learning Commons @ the Lincoln School

Go to [www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com](http://www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com) for documents and info!

**Annual Town Election: Monday, March 25 @ 7:30am - 8:00pm**

Voting in the Reed Gym @ the Lincoln School

## *From the Moderator*

As a community we will gather on **Saturday, March 23, 2024** for our Annual Town Meeting. For all of us this is a long anticipated meeting of our town legislative body where we can express our opinions and listen to those of others. We have a lot to talk about and decide. I urge you to arrive early - **doors open at 8:00 am.**

**The meeting will begin promptly at 9:30 am at the Lincoln Schools.** We are doing what we can to be as efficient as possible with all aspects of this meeting.

The **Zoning By-law for the mall area** and **the Community Center** will be considered early in the meeting. We will then move into routine matters several of which are on the Consent Calendar where they may be voted on together. We will hear directly from the **Finance, Capital Planning and Community Preservation Committees.**

In the pages that follow you will see all of the articles that will come before Town Meeting. I urge you to become familiar with them so you are ready to vote on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Also, **remember to vote at the polls on Monday, March 25<sup>th</sup>.** There are contested elections and a follow up vote from Town Meeting.

**We are planning for a ½ hour lunch break. You may bring your own lunch and the Girl Scouts will be selling light refreshments.**

This is our opportunity not only to participate in direct democracy but also to reflect on its fragility. We should never take it for granted. I look forward to seeing you on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*- Sarah Cannon Holden*  
Town Moderator

## From the Select Board

As has been discussed over the past couple of years, we remain focused on four major initiatives: Housing Choice Zoning, plans to build a Community Center, development and implementation of a Climate Action Plan, and embedding the work of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism Committee (IDEA) into the daily work of the Town. Two of these, the Housing Choice Zoning and the Community Center project, are up for votes at this year’s Annual Town Meeting. We strongly encourage the community to set aside the necessary time on both Saturday, March 23rd and Monday, March 25th to participate in these important discussions and votes!

**2022 - 2024 Priorities**

			
Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, & Anti-Racism Committee	Housing Choice Act Working Group	Climate Action Plan	Community Center Building Committee

*We recognize that residents may feel that some of these votes are divisive. We, on the Board, believe in our collective ability to maintain and build community as we discuss, debate, and even disagree. We all share a love of this town and a commitment to its future!*

Another article we will vote on at Town Meeting is whether to purchase and then use electronic voting devices at future Town Meetings. This is an interesting philosophical discussion, which is outlined below.

Each of us is honored to serve you as members of the Select Board. We look forward to seeing you at Town Meeting! – *Jim, Kim, and Jennifer*

### ARTICLE # 6 ELECTRONIC VOTING DEVICES – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE

About 80 towns have adopted the use of electronic voting devices for Town Meetings. This year, Article 6 would fund the purchase of “clickers” for their use at future Town Meetings. Doing so could also require a future change to our bylaws, and there are several considerations in going this route. For example: We would need to decide if the clickers are used for all votes or only those that are unclear from a voice vote; Town Meeting is Lincoln’s legislative body, and generally legislators are required to have their votes on record. Would we keep a record of how each clicker votes or make voting anonymous?

At Town Meeting we will vote on the funding for the equipment. If residents vote to purchase the clickers, the Town Moderator will lead a public process beginning later this spring to determine how and when they will be used.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO SERVE ON A TOWN BOARD OR COMMITTEE?**

There are so many ways to be involved in the life of our community! Whether your interest is in conservation and trail management, celebrations, finance, planning, housing, or being a driver for the Council on Aging & Human Services, we welcome your help.

Use the QR code to get the town volunteer interest form or click here: <https://www.lincolntown.org/DocumentCenter/View/66/Volunteer-Sign-Up-Form-Final?bidId=>



## Article #3: Housing Choice Act Zoning – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE

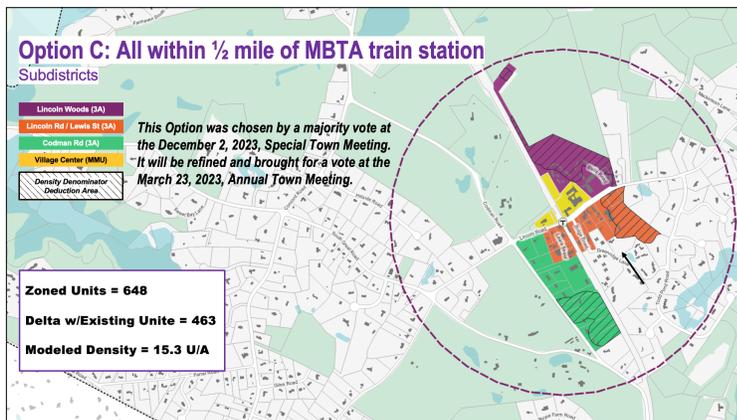
<https://www.lincolntown.org/1327/Housing-Choice-Act-Working-Group>

The MBTA Communities/Housing Choice Act is a bipartisan bill that was passed overwhelmingly in the Massachusetts Legislature and signed into law by Governor Baker in early 2021. Its purpose is to address the both the housing and climate crises by requiring MBTA communities to implement zoning that allows transit-oriented, multi-family housing by right. Implementation of the law is a top priority of Governor Healey’s administration.



In January 2022, the Select Board and the Planning Board began talking about what the Housing Choice Act would mean for Lincoln. Since then, the Housing Choice Act Working Group developed multiple iterations of zoning proposals based on community feedback. This work culminated with voters having the opportunity to choose from among 5 different options at the December 2, 2023 Special Town Meeting. Approximately 650 people voted, and 55% of voters chose “Option C” in the first round of voting via a secret ballot.

**What are we voting on?** Since the December vote, the Planning Board has, with significant input from the community, finalized the zoning bylaw that codifies the Option C Housing Choice 3A District. **We will be voting to adopt that zoning bylaw at Town Meeting.**



**What does the bylaw cover?** The bylaw lays out the maximum units/acre, height restrictions, and property line setbacks. It also covers parking requirements and the types of businesses that are or are not allowed in mixed-use (residential + commercial) subdistricts.

**Do we have any other control over what is built?** Yes! Although we will change the by right use of the properties in the District, all of Lincoln’s other bylaws and procedures remain in place. Any proposal will need to: Get an approved septic plan; adhere to the Design Guidelines and Site Plan Review process; abide by stormwater control laws; follow Lincoln’s stretch energy code and the Demolition Delay bylaw; meet affordability requirements. The bylaw requires 15% affordability at 80% Area Median Income unless the

### The Basic Requirements for Lincoln

- ➔ **Total Acres Zoned** = 64.5 (only 34 acres are “buildable” - the rest are wetlands). *Requirement* ≥ 42 acres.
- ➔ **Modeled Capacity** = 648 units (includes 125 unit “credit” for rezoning the Mall). *Requirement* ≥ 635 units
- ➔ **Modeled Density** = 15.3 units/acre. *Requirement* ≥ 15 units/acre
  - Lincoln Woods = 8 units/acre maximum
  - Codman Road = 10 units/acre maximum
  - Lincoln Road/Lewis Street = 11 units/acre maximum
  - Village Center (Mall) = 25 units/acre maximum
- ➔ **By Right** = Every piece of property has a by right use. It tells an owner how they can use their property without needing a special permit or a town meeting vote (most of Lincoln is zoned as R1 = single-family home)

state determines in writing that 15% is not feasible, and then 10% shall be required.

**Use the QR code or the link above to the website to get answers to many FAQs!**

**Article #4: Community Center Bond Vote – 2/3 MAJORITY VOTE AND MAJORITY VOTE AT THE MARCH 25TH BALLOT.**



Continued refinement of floor designs, massing and site development are among many of the project pieces that have progressed since our December Special Town Meeting.

The Community Center Building Committee (CCBC) has also continued to seek community feedback via forums and attended many public meetings with our Town Boards and Committees, including Historical, Finance and the Select Board, to ensure they are coordinating and collaborating on every step of this complicated building project.

At a February Meeting and subsequent public forum, the CCBC's architects, ICON, announced that the latest cost estimates for the project were just over \$24.02 million which was enthusiastically received because it is consistent with the amount provided at the December Special Town Meeting. It was also announced that the project would be receiving a generous donation of \$500,000 from the Ogden Codman Trust and a \$1M donation from the Friends of the Council on Aging & Human Services.

Additionally, Lincoln's Finance Committee recently voted to propose a financing strategy that includes using \$4.75M from stabilization and \$2M from free cash for a total of \$6.75M. This, combined with the existing \$1.5M in donations, will allow us to lower the amount needed to bond the project to approximately \$15.8M.

We have also begun to establish "stay in place" costs, should the community choose not to move forward with this project. These would include approximately \$10.2M to renovate the three Hartwell Pods (\$3.4M each), as well as \$4.2M to make minimal programmatic improvements to Bemis Hall, not including full building upgrades, the creation of any outdoor programming space or additional parking. These estimates are in FY25 dollars, and ICON suggests we escalate about 7% annually over the next 5 years.

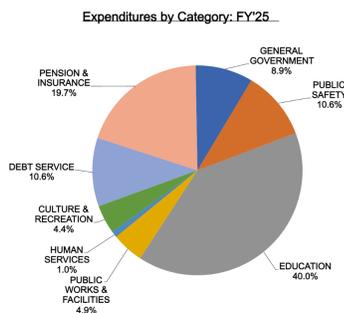
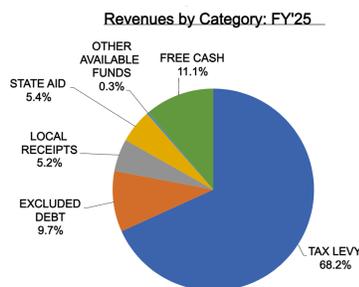
Learn more about the project at [www.lincolncommunitycenter.com](http://www.lincolncommunitycenter.com). *At the March 25th ballot, a yes vote is in favor of the project, and a no vote is against the project.*



**Article #7: FY 2025 Budget – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE**

The Finance Committee (FinCom) held its annual budget hearing on February 12th, and will hold a Q&A session for residents on March 18th at 7:30pm. Zoom information: Zoom Meeting ID: 849 2072 7318; Password: fincom. The recording of the February hearing is at [https://youtu.be/podOBRvSI7k?si=yj7kK\\_s065mQZVFR&t=890](https://youtu.be/podOBRvSI7k?si=yj7kK_s065mQZVFR&t=890) and other materials are posted on the Finance Committee FY25 budget page of the town website: <https://www.lincolntown.org/1487/Budget-Information>. The charts and table below give a high level overview of the Town budget, including all schools.

<b>Town of Lincoln</b>				
<b>FY2025 Proposed Budget</b>				
	<b>FY2024</b>	<b>FY2025</b>	<b>\$ change</b>	<b>% change</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>				
TAX LEVY	32,800,008	33,651,884	851,876	
EXCLUDED DEBT	4,800,658	4,802,479	1,821	
LOCAL RECEIPTS	1,030,043	2,551,571	1,521,528	
STATE AID	2,608,145	2,659,300	51,155	
OTHER AVAILABLE FUNDS	166,657	160,955	(5,702)	
FREE CASH	6,060,000	5,483,561	(576,439)	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>47,465,511</b>	<b>49,309,750</b>	<b>1,844,239</b>	<b>3.9%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	3,739,266	3,992,724	253,458	
PUBLIC SAFETY	4,661,991	4,795,954	133,963	
EDUCATION				
<i>Lincoln K-8 School</i>	13,161,319	13,490,352	329,033	
<i>Lincoln Sudbury High School</i>	4,292,657	4,421,436	128,779	
<i>Vocational School Assessment(s)</i>	350,905	105,500	(245,405)	
PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES	2,120,071	2,207,464	87,393	
HUMAN SERVICES	389,730	434,226	44,496	
CULTURE & RECREATION	1,918,800	1,986,677	67,877	
DEBT SERVICE	4,759,169	4,760,669	1,500	
PENSIONS & INSURANCE	8,768,467	8,888,389	119,922	
CAPITAL PLAN	800,292	1,296,841	496,549	
STABILIZATION FUND	1,638,696	-	(1,638,696)	
WARRANT ARTICLES	864,148	2,929,518	2,065,370	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>47,465,511</b>	<b>49,309,750</b>	<b>1,844,239</b>	<b>3.9%</b>



**With offsets to reduce the impact on property taxes, the FY25 budget as presented will result in a 2.38% increase on the median tax bill. This does not include the Community Center. More info on page 17 of the Financial Report available on the Town website.**

**Article #8: Capital Committee Recommendations – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE**

The Capital Committee (CapCom) is recommending 19 “cash capital” projects totaling \$1.12M. These projects are financed within the annual budget; none require a bond vote.

Cemetery digital records and mapping program	\$24K
Conservation Department: 1) Tacoma SR5 work truck; 2) Rock rake	\$49K
DPW Loader	\$250K
Fire Department Air supply unit for firefighting SCBA	\$78K
Town: IT network electronics upgrade	\$95K
Lincoln Public Schools: 1) 2 vehicles; 2) wireless access point replacements; 3) Hartwell wooden curtain wall replacement design	\$145K
L-S High School: 1) exterior masonry; 2) analog lighting control replacement; 3) wifi network upgrade	\$50K
Police Department: 1) marked cruiser; 2) replacement of 9 ballistic vests and carriers	\$91K
Facilities Director vehicle	\$22K
Town Hall lighting controls	\$200K
Public Safety boilers replacement	\$115K

**How does Town Meeting work? What are the rules? Visit [www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com](http://www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com)!**

**Article #9: Community Preservation Act Projects – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE**

CPA funds are raised through a 3% surcharge on real estate bills and are partially matched by the state from a dedicated fund. Sixteen projects totaling \$1.74M are recommended:

Debt Service: 1) Town Offices Renovation, \$287K; 2) Wang Field, \$103K	391K
Housing: 1) Rental assistance program, \$97K; 2) Housing support , \$30K; 3) Housing Trust request for set-aside funds, \$500K	\$627K
Historic Preservation: 1) Pierce House ADA walkways, \$20K; 2) Pierce House exterior carpentry, \$25K; 3) Archives - Flint Family historical documents, \$23K; 4) Library AC & HVAC, \$29K	\$96K
Codman Farm C Barn sprinkler system	\$400K
Elm Brook Hill Battlefield preservation project	\$150K
Parks & Rec: 1) Tennis Courts, \$40K; 2) Pool cover, \$27K	\$67K
Administrative expenses	\$3.5K

**Article #10: Senior Circuit Breaker Property Tax Reduction Program – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTE**

<p><b>OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED EXTENDED CIRCUIT BREAKER PROGRAM</b>  <i>(AS SUBMITTED TO THE LEGISLATURE IN 2021)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For homeowners aged 65+</li> <li>• Must have been a Lincoln resident for 5+ years</li> <li>• Uses the State Circuit Breaker income limit to determine eligibility</li> <li>• Uses Lincoln’s average single-family property value + 10% as the property asset limit</li> <li>• Funded by shifting up to 0.5% of the total tax levy in year 1; up to 1.0% in years 2 &amp; 3 - no additional revenue raised</li> <li>• Must be implemented by another vote of Town Meeting (March 2024)</li> <li>• Must be reauthorized at Town Meeting every 3 years</li> </ul>
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At the 2021 Town Meeting, residents voted to petition the State Legislature to allow Lincoln to create a local Extended Circuit Breaker property tax assistance program for seniors whose incomes and property assessments fall within certain limits. *The basic premise of the program is that most property owners who pay property taxes would pay a bit more in order to provide assistance to those with demonstrated financial need.* For eligible residents, this would provide tax relief in addition to the State Circuit Breaker program. The Select Board is hopeful that the Legislature will approve our request before Town Meeting in expectation of a vote to implement the program.

Visit <https://www.lincolntown.org/1084/Property-Tax-Study-Committee> for more information.

**Citizens’ Petitions – SIMPLE MAJORITY VOTES**

ARTICLE # 27: SPECIAL LEGISLATION RE: AUTHORIZATION TO POST PUBLIC NOTICES IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA	ARTICLE #28: NOTICE OF PROPOSED REZONING TO PROPERTY OWNERS, RESIDENTS AND ABUTTERS
<p>This article requests that the Select Board ask the Massachusetts General Court to allow the Town to satisfy requirements for legal notices by allowing the publication of notices in local <u>digital</u> newspapers, print media or both. In addition, this article asserts that only minor editorial changes can be made to the bill by the General Court and substantive amendments must be approved by the Select Board.</p>	<p>Article 28 was submitted by Citizens’ Petition. It proposes an additional layer, not currently required by state law, for notifying affected parties when rezoning is being considered. The full text of the petition is available on the town website. at <a href="http://www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com">www.lincolntownmeeting2024.com</a>.</p>

### Town Meeting Logistics

- Check-in begins at 8:00 am.
- TOWN MEETING BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 9:30 AM!
- MEETING LOCATIONS:
  - ◆ Donaldson Auditorium/Todd Lecture Hall
  - ◆ Reed Gym
  - ◆ Learning Commons (socially distanced seating)
- There will be a 30-minute lunch break. You are invited to bring your own lunch or to purchase snacks from the Lincoln Girl Scouts.



### March to the 250th Continues!

The Lincoln250 Planning Committee and town partners are planning a year-long calendar of activities, events and programs to celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord and Lincoln’s contributions to this history. If you would like to learn more, follow Lincoln250 on Facebook or find us on Lincoln’s Town website: [www.Lincolntown.org](http://www.Lincolntown.org).

Currently, we are also setting up a sub-committee to plan for a *Lincoln 250<sup>th</sup> Community Day* in Spring 2025.

If you are interested in volunteering, please scan the QR code or email Kim Bodnar, Lincoln250 Chair, at [bodnark@lincolntown.org](mailto:bodnark@lincolntown.org)



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