

Northside News



Captain William Smith house, Minute Man National Historical Park

Lincoln's Neighborhood Newsletter

January 29, 2017

What's Hot

SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE! - SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, February 12, 12:30 - 2:30 PM Nominees for the Board of Selectmen will come to North Lincoln for a Candidates' Forum - Bring Your Questions and Concerns! (See *Forum below*)

McLean Hospital Files Lawsuit Against the Town for Blocking Its Plan for a Psychotherapeutic Facility on Bypass Road, Next Stop - Massachusetts Land Court (See *McLean Hospital below*)

Minuteman Tech Finalizes Plans for its New School Building in Lincoln; Planning Board Meetings Begin on February 14th (See *Minuteman Tech below*)

Town Meeting to Consider Plans for Large Solar Panel Array Near the Transfer Station (See *Solar Project at the Transfer Station below*)

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Candidates' Forum



A map showing the location of the Candidates' Forum

Mark your calendars! We're hosting a forum for the candidates who are running for the two open seats on the Board of Selectmen. This is a great opportunity to exchange ideas and concerns with folks who will be managing the town on our behalf over the next few years. We'll learn what they think about the issues facing the north side of Town, and they will learn what WE think! And you can participate without having to cross Route 2 !!!

The meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 12, from 12:30 - 2:30 PM. It will be held at the Lincoln North office building at 55 Old Bedford Road. We are grateful to the owner, Larry Smith of Concord, for graciously allowing us to use the facility for this meeting. Driving directions: Head north on Hanscom Drive, then turn left onto Old Bedford Road just before the entrance to Hanscom Field Airport. The large office building will be on your left, just beyond the entrance to Battle Road Farms.

McLean Hospital



Residences at 16 and 22 Bypass Road

McLean Hospital is suing the Town. McLean's attempt to put a psychotherapeutic facility in two adjacent residences on Bypass Road has been blocked by the Lincoln Zoning Board of Appeals (the "ZBA"). On November 3rd, the ZBA decided that the facility was not primarily "educational" and that it therefore did not qualify under Massachusetts law for an exemption from our local zoning. McLean is hoping that the Land Court will reverse the ZBA's decision and rule that their proposed use of the property is "educational."

According to documents provided by McLean, the proposed facility would treat young men aged 15 -21 "struggling with mood disorders, anxiety and depression." Patients would typically stay at the facility for 90 - 120 days. Their treatment would not be covered by medical insurance, and McLean would charge each patient approximately \$1000 per day out-of-pocket.

McLean's plans were first disclosed to the Town in mid-April 2016. Residents in the Bypass Road/Brooks Road/Smith Hill Road neighborhood quickly banded together to learn about, and ultimately oppose, the project. They hired an attorney to represent them as McLean attempted to get permits from the Town.

Now that McLean has appealed the ZBA's decision in state court, the Town will defend the ZBA's decision. The Town's lawyer and the residents' lawyer will work together to make the defense of the ZBA's decision as efficient as possible.

One of the members of the residents' group, Robyn Laukien, spoke with us.

"It's a shame that it's come to this. What's happened here put McLean and residents on a collision course, and it didn't have to happen. McLean spent almost \$ 3 million on two properties before finding out whether they could get the permits they needed. They should have made sure they could get permits before they purchased the properties."

McLean may have been encouraged to purchase the properties by early release to the public (and McLean) of an advisory opinion of Lincoln's Town Counsel Joel Bard that the proposed use of the properties was "educational" and could therefore proceed under the Massachusetts law that protects non-profit education. In an unusual sequence of events, Bard's opinion was published on Lincoln's town web site in early May, prior to the filing of any permit application by McLean and prior to any fact-finding by the Planning Board or the Zoning Board of Appeals.

the serious environmental issues in the area: the site and surrounding land sit well within the City of Cambridge's protected watershed which requires vigilant protection. He also noted that his team has made significant efforts to design the new building and site plan in a manner that respects the National Park.

Over the course of the one hour meeting, school officials responded to questions about height, disturbance of existing topography, effectiveness of screening by trees, exterior lighting, parking, building exterior appearance, construction noise, and emergency access from Mill Street. The school will attend a preliminary meeting with the Lincoln Planning Board on February 14, followed by a formal site plan review hearing on February 28. Both meetings will take place at the Lincoln Town Offices.

Detailed plans for the project may be viewed by clicking the link on the home page of the Lincoln website, www.lincolntown.org. The Town has hired a consultant to review the plans, with the consultant's fee paid by Minuteman High School. The consultant's notes and report will be posted on the town website as they become available.

Solar Project at the Transfer Station



Proposed Solar Site on Capped Landfill (left); Nearby conservation trail (right)

The capped landfill adjacent to the town Transfer Station may soon be covered with 6 acres of solar panels. This year's annual Town Meeting will be asked to approve the project and release the conservation restriction that currently restricts re-use of the land. The Town Meeting vote will mark an important milestone in the multi-year effort to enhance Lincoln's status as a "Green Community" by offsetting with a renewable source approximately 50% of the Town's municipal demand for electricity.

According to John Snell, a member of the Town's Solar Photovoltaic Working Group, the present plan is to enter into an agreement with a solar company that will install, operate, and maintain the system at no cost to the Town. The Town will benefit by purchasing electricity from the provider under a power purchase agreement at a contract price that will likely be at or less expensive than the price charged by our present supplier, Eversource. Tax credits and incentives are claimed by the solar company and do not directly benefit the Town but do figure into the pricing of the power purchase agreement. Massachusetts is currently formulating new incentives to replace older programs that have expired, so it is not known at this time how large the Town's savings, if any, will be.

If Town Meeting approves the project, there are additional approvals that must be obtained. The Massachusetts legislature must approve removal of the conservation restriction and Eversource must approve connection of the system to the electric grid. In addition, the Town will coordinate neighborhood-specific details with Minute Man National Historical Park and other landfill abutters through the Planning Board's site plan review process.

More detail about this project can be found on the town website at www.lincolntown.org. The Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 25th, in the auditorium at the Lincoln School campus.

Editorial Board

Steve Durante, Bob Domnitz, Maria Hylton, Jane Herlacher

Northside News is a community based newsletter designed to foster communication and advocacy for the residents of North Lincoln.

Our goal is to keep everyone in the neighborhood informed about issues that uniquely affect our part of Lincoln. Please let us know if you would like to contribute articles or join us on the Editorial Board.

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