

# **STATE OF THE TOWN MEETING**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2007**

**9:00 am – 12:00 Noon**

**BROOKS SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

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**Town of Lincoln  
P.O. Box 6353  
Lincoln Center, MA 01773**

**RESIDENT  
LINCOLN, MA 01733**

# STATE OF THE TOWN REPORT -2007

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## **2007 State of the Town: Infrastructure is in Our Future**

The introduction of SOTT six years ago was a natural outcome of our tradition of looking for creative ways to be proactive in management of our future. It provides an opportunity for town officials to introduce long-term concerns and issues that they anticipate the town will face in the not-so-distant future. SOTT also allows for early citizen participation in the development of the annual budget, proposed warrant articles and other proposals and ideas that boards and committees are developing for an upcoming Town Meeting.

Recent State of the Town (SOTT) meetings have dealt with planning for future land use challenges and changes. This year's SOTT will focus primarily on planning for long-term infrastructure challenges and needs, and the funding necessary to meet them. This includes our town-owned buildings, facilities, and our roads.

As part of our discussion of infrastructure needs, the Board of Selectmen wants to use a portion of the SOTT meeting to make everyone aware of the growing pressures on Lincoln from the larger communities that surround us in an ever-expanding metropolitan area. Many of the external pressures we face seem beyond our control. While commercial and job development, especially along the Rt. 128 corridor, is occurring to our east, housing development is occurring primarily to our west. Lincoln is squeezed between. Maintaining our small town, rural character in this environment has always been and will continue to be a challenge. We must establish sensible priorities among all the requests so that our long-term budgets and debt are manageable.

We anticipate that we will meet the internal infrastructure challenges as well as the external development pressures with the foresight and planning that have been our strength. At the same time we will continue to depend upon active citizen participation. The current comprehensive long range planning process is an illustration of Lincoln's citizen-based, bottom-up approach to looking forward. It is this critical combination of foresight and citizen vigilance that has brought success to our efforts in the past, and that we hope to continue as we consider our critical infrastructure needs.

At this, our 6<sup>th</sup> annual SOTT meeting, we will first have brief presentations by the key boards and committees which have major capital projects in the pipeline. Relevant information from the boards is found in the following pages. We encourage you to develop comments and questions as you read these report, and to bring them with you on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

After board and committee presentations, the Finance Committee will guide us through a variety of options for how we might support such proposed capital investments. Then we shall invite everyone to jump into the conversation with their questions and comments.

All of Lincoln's volunteers rely on your help and perspectives to guide them as they make their recommendations for Town Meeting. We look forward to your participation in this annual event.

Lincoln Board of Selectmen

**November 3, 2007**  
**State of the Town Meeting**  
**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Brooks School Auditorium**  
**Agenda**

- 9:00 a.m.      Welcome & Introduction  
                         Sara Mattes, Selectman
- 9:05 a.m.      Infrastructure Needs from the Perspective of the:
- Lincoln School Committee      Julie Dobrow, Chairman
  - Board of Selectmen              Gary Taylor, Chairman
  - Library Board                      Jackie Apsler, Chairman
- 9:35 a.m.      Financial Implications  
                         Robert Steinbrook, Chairman - Finance Committee  
                         John Koenig, Chairman - Community Preservation Committee
- 10:00 a.m.     Questions & Comments  
                         Sarah Cannon Holden, Moderating
- 12:00 p.m.     Wrap-up  
                         Sarah Cannon Holden, Selectman

## STATE OF THE TOWN REPORT – 2007

### BOARD OF SELECTMEN

#### The Board of Selectmen's Goals – 2007

We look forward each year to the State of the Town Meeting and the opportunity it provides for open discussion of the issues that have significant potential to impact Lincoln and our quality of life. We outlined our board's 2007 goals in the report we issued as part of the 2006 State of the Town Meeting:

- Final creation of the Agricultural Commission with creation of an inventory of all agricultural endeavors in Lincoln.
- Collaboration with Hanscom Area Town Selectmen (HATS) to:
  - pass the Muni-Electric Bill;
  - explore the creation of an Electric Cooperative with other HATS towns;
  - continue working in support of Hanscom Air Force Base;
  - facilitate regional efforts in transportation;
  - shape growth that is sensitive to the area and each community's unique character; and
  - monitor the growth of Massport's Civilian Airport at Hanscom Field.
- Redevelopment of the South Lincoln commercial area and particularly the Mall in a manner consistent with the values expressed at past town-wide conferences and town meeting votes.
- Creation of a "Green Committee" to achieve not only sustainability in municipal, residential, institutional and commercial Lincoln, but also to work toward energy independence throughout the town.
- Progress on moving the stalled/delayed Route 2/Crosby Corner project along.
- A financial plan that thoughtfully integrates the operating and capital needs of the town.
- Additional housing units certified by the Commonwealth for Lincoln's Affordable Housing Inventory
- The development of a Comprehensive Long-Range Plan for Lincoln.

#### How have we done?

In assessing our performance, not only over the course of the past year but more generally, it becomes quickly apparent that we enjoy a much higher rate of success when a project does not require that we go outside Lincoln for grants of legal authority or funding. This reality was in evidence again in 2007. We made substantial progress or achieved our objective where the town controlled its own destiny:

- Agricultural Commission

In March of 2006, the town meeting endorsed the Selectmen's plan to establish an Agricultural Commission to explore opportunities to sustain and promote agriculture in Lincoln. In June of this year, the Selectman

finalized and adopted a charge for the Agricultural Commission, We have invited applicants to come forward and expect that as the close of the harvest season, appointments will be completed and the commission will begin its work.

- Revitalization of South Lincoln

The Town Meeting approved the development plan establishing the parameters for the redevelopment of the Mall during a special town meeting that was incorporated within last year's State of the Town Meeting. Since that time, our board has been working with the Planning Board, the RLF and other stakeholders to work out the detailed plans that will ensure that the Mall is redeveloped in a manner that suits our small town character while also enhancing its prospects for long-term financial viability. We were pleased to participate in the September 24<sup>th</sup> groundbreaking ceremony. We look forward to the completion of the new post office and restaurant next summer and the revitalization of the existing structures in the Mall next fall.

- Green Committee

The Selectmen appointed Green Energy Committee is up and running. Appointed in 2006, the Committee is exploring alternatives to increase the energy efficiency of town buildings, assessing opportunities to invest in alternative energy technologies and contemplating its role in encouraging broad community support and participation in environmental sustainability efforts.

- Integrated Financial Plan (Operating and Capital)

The Town is in a strong financial position, due in no small part to our commitment to long-term financial planning. With voter support for regular but fairly modest tax increases above Proposition 2 ½, we've been able to maintain town services at desired levels. We have set aside prudent levels of reserves for unanticipated circumstances. We've developed a comprehensive capital plan and allocated sufficient funding for timely replacement of essential equipment. We've pursued additional revenues and received town support for projects that will expand our tax base and abate pressure on the residential property tax. And we have been judicious about incurring new debt and been aggressive in its repayment. As a result, we are well positioned to identify and plan for the town's service and infrastructure needs going forward. The bond rating agencies have rewarded us for our efforts. Our AAA rating is testament to the thoughtful manner in which the town manages its finances.

We will focus much of this year's State of the Town discussion on the town's infrastructure needs. There are a number of substantial capital investments that the town is likely to be asked to support in the next few years. The major components are 1) a comprehensive roadway repair program 2) repair, renovation, and possible expansion of town and school buildings, and 3) several key conservation acquisitions.

- Expanded Affordable Housing Inventory

Affordable Housing is another area in which our planning efforts have yielded results. Many of the objectives we set out in our 2000 Comprehensive Housing Plan have been accomplished. A number of housing strategies were pursued this past year – some successful and some not. Under the direction of the Housing Commission, three units of affordable housing were added at Sunnyside Lane. When the final permits for the New England Deaconess project are issued shortly, we will have exceeded the 10% affordable housing requirement imposed by state law and remain in compliance until 2010 when, by virtue of the new federal census, the town's affordable housing target figure will adjust and we must again pursue additional affordable housing units. The Housing Commission, Lincoln Foundation and the Affordable Housing Trust recently approved by Town Meeting and supported with CPA funds are developing strategies to help us accomplish our affordable housing objectives, including staying ahead of the 40B requirement so that we may continue to have discretion to make housing decisions locally.

- Comprehensive Long-range Plan

Our board has worked closely with the Planning Board to initiate the effort to create a Comprehensive Long-range Plan for the community. As the prior discussion points demonstrate, we've done a good job as a town of developing program and service specific plans (e.g., financial plan, open space plan, facilities plan, housing plan, etc.). What we have yet to do is integrate them into one comprehensive plan that establishes priorities and allocates resources. The process is now underway. Our June 19<sup>th</sup> forum at Bemis Hall was well attended and well received. There will be many opportunities for public involvement as the process unfolds over the next eighteen months. The Planning Board anticipates putting the final plan before the town for a vote at the annual town meeting in 2009.

Unfortunately, a number of the projects and initiatives we are currently pursuing for the community require approvals and/or funding from agencies and organizations external to Lincoln – the redesign of Route 2 at Crosby's Corner being perhaps the most important. Although substantial efforts have been made to build coalitions with stakeholders who share our town's values and interests, it is often difficult for us to generate the critical political mass needed to affect policy decisions at the federal, state and regional levels.

- Route 2/Crosby's Corner

The case for redesign of Crosby's Corner has been well made by Lincoln, Concord and other concerned communities and accepted fully by the Massachusetts Highway Department. The towns worked in close partnership with the state to achieve an appropriate design that was supported by all stakeholders. Unfortunately, recently announced project cost estimates have sobering implications since they approach \$100 million while the state currently allocates a total of only \$60million annually for transportation

projects in our entire region. Going forward, we will continue to urge state agencies to finalize design plans so that this important project remains at the top of the list and ready to move forward when and if the state finds funds to address the growing backlog of needed infrastructure improvements.

- Muni Electric

The Town has along with many others supported legislation that would remove unreasonable impediments to the formation of municipal electric companies. Over the last several years municipal electrics like the one in neighboring Concord have provided more reliable and responsive service with much smaller rate increases than the incumbent investor owned utilities. Despite strong support, the “muni” bills have been stymied in legislative committees heavily influenced by utility lobbying activities. We shall continue to attempt to move this legislation forward.

- Regional Transportation Plan

The Selectmen have been and will continue to participate in regional forums to better understand the impacts of regional development on our future. We have been actively participating in the development of the MAPC Metro Future Plan that would, if implemented, assist in the creation of better transportation networks and Smart Growth development.

### **The Board of Selectmen’s Goals – 2008**

Over the coming year we shall pursue the following goals:

- Completion of a Comprehensive Long Range Plan for Lincoln and the development of implementation approaches;
- Appoint an Ad Hoc Traffic Committee to better understand the implications of regional development on our roadways and use this information to assist in directing the best use of our resources to offer mitigation;
- Implementation of a roadway improvement program addressing concerns regarding safety, traffic management, rural character, and asset protection;
- Development of a comprehensive facility improvement, maintenance and financing plan to address the needs of the Town, the Schools and the Library;
- Development and implementation of a program to improve Pierce House usage and stabilize its finances to assure long-term sustainability;
- Development of strategies in conjunction with the Housing Commission, Housing Trust, and Lincoln Foundation to expand affordable housing opportunities – including satisfying the town’s obligation under Chapter 40B, post 2010;
- Continuing case by case review of development threats/opportunities in order to preserve Lincoln’s character and promote its interests; and
- Continuing participation in regional planning groups and forums.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Finance Committee is charged with advising and making recommendations to Town Meeting on the budget and other areas of finance and administering the reserve fund. The committee seeks to develop an overall budget that is fiscally prudent, that reflects the Town's values, and that meets the needs of residents. It also seeks to obtain broad public understanding and support for the budget that is ultimately recommended at Town Meeting.

Lincoln's budget cycle runs from July to June. For the current fiscal year (FY '08), the committee recommended--and the Town approved--a Proposition 2 ½ override to fund the operating budget. In October 2007, the time of this writing, it is too early in the budget cycle to know whether the FY '09 operating budget can be funded at a level that provides the desired level of services without a Proposition 2 ½ override.

According to the committee's emergency reserve policy, an amount equal to 3 % of the prior year's operating budget should be set aside as emergency reserves. Currently, the emergency reserves are at this level. As in prior years, the committee will consider budget requests in the context of maintaining adequate reserves.

For 2007-8, the Finance Committee will focus considerable attention on planning for the potential financial impact of long-term infrastructure needs. Among the large projects that could be proposed for funding in the next several years are expenditures for roads, Town buildings and facilities, conservation land acquisition, and school construction. Such capital expenditures are paid for by issuing bonds, which are typically repaid over a 10 to 20 year period. They require approval at both Town Meeting and the Town Election. Approved expenditures are debt excluded, which means that they are outside the limits on Town spending imposed by Proposition 2 ½.

The tax payments required to fund large capital projects are substantial. It should be recognized, however, that timely capital expenditures are an important part of maintaining and improving the infrastructure and environment of the Town. In addition, the existing debt service--principal and interest payments on the Town's outstanding loan obligations--is already declining. The debt service decreased from \$1.61 million in FY '07 to \$1.3 million in FY '08. The major reason is that the Town has finished paying for the Public Safety building built in 1996.

The Finance Committee will work with other boards and committees to coordinate the various projects that may be proposed, to help boards and committees to understand the potential financial impacts of the proposals, and to minimize year-to-year changes in the amount of excluded debt.

## LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Sharon Antia  
Julie Dobrow, Chair  
Laurie Manos, Vice Chair  
Tom Sander  
Al Schmertzler

This year the Lincoln School Committee will focus its efforts on overseeing the continuing progress toward our goals of educational excellence, maintaining the excellent fiscal management we have enjoyed the past several years, and ensuring that we attract and retain a highly trained, creative and motivated faculty. Our State of the Town message this year focuses on the facilities master planning work we have been doing, spotlighting the needs of our aging facilities and beginning the work to develop the options we have to improve them. In addition, our ongoing work on emergency planning has led us to consider a proposal for a secondary emergency access option in addition to the access provided through Ballfield Road.

We are pleased to present a summary of our collective progress from this past year, and to outline our goals for the year to come.

### **SUMMARY OF FY 07 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

#### **Goal Category 1: Curriculum Instruction and Assessment**

This category addresses our central educational mission, refers to our ongoing efforts to extend and strengthen the learning experiences and academic performance of our students.

##### Highlights:

- Established curriculum improvements and publication of learning expectations in many academic areas including mathematics, science, language arts, social studies and visual arts
- Completed extensive curriculum development activity in all academic areas
- Continued work on Middle School Renewal Plan
- Designed and implemented common assessments in mathematics and writing at selected grade levels
- Implemented district-wide technology plan, acquisition of technology equipment and pilot projects focused on math, science and humanities
- Administered "Tripod Project," survey designed to collect data on student perceptions of learning expectations, engagement and data to analyze issues relating to achievement gaps

#### **Goal Category 2: Teacher Excellence and Professional Development**

This category refers to ensuring that the Lincoln Public Schools attract and retain top flight teachers and administrators in an increasingly competitive market, and that our faculty continue their own training in best educational practices.

Highlights:

- Implemented comprehensive teacher evaluation program
- Partnered with other educational institutions for professional development (e.g. FreshPond Education, Primary Source)
- Ensured that all professional development activities were aligned with school and district goals and met teachers' own professional goals
- District sponsored or facilitated approximately seventy-five (75) curriculum or professional development activities during the summer of 2007

***Goal Category 3: Leadership and School Culture***

This goal refers to the development and maintenance of strong and effective leadership for the district, and to the continuing improvement of a collaborative, supportive and safe environment for learning for all students.

Highlights:

- Researched and trained faculty in programs to address social/emotional learning needs of students (e.g., Responsive Classroom, Open Circle)
- Increased efforts to facilitate transitions between grades and schools
- Redesigned and launched the district's website in an effort to make available current information about the district's programs, plans and policies

***Goal Category 4: Facilities, Operations, Health and Safety***

This category refers to the necessary activities required for the district to be in compliance with both state and federal regulations (such as No Child Left Behind), and also to all those activities necessary to operate the schools in an efficient manner, to improve facilities, and to deliver our educational program (e.g. – contract negotiations, etc.)

Highlights:

- Managed FY 07 budget successfully, ending another year in the black, and developed FY 08 budget to support educational program with modest improvements
- Facilities subcommittee worked with SMMA consultants, resulting in prototype master plan, comprehensive assessment of state of the facilities, and several possible options to address needs
- Completed extensive facilities repairs in summer 2007
- Worked with members of Public Safety and Conservation Commission to assess possible alternate emergency roads from school complex
- Secured successor contract to support district operations and educational programs at Hanscom Air Force Base for the next five years
- Appointed subcommittee to study and assess current class size policy

The following are the goals we have established for the coming year for both the School Committee and the district. They were written with key components and activities and a timeline; the district goals were also developed with specific activities for this academic

year and outlines of how each goal would be operationalized in two subsequent years in an effort to do some long-term and strategic planning for the district.

## **FY 08 GOALS**

- Continue work on learning expectations and assessment strategies to monitor student learning and performance
- Complete final phase of Middle School Renewal and implement recommendations
- Convene task force on high achieving students
- Consider expansion of world language program into earlier grades
- Assess mathematics programs, develop criteria for selecting math materials and plan adoption of instructional materials for K-5 math program
- Address issues of achievement gap and student engagement
- Sustain efforts to recruit, develop and retain strong administrators and teachers
- Continue implementation of teacher evaluation program
- Continue focus on expanded professional development and teacher mentoring
- Assess and design standards-based reporting system
- Promote opportunities for student leadership and civic engagement
- Work to improve transitions between grades
- Develop FY 09 budget to support educational programs
- Negotiate successor contracts with the Lincoln Teachers' Association, Custodians' Union
- Conduct bid process to select bus contractor
- Facilitate inclusive process for school building projects, submit letter to School Building Authority
- Review crisis plans, work with community groups to develop ideas and assessment of alternate emergency road
- Respond to the Department of Education Coordinate Program Review, develop and implement action plan
- Review work of the Class Size Policy Subcommittee and consider recommendation for policy adjustment

## **LINCOLN SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

Obviously, the most significant event that the LSRHS community has been dealing with since the last State of the Town meeting is the alleged murder of one student by another last January. The first priority was helping the students, teachers, parents and staff cope with this very traumatic event. We were assisted in this effort by the fire and police departments in both towns and the School Threat Assessment Response System of the NEMLEC. We feel that this effort went very well and it allowed the school to continue through the year as well as could be expected after such a tragic event.

After consultation with the Select Boards of both towns, the School Committee appointed a Safety Review Committee (SRC) that had broad representation from the Lincoln and Sudbury communities as well as from within Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School. Following months of painstaking research, data gathering, interviews and discussion, the SRC made a very thorough preliminary report to the School Committee with many suggestions for moving forward. L-S has many well-established programs to support students who are struggling both educationally and personally. The SRC acknowledged this work and also, based on the research, urged L-S to explore and find additional ways to strengthen the connections that adults have with students. The School Committee found the suggestions throughout the report to be well thought out, clearly presented and helpful. The suggestions will be factored into program planning and future budget discussions as appropriate. A copy of the report can be found at the school committee's website, LSRHS.net

In addition, the FY07 school year opened with several other goals and challenges: the self-evaluation process for our ten-year evaluation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC); budget planning to address growing class sizes, increasing Special Education needs, and pension and insurance costs; and coordination of community efforts to replace the football field and track complex, among others.

The self-evaluation process was a year-long, intensive effort to collect data about Lincoln-Sudbury, assess progress in the various standards established by NEASC, and begin a comprehensive documentation effort. As part of this process, we took the opportunity to refine our mission statement and renew our collective commitment to it. Several committees were formed to accomplish this first phase of the ten-year evaluation and will continue its work into FY08 in anticipation of the on-site evaluation team in FY09.

The budget process presented many challenges, including continued projected increases in enrollment, though at a slower pace. This population growth, without comparable staff increases, has over time stressed the system, resulting in a greater number of classes with 26 or more students, some well over 30 students. Lincoln-Sudbury has been effective in managing this growth through the creativity and excellence of its teaching staff, but as a system we will be focusing on how to address these issues over the long-term. The budget is an area that will also be examined as part of our NEASC evaluation.

Special Education has always been one of the most volatile segments of the budget, and FY07 was a year in which L-S had significant increases in costly tuition placements. We were able to offset the impact on the budget by applying for and receiving additional

State funding, which will also ease the budget pressures in FY08 as many of these costs will now continue.

Other budget drivers that were not unique to L-S but, rather, presented more fundamental challenges to both communities was the impact of significant pension and insurance increases and the uncertainty of State Aid increases. L-S participates in a purchasing collaborative for its health insurance, which has been as effective as possible in managing these increases, and will continue to work within the collaborative to seek new ways to minimize the costs to the budget. In spite of all of these challenges, Lincoln-Sudbury has benefited from the fiscal support from both the Lincoln and Sudbury communities who understand and appreciate the value of its educational system.

Finally, during FY07 momentum built for the replacement of the track and football field complex at Lincoln-Sudbury. Sudbury's Community Preservation Committee provided the initial funding of \$960,000 and this grew to \$1.7 million through the allocation of school construction funds and the generous donations of local sports groups and community members from both Lincoln and Sudbury. The project was completed on schedule and within budget, and is a major enhancement to the school and a significant addition to the community.

## LIBRARY TRUSTEES

### Long Range Plan

The library recently completed a long range plan to guide our activities through fiscal year 2012. Under the authorization of the Board of Library Trustees, a "Strategic Planning Committee" was formed consisting of ten Lincoln residents and two staff members. The Lincoln residents are library Trustees, members of the Board of the Friends of the Lincoln Library, Inc., and representatives from the community. This strategic plan is required by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners and uses the book, The New Planning for Results: A Streamlined Approach, which is published by the American Library Association, as the template for the five-year plan.

Our plan identifies six "service responses" that the library will focus on for the next five years. A service response, as defined in The New Planning for Results, is "what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs." The six service responses are:

- Current Topics and Titles: helps to fulfill community residents' appetite for information about popular cultural and social trends and their desire for satisfying recreational experiences.
- General Information: helps meet the need for information and answers to questions on a broad array of topics related to work, school and personal life.
- Lifelong Learning: helps address the desire for self-directed personal growth and development opportunities.
- Local History and Genealogy: helps address the desire of community residents to know and better understand personal or community heritage.
- Commons: helps address the need of people to meet and interact with others in their community and to participate in public forums about community issues and broader issues of interest and concern.
- Information Literacy: helps address the need for skills related to finding, evaluating, and using information effectively.

The committee created goals with measurable objectives for each of these service responses.

### Library Services

The quality of library services is dependent on the quality of library staff. We are fortunate to have staff who take advantage of varied professional development opportunities even though the library profession does not mandate it. During the past year, three staff members attended the American Library Association's national convention. One staff member attended a mystery convention. Staff regularly attend classes at the Metrowest Massachusetts Regional Library System headquarters and Minuteman Library Network headquarters. The first annual training workshop for the entire staff was held in August and the topic was customer service. Our investment in staff training improves our staff and our services to Lincoln residents.

As of December 31, 2006, the number of items in the library's collection was 92,464 and the number of check outs was 154,118. The library was open 316 days in 2006 with 67,861 visitors. In addition to 20 library staff members we had 53 library volunteers, two summer interns, and four senior workers in 2006. Visits to the library's web site increased from 93,796 in 2005 to 120,283 in 2006. The library had 378 programs in 2006, which were attended by 7,934 people. Long running programs: Classic Jazz and

the children's storytimes are still going strong. This summer 175 children came to the Summer Reading Program kick off party and signed up for the Summer Reading Program. The special events that were sponsored by the Friends of the Library were well attended. The "Write Stuff" writers' group, the "Mystery Monday" book discussion group, the "Photo Share" group, and the Dungeons and Dragons group are new programs with strong followings after only one year of existence.

### **Current Collaborations**

We are participating in town wide activities such as Memorial Day, Winter Carnival, the July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade, Unplugged Week, the Invasive Species Summit, and the Comprehensive Long Range Planning Committee. We also collaborate with several town organizations such as the Friends of the Lincoln Library, the Lincoln Historical Society, the Historic District Commission, the Lincoln Public Schools, the Hanscom Air Force Base Public Library, the Hanscom Air Force Base School Library, the Town Clerk's Office, the Public Safety Departments, the Recreation Department, the Magic Garden, the Lincoln Nursery School, the Disabilities Commission, and the Council on Aging.

The library and Town Clerk's Office are in the beginning stages of long term collaboration concerning Town records. As Vartan Gregorian (then President of the New York Public Library) said about materials in his library, "These records are the DNA of who we are." This is also true for Lincoln's Town records. The Town Clerk's Office is the prime recorder, preserver, and retriever of records of essential civic and individual life events. The library is the key repository of cultural and historic records. There are several problems with the current Town vaults:

- The vaults are overcrowded.
- The climate control for these vaults is inadequate to preserve the records for future generations.
- There is not enough staff time to catalog the new materials so the backlog is growing.
- Town Offices' vault is in worse condition than the vault at the Library. Permanent Town records could move to a renovated and expanded vault at the library for better preservation.

### **Future Collaborations**

The Town Clerk plans to appoint the library director as an assistant Town Clerk. This will bring the library in compliance with state laws concerning town records. If the library's archivist's hours are increased at 2008 Town meeting, she will spend some of her hours at the Town Clerk's Office.

A design for a renovated vault at the library was completed in April. This design expands the vault to make room for permanent records from the Town Clerk's Office and allows for future growth. The design also upgrades the climate controls so that the temperature and humidity within the vault will stay within a narrow range, which is the best way to preserve the materials. The Trustees are working with the Community Preservation Committee to have a warrant article for the vault renovation for vote at the March 2008 Town Meeting. If approved by the Community Preservation Committee and at 2008 Town Meeting, the construction phase of the vault renovation project will begin next summer.

In the past year the library began collaborating with the Police Department to create a crisis plan for the library. The schools already have crisis plans in place; soon the library will have one too.

### **Building Projects**

In addition to the library services provided at the library, staff and Trustees are continuing to focus on library repairs that were identified in Simpson, Gumpertz, and Heger, Inc.'s (SGH) January 2004 facility review. During the past year the following building projects were completed:

- (1) new carpets in the Magazine Room and Reference Room;
- (2) automatic door closers added to the entry doors to make them handicapped accessible;
- (3) a courtesy phone for patrons in the lobby;
- (4) wall repairs and painting as described in SGH's facility review;
- (5) more powerful sump pumps;
- (6) the architectural design for an automated smoke vent in the elevator shaft;
- (7) the architectural design for the vault renovation project;
- (8) carbon monoxide detectors for each floor of the library;
- (9) waterproofing for the parapet above the handicapped parking area;
- (10) repairs to the entrance terrace.

The construction phase of the window replacement project will be completed in the near future and the first phase of construction for the last major building repair project, enhancing and expanding the library's fire suppression system, will begin early next year. Expanding the library's fire suppression system is an important safety concern.

These building projects were funded by Lincoln residents and grants awarded by the Community Preservation Committee. Without your support the repairs could not have been made, the building problems would have grown, and our mission would have been at risk. The library will have a building maintenance warrant article for vote at the 2008 Town Meeting to keep the library in good working order.

### **Technology**

Another concern and challenge for the library is the trend of providing an increasing amount of technology such as wireless access for patrons who bring their own laptop computers to the library. A problem with the library's current wireless network is that it does not extend to the entire building. Lincoln's Information Technology Director has included this wireless project in his capital plan request to the Capital Planning Committee.

Patrons also want more the library's web site to provide more interactive services. For example, increasing numbers of patrons want to go to the web site and download journal articles and books. Others want to see the library's upcoming events. For the convenience of patrons, the library catalog will allow patrons to pay their fines online beginning in November. As we move forward, new interactive services will be added to the library's web site.

The library is starting a Technology Committee comprised of Lincoln residents and staff that will create a five-year technology plan for the library. This committee will set future technology goals for the library and develop the tasks that are necessary to reach those goals.

## COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The mandate of the Community Preservation Committee is to study the needs of the town, in consultation with other municipal boards and committees, to solicit input from the town as to its community preservation needs, possibilities and resources, and based on that study, to make recommendations to the town for expenditures in the four areas of community interest: (i) open space, (ii) preservation of historic structures, (iii) community housing (defined as low to moderate income housing) and (iv) recreation.

Over the last five years, the committee has recommended, and the town has approved, funding for the following projects:

1.	Pierce House repairs and safety -	\$254,500
2.	Library repairs and improvements -	\$824,368
3.	Town Building Needs Assessment -	\$25,000
4.	Sunnyside Lane property acquisition -	\$119,000
5.	Sunnyside Lane construction/renovation -	\$673,500
6.	Greenridge condominium "buy down" -	\$150,000
7.	Affordable Housing Trust funding -	\$900,000
8.	Funding of the town's Conservation Fund -	\$200,000
9.	Harrington/Row land purchase -	\$350,000
10.	Booth Property Purchase -	\$250,000
11.	New playground construction -	\$50,000
12.	Historic properties inventory -	\$15,000
13.	Model historic preservation restriction easement -	\$5,000
14.	Cemetery Repairs -	\$4,300
15.	Town Hall Records Preservation -	\$7,720

The goals of the Community Preservation Act coincide closely with Lincoln's Vision Statement: open space, historical legacy, economic diversity, citizens' convenience. Acquiring open land that comes on the market, preserving our numerous historical structures, providing affordable housing, and ensuring adequate recreation facilities are all priorities under the CPA. In order to sustain Lincoln's vision, the committee meets with town boards and organizations in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the town's present and future needs, priorities and objectives in the areas of CPA concern. The committee evaluates current funding proposals in light of possible and probable future needs.

As can be seen from the list of projects funded to date, the Community Preservation Committee has been very involved in the town's infrastructure: creating affordable housing; funding the purchase of conservation land, and preservation of some of the town's key historic properties. All of these projects have been determined to be necessary and/or advisable. These projects have been funded by means of a 3% surcharge on our property taxes, which surcharge is then supplemented by a state

match. Until now, the funds raised by the town surcharge have been matched 100% by the state, so that the direct cost to the town of CPA funded projects has been reduced by 50%.

While a 100% state match was never contemplated as being probable when the CPA was passed by the legislature and adopted by Lincoln, it was made possible by the significant refinancing activity of the early 2000s (the state matching funds come from filing fees at the state Registries of Deeds), coupled with the slow adoption rate of the CPA by cities and towns in Massachusetts. As more cities and towns have adopted the CPA, and the number of recordings with the state Registries of Deeds have decreased, it is now projected that the state match will fall below 100% for the first time commencing with the match against the CPA surcharge for FY 2008). Estimates of the state match going forward fall between 40% and 70%. Legislation is currently pending on Beacon Hill to modify the mechanism used to fund the state match. This legislation, if passed in its current state, would guarantee a minimum state match of 75%.

Even if the state match were to decline to only 50%, the town's direct cost of any CPA funded project would still be only two-thirds of the total cost, with the state fund making up the balance. There are still key parcels of open space in Lincoln that are candidates for preservation. Preservation of the town's historic buildings - Bemis Hall, the Library, the Pierce House, Town Hall and Codman Farm - can be CPA funded. Lincoln still needs more affordable housing. As long as the state match continues at any level, the town can undertake these projects at a reduced cost.

The committee is now in the process of reviewing proposals for funding to be considered at the 2008 Town Meeting. In evaluating proposals, the committee considers the following factors:

- consistency with Lincoln's vision, its Housing, Open Space and Recreation Plans, and other planning documents that have received town-wide review and input.
- whether the project has support of relevant town committees or organizations. (e.g. Conservation Commission, Recreation Committee, Historic Commission, Housing Commission, etc.)
- if the project helps preserve threatened resources or currently owned town assets.
- if the project serves multiple needs and populations.
- if the project serves a population that is currently underserved.
- whether the project can realistically be accomplished within the time frame and budget that is proposed.
- the impact of a delay in initiating this project.

The committee also considers demonstrated support for the project as shown by additional fundraising through grants or private donations.

We also have a Questionnaire available on the town web site as a way to solicit input from town residents into the town's community preservation needs. If you have not already done so, please take the time to complete and submit the Questionnaire to us.

## **WATER COMMISSION**

The Department is approaching five years of operations with the micro-filtration plant and we are being told by U. S. Filter/Seimens, the supplier of the filtration equipment, that a new low flow pressure technology is available and we should seriously consider retrofitting the plant to accommodate this technology. We are currently looking at their proposal and believe the upgrade may be necessary in the near future. We have funds available so there would be no impact upon water rates or a need for a Town sponsored bond.

The Commissioners are pleased with the direction the Department is going. We continue to promote water conservation and even though it was a particularly dry summer, water consumption is in line with expectations. The three tiered water rate appears to have raised resident awareness and the need to conserve water. We still need to do more to educate residents and make incentives available to further promote conservation.

We look forward to the SOTT meeting and hope to answer any questions residents may have about the department.

## PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board has completed its review of two major projects in town: the Deaconess Abundant Life Communities' development of 197 dwelling units with associated services for the over-62 population ("The Groves") and the Rural Land Foundation's expansion of the Mall at Lincoln Station. Both projects were granted special permits in line with the preliminary development and use plans approved by Town Meeting under the Town's overlay district procedures. Details such as architecture, traffic circulation, pedestrian links and lighting were subjected to scrutiny and the Board looks forward to seeing two high quality developments materialize.

Other smaller scale site plan reviews have included a number of new houses involving teardowns of smaller homes, as well as additions and some major accessory structures. Cell phone companies are showing renewed interest in expanding their coverage, causing pressure for higher or additional towers and for a new site in the western part of town.

Work has continued on the Comprehensive Long Range Plan. A public meeting was held in June, where participants identified their high-priority issues, and the topic-based sub-committees have been holding discussions and gathering background information. The Steering Committee has hired a consultant to support plan preparation, as authorized at the March Town Meeting. Community Opportunities Group was awarded the contract and has commenced work.

The Town's Land Use Permitting Guide has been completed and published on the website. This is aimed at giving potential applicants a clearer understanding of the roles and procedures of Town boards.

Advocacy of the Route 2 Crosby's Corner reconstruction project has helped to keep its high priority in the State's programming of projects, and the 75% design plans have now been received. However, steep escalation of costs is a cause for continued attention concerning funding.

The Board of Selectmen is analyzing the implications of a proposal for commercial development at the intersection of Winter Street and Old County Road, near the Waltham town line, and they have reconvened the At Risk Properties Committee to assist in the analysis. The proposal can only move forward if Town Meeting rezones the land. The Planning Board will examine the results of the At Risk Properties Committee's analysis and provide its land use-related comments for consideration by the Town.

The Planning Board is beginning to consider potential changes to the Zoning Bylaw for next Town Meeting, including a simpler permit procedure for signs, better control of outdoor lighting, and rules to address installation of alternative energy equipment by homeowners. Ideas are welcome.

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Land stewardship is the focus for this State of the Town Report. This multi-faceted topic is currently receiving a lot of attention, both locally and throughout Massachusetts. Lincoln just completed a fully revised Open Space and Recreation Plan (still awaiting State approval) and this Plan clearly shows the need and the desire of the community to have ecologically sound land management on conservation land. The period of acquisition of large land parcels is nearing an end and now attention is shifting to how to care for and manage this land.

The Conservation Commission is responsible for the municipally owned tracts of conservation land and for the private conservation restrictions for which the Town is the Grantee. However, we coordinate and collaborate with the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust and other organizations and agencies that own open space within our borders. These property holdings are worth an incredible amount, both in monetary terms but more importantly in natural resource value. It is the Commission's responsibility to ensure that these lands are preserved for future generations.

Lincoln as a whole has always been proactive in regards to open space stewardship. However, we are facing new challenges that are largely driven by the increase in human population in the region coupled with the overall decrease of available open space. The Conservation Commission works hard to balance multiple uses on the ground while still being protective of our natural resources. One thing we know for sure is that the landscape can and does change dramatically over time. The natural landscape changes with surrounding development, drainage changes, fire, drought, shifts in plant and animal populations, changes in trail use, agricultural enterprises and more. We need to remain flexible to be able to respond to today's challenges and those that may arise in the future.

This is where it gets more difficult. Often there is no one correct answer but decisions need to be made. It is important that residents provide feedback to the Commission to guide the decision making process and it is also important to acknowledge that decisions will not always be ones that everyone is in favor of implementing. The volunteer Commission does its best to make sound decisions with available information.

One example is the arrival of a new beaver family several years ago along "Beaver Dam Brook" in Mount Misery. The flooding affected trees, trails, and agricultural land but wildlife habitat is one of the values of conservation land. Beaver dam ponds provide excellent habitat for a variety of wildlife not just for the beavers themselves. Options ranged from letting nature take its course without intervention to lethal trapping combined with dam removal. Ultimately a variety of culvert pipes and protective fencing were employed to allow water levels to remain at a manageable level. This was a middle ground that allowed for some but not all of the agricultural land to remain in production and allowed for the beavers to survive but not in an ideal environment. This situation will certainly evolve over time and the Commission may need to address the issue again as the changes occur.

In September there was an Invasive Species Summit held to educate residents and organizations about non-native plants that threaten our ecosystem by spreading rapidly and outcompeting our native plants. These plants are found in aquatic and upland environments and there is a current trend where the number of species and their spread

is on the increase. This is a new view of forestry that Lincoln needs to address to keep our woodlands healthy. We are dedicated to doing control and eradication work on these plants using the Conservation Staff, volunteers, and coordinating with other groups such as LLCT, the DPW, and the Garden Club. This control work dovetails nicely with the new initiative for roadside care being carried out by the DPW and Garden Club. We still need to increase our staff levels if we are going to turn back the tide of invasives. The Commission is submitting a proposal to the CPC to fund invasives management by employing summer youth workers. We also have a request in to the Capital Committee for purchasing a dumptruck to replace our utility box pickup truck. This will greatly expand the land management capabilities of the Conservation Staff.

In managing the land we realize that there is a significant human component in addition to the natural biodiversity found out in the field. Approximately 200 acres of Town land are in agricultural production of various types. Our extensive trail system provides recreational opportunities for many users including hikers, skiers, horse back riders, runners, dog walkers, bicyclists, birders, school groups etc. Balancing these uses with natural resource values such as water quality and wildlife habitat is an area of real concern for the Commission and one that receives extensive attention.

Recently the Commission hosted a public forum to get feedback on trail use. One need that was discussed was for better transportation connectivity throughout Lincoln for children and adults. One way that the Commission is considering addressing that need is opening up a limited number of additional trails on Town land to the use of bicycles to create key connections. In the past the very difficult decision to close most of the trails to bicycles was made. Now that times have changed it is appropriate to revisit past decisions in light of what Lincoln is currently experiencing.

Another difficult and polarizing issue that the Commission is grappling with is the possibility of controlling the deer population through the limited use of bow hunting. No decisions have been made on whether or not this will happen here in Lincoln but the Commission is doing its best to understand the issues associated with deer and deer hunting on public land. Bringing the issue to a public forum (held on October 17<sup>th</sup>) seemed to be the best way to get a sense of the Town. The Commissioners will then take this information and come to a decision on whether or not hunting should be allowed at this point in time.

This is a snapshot of some of what the Conservation Commission is dealing with these days. These are not easy issues and they do not have clear right and wrong answers. We do have healthy land and land use at this time and fully expect that to continue in the coming years.

## HOUSING COMMISSION

Lincoln Housing Commission oversees the Town's Affordable Housing program. It administers 6 Town-owned rental houses, monitors the sale and resale of owner occupied affordable units, and works with the Selectmen and Town Boards to facilitate the development of additional affordable housing. The Commission's goals are outlined in Lincoln's Comprehensive Housing Plan passed at the 2003 Town Meeting. Lincoln was the first Town in Massachusetts to have a Comprehensive Housing Plan certified by the Commonwealth.

### **Housing Commission's Report Card**

In FY07-FY08 the Housing Commission:

- ❖ Completed 2 new units of affordable housing on Sunnyside Lane.
  - Both units were rented through a lottery process and are occupied.
- ❖ Completed the addition of an accessory apartment to 30 Sunnyside Lane.
  - Built by students from Minuteman Regional High School.
  - Unit in the process of being rented through the lottery.
- ❖ Following the town's review of all town owned properties we
  - added an upstairs bathroom to 65 Tower Road;
  - repaired insect damage to 65 Tower Road;
  - replaced a picture window at 30 Sunnyside Lane;
  - replaced the water heaters at both 65 and 75 Tower Road.
  - are now assessing any additional work which needs to be done at 65 Tower Road.
- ❖ Continues to monitor the affordability of Accessory Apartments.
  - DHCD has developed guidelines under the Local Initiative Program which we are now reviewing.
  - We continue to work with a number of owners of Accessory Apartments who do rent to individuals meeting the town's current criteria
- ❖ Monitors the Minuteman Commons 55 Plus development in North Lincoln
  - To insure that it meets Town Meeting specifications for affordable units
  - The 6 affordable units are all under agreement or sold.
- ❖ Continue to work with the Selectmen and The Groves (Deaconness).
  - The LIP application for the affordable rental units has been submitted to DHCD.
- ❖ Continue to participate on the Lincoln Housing Trust.
- ❖ Participates on the Long Range Planning Committee and is updating the Lincoln Comprehensive Housing Plan.

## ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS

### Activities, Concerns, and Challenges

- Activities. The ZBA continues to apply the Zoning Bylaw to a wide variety of construction projects proposed by residents, primarily on nonconforming lots. The frothy housing market has increased the number of tear-downs - or reconstruction projects as we must treat them - but we have been able to deal with these cases under current provisions. For big houses and other cases, we have developed procedures to coordinate our consideration with that of the Planning Board and other Boards. These procedures are intended to minimize delay. We have a very capable clerk to assist us, but see 4 below.
- 2. Concerns. This year we were faced with an application (ongoing) by a cell phone company to build a tower outside the approved overlay districts in Town. Applications for cell towers are usually the purview of the Planning Board, but this is the third time the ZBA has had to deal with the subject because the applicant claimed that the existing districts did not suit his needs. We hope not to have to deal with these cases often, but cell phone transmission technology does not appear to be keeping up with the purported demand for services.
- 3. Challenges. We are considering changes to our procedures for administering accessory apartments. Most of the outstanding 80 special permits for apartments in Town require the owner to apply for renewal every three years or when the property is sold. These requirements are almost universally honored in the breach, and the result is legal uncertainty. The Town last year again showed that it is strongly in favor of accessory apartments, and we hope to streamline our procedures.
- 4. More challenges. We are operating with only 5 Board members who can regularly attend meetings, which makes scheduling hearings difficult and can result in delays. Our pleas for interested persons to apply to the Selectmen to fill the 3 open associate seats have so far been unanswered. We are a rather congenial Board and encourage inquiries.

## LINCOLN COUNCIL ON AGING

### Update on key issues presented last year:

- **Staffing** – Our number one priority presented last year was to expand from 1 full time and 1 half time staff to 2 full time staff positions in order to maintain the current level of service and programs, as well as have room for expansion. After a careful search process, the COA has selected a new Assistant Director for the full time position. Current Assistant Director, Liz King, is retiring on December 3. Plans are to start the new Assistant Director as soon as possible to have some overlap time with the current Assistant Director, for training purposes.
- **Comprehensive Long Range Plan** - Participate in the development of the Lincoln Comprehensive Long Range Plan to include: (a) Evaluation of the need for a Van operated by the Town to meet the transportation needs of residents; (b) Evaluation of the need for a town wide Community Center to meet the needs of residents of all ages, including teens, adults, and seniors; and (c) Development of a housing plan for seniors and others not needing large single family homes. **Board Chair Bob Sutherland and Vice-Chair Fez Morse are actively involved in the planning process of the Comprehensive Long Range Plan Committee.**

### Coming Year Key Issues

1. Make a smooth transition between retiring part time Assistant Director and new full time Assistant Director, with some overlap time of staffing in order to allow for training.
2. Transition social work functions currently performed by Director to new Assistant Director, thus freeing Director for more planning and implementation of programs, and administrative duties.
3. Expand activities to Fridays.
4. Develop new social work initiatives such as support groups, committee of social support volunteers.
5. Expand the office assistant volunteer program to two volunteers a day, morning and afternoon, to greet visitors, answer phones, etc. This frees staff up to perform other duties.
6. Convert newsletter to new book style format and continue to perfect it over the year.
7. Continue to be involved in the long range planning process, as it relates to Lincoln seniors.

## LINCOLN COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

We are pleased that the Town of Lincoln is taking a pro-active look at our facilities and infrastructure, and giving appropriate thought to what changes need to be made to meet our community's future needs. As the Town enters this analysis-and-planning period it is important to remember that any planning must involve consideration of the needs of people with all levels of ability and varying accessibility needs. The leaders of these planning efforts should seek the input of the Lincoln Commission on Disabilities to ensure that issues of accessibility are fully vetted for any projects involving town buildings, affordable housing or infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks or commuter rail stations. We wish to remind people that we all face issues of accessibility needs at the various stages of our lives – be it the young mother juggling toddlers and strollers while attempting to enter the doorway of a public facility, or an adult experiencing a recent knee replacement, or an individual who lives with a physical or mental handicap on a daily basis. It is our sincere hope that any planning for future facility and infrastructure projects should take the needs of all levels of accessibility into consideration, and should, whenever possible, include design features that offer the highest level of ease of accessibility.

The Lincoln Commission on Disabilities is actively working in collaboration with our town departments to conduct the mandated accessibility "Self Evaluation". This evaluation requires that we analyze all town facilities, and all programs or services we provide to the public to identify areas where we lack true accessibility. We hope to have this task completed later this year or early in 2008. The results of this study will then inform the Town as to areas of structural or programmatic improvement that are needed in the future. This information will be shared with all town officials, and is intended to be considered in the comprehensive long range planning work that is currently underway.

Much of the work of the Lincoln Commission on Disabilities is that of raising the consciousness level of the public as to accessibility issues. We are available to assist townspeople regarding any issue related to disability. We encourage people to contact us to provide insight or to seek information in confidence.

We may be reached through our Ex Officio member Asst. Town Administrator Anita Scheipers at 781-259-2603, or at [scheipersa@lincolntown.org](mailto:scheipersa@lincolntown.org), or by mailing to Ms. Scheipers attention at Town Offices, 16 Lincoln RD., Lincoln MA 01773. All communications will be kept in confidence.