

Mayor's Corner April 2025

What is the Community Hub?

By Elspeth McLean-Wile

The District of Lunenburg has been involved in several community engagement sessions with community groups and individuals from across the District, discussing the opportunities that a Community Hub could provide.

From those discussions it became very clear that there was a lot of confusion about how the Community Hub came to be a project the District was considering. Questions such as, “Who is paying for the hub and what will be the benefit to the District?” were raised.

The original idea to build a facility located in Osprey Village that could add a “community component” to the shopping area was introduced in 2020. The idea was to have a place where people could gather and experience community events and activities. When the work to evaluate this opportunity was completed Council felt it was too expensive a project to proceed.

In 2021, the District was approached by Lumia Health, who was interested in developing a health centre on the site that the District previously considered for the Community Hub. The Lumia Health concept is brought to the area by Partners for Care, an independent, non-profit partner of Nova Scotia Health. Lumia Health is a collaborative organization of health care providers complementing the primary health care system (not to be confused with a US company of the same name).

Their mission is to partner with businesses to improve healthcare and make life easier for patients, health providers and communities across Nova Scotia. Lumia Health would include health care providers like mental health workers, dental care practitioners, dietitian services, optometry, physiotherapy, massage therapy, pharmacy, hearing therapy, naturopathy, and a sexual health clinic.

The building will also include a café that will serve the people visiting and working in the building and the broader community.

Lumia Health partnered with two private developers to build the project, Lindsay Construction and RCS Construction Inc. The District sold the land to Lumia Health in February 2025 following a lengthy development period where Lumia Health worked to acquire tenants for the building and secure financing.

What is our involvement beyond selling the land? The District is committed to being a tenant in the building. This is the reason we are working to develop a plan for the use of the

space given the private sector is constructing the building that could house a community hub.

Recently we held two meetings with representatives of the community looking at the opportunity for an additional farmers' market and/or meeting space for groups. There were concerns raised about creating another market that could compete for vendors and customers with the existing weekly markets throughout the South Shore. The need for some commercial kitchen space that could be used by vendors making value-added products was raised, and the need for meeting space was raised by many groups in attendance at the meeting.

Council will receive a report in the next few weeks on what we heard at the public meetings. We will then need to consider the best direction to take for the space.

We will want to consider the impact the Community Hub might have on other organizations and activities in the community, configuration of the space to allow for maximum flexibility, and the management of the space. We want to add to the offerings in the community and not compete with existing businesses and organizations.

Lumia Health has started work on the project and has begun clearing the site during the last month. They anticipate completion in 2026.

You will hear a lot more about this project in the months to come as Council makes decisions about the best direction to take in serving the community.