

PLANNING BOARD MINUTES - May 16, 2023

Members Present: Margaret Olson (Chair), Lynn DeLisi (Co-Chair), Craig Nicholson

Staff Present: Jennifer Curtin

Other Attendees: Tim Higgins, Dan Pereira, Ned Collier (ICON), Mark McKevez (ICON), Sarah Chester, Alison Taunton

7:00 PM Presentation by ICON, Architects for the Community Center

Tim Higgins gave a summary of the current status and next steps in the Community Center Building process.

Sara Chester, chair of the CCBC, expressed that the project has built on the efforts to create the Community Center starting before 2010, gathering lessons learned from COVID and other Towns' community center projects.

CN asked if ICON is doing in-house cost estimation. Mr. Collier said that they use an independent estimator.

MO expressed concern about two main things. First she mentioned that safety would be a concern due to increased traffic and the traffic circulation pattern would have to be carefully looked at. The campus is foremost a school, and accident statistics for Lincoln show Ballfield Road as an unsafe intersection. In addition, she explained that the Board has been working on revitalizing the South Lincoln Center and expressed concern that having a café at the Community Center may impact this.

Sarah Chester said they will work to better define the café and there is no intent to compete with the Twisted Tree. The café would just be a spot for people to have coffee and gather.

Mr. Higgins said that there have been differences of opinion about the Community Center being sited at the School campus vs. Lincoln Station. Town Meeting vote instructs that new construction take place at Hartwell campus, which could be supplemented with additional town spaces for other programming, which is being reviewed. Most of the programming happening remotely will continue in those locations.

LD said she is in favor of having a proposal pass but the current proposals will be all too expensive. The residents of Lincoln are not wanting another increase in taxes. Other Towns have built community centers that are less expensive. We could have a smaller building on the school campus and have other programming and a place for people to meet in different space particularly by the Lincoln station commercial area.

Mr. Collier said they have focused on what will allow Parks and Rec, the Council on Aging and Human Service, and the schools be able to meet their missions. That has resulted in a significant reduction in square footage to the 75% option. To get to 50%, there will need to be a combination of deep program cuts, site development, and renovations. Until they understand what the base program needs are, they cannot make recommendations.

LD asked if they have looked at the other communities who have built community centers for lower cost. Mr. Collier said they are similar to our proposal. Alison Taunton added Wayland renovated an existing

building, so the costs were lower. Parks and Rec is the biggest need for space, not COA. The towns around us either have existing buildings or are building senior centers without including parks and recs.

Ms. Chester said we are in the process of updating our assessment of what other towns are doing. It is difficult to gather all the information to make comparisons. Mark McKevez gave an overview of the current programming plans for the community center. Ms. Chester added that the programming is being developed so there will not be a lot of traffic from Adult Parks and Rec programs and COA programs to conflict with the School traffic at morning and afternoon pickups.

MO asked for more information on traffic and circulation. Mr. Collier reviewed the plans for the site circulation.

LD said it is important to make sure light pollution does not impact the neighbors. oA neighbor adjacent to the property gave her input that if a parking lot was placed in the back lights from cars and the lot at night would come into her home windows.

CN asked if traffic flow plans are just limited to the Hartwell site or for the entire school campus. Mr. Collier said their initial analysis was broader to look at the external factors coming into the site. Their current analysis is mostly at the threshold of the project.

MO said there are many paths that children take to get onto the campus. The school bans traffic around the big loop during certain times of the day, which is a safety concern when there are so many kids in a smaller area. She is concerned that this development may make safety issues worse. She added that BPAC has on its list of future safety improvements that should include removing the slip lane at Ballfield Road. This could impact the traffic study that was done around that intersection. She encouraged the architects to come back to the Board as they work through the circulation issues.

Mr. Higgins said that there was a study done in 2017-2018 was built around separation of kids and cars. When the parking and building locations are determined for the Community Center project, it is the highest importance that safe connections be established.

Mr. Collier will share the site development proposals as they are developed, which will help address the separation of pedestrians and vehicles.

CN asked how this work relates to the Town's Climate Action work.

Mr. Collier said they are interconnected, as communities want all work to be green. All proposals will be designed to be all electric and will be daylight harvesting and doing exterior shading to ensure energy efficiency.

Mr. Higgins will keep the Planning Board updated.

LD moved to adjourn. CN seconded. Roll Call: LD aye, CN aye, MO aye.