

**From:** [John andMelissa Mitchell-Hooge](#)  
**To:** [Jacqueline Schad](#)  
**Subject:** For Public Comment -- Lincoln Playground & Playing Field -- Joint Meeting with APRC 4/27/21  
**Date:** Monday, April 26, 2021 3:33:19 PM

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Dear Members of the Ashland School Board and Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission,

Thank you all so very much for having this Joint Meeting. It means so much to our group. I'm very sorry that I will not be able to speak during the meeting but I'll be watching the meeting at home and I'm very excited that it's taking place.

Regarding the future of the Lincoln school grounds, we are hopeful that a positive and permanent solution can be found so that this issue doesn't fall into the laps of Ashland citizens for a third time.

I'm of the mind that it's really something that members of the School Board in 2003 should have dealt with but for some reason they did not. Maybe it's partly the benefit of hindsight, but I think that they should have reached out to the Parks Commission at that time to try to work out a deal regarding preserving both Briscoe & Lincoln school parks as both are much-used and both are vital to the health of our community. Lincoln is in an under served neighborhood which makes it that much more important to preserve.

Here are a couple of ideas that we're excited about and that might be worth exploring... but keep in mind that these are just ideas and you all might come up with some even better ideas. We would like to see all of the options on the table, discussed, and debated.

- 1.) It doesn't have to be a sale, it could be a long term lease (50 - 100 years).
- 2.) It doesn't have to be the full 4 acres.
- 3.) First right of refusal granted to the Parks Department would be much appreciated and would serve as an insurance policy for our community.
- 4.) Another great idea is a Community Benefits Agreement that would be a long term written contract between ASD and the Parks Department and could include other issues, as well.

We fully realize that the Parks Department is not in a position to take on the purchase or maintenance of the playground and playing fields at this time due to COVID-19 budget constraints as well as other funding concerns that APRC is currently faced with.

But this situation is unique in that there are many options available to us and the solution does not necessarily need to begin tomorrow. A deal could be reached, for example, that starts a few years down the line, allowing time for budgets to rebound after the COVID crisis.

We're confident that you will find a solution that is positive for our community. Thank you very much for your time, your effort, and your dedication to public service.

With much appreciation for all that you do,  
Melissa Mitchell-Hooge  
Save Our Schools & Playgrounds and Friends of Lincoln Park