

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

October 9, 2017

Tracy Corr opened the meeting on Monday, October 9, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City/County/Building, in Lincoln, NE.

Attendance

Eight residents and four City staff attended:

Tracy Corr – 40 th & A NA	Russ Irwin – Clinton NA
Jennifer Powell – Country Club NA	Myrna Coleman – Highlands NA
Dennis Hecht -- Meadowlane Area RA	Keith Roland – University Place CO
Bill Vocasek – West A NA	Randy Smith – Woods Park NA
Lin Quenzer – Mayor's Office	Jon Carlson – Mayor's Office
Wynn Hjermstad – Urban Development Dept.	Mayor Beutler

Welcome & Introductions

Everyone introduced themselves. Jon Carlson agreed to take meeting notes.

Mayor's Comments

Mayor talked about the upcoming budget process and the impact of State-imposed restrictions on growth. He discussed how Lincoln has been so successful over the past decade, growing not only in size and population, but also in the quality of opportunity and services for our residents. He said that investments in streets, parks, public safety, sidewalks and more have grown a very high quality of life. However, there is a barrier to growth threatening our future. The State of Nebraska only allows city budgets to grow 2.5% each year. With City Council approval, that level of growth could be higher -- 3.5% per year.

The Mayor explained that this has nothing to do with raising or lowering taxes. This merely allows the City the authority to spend money that is already budgeted and collected. For example, we grow revenues with the new property taxes from new homes and businesses. We also grow revenues from increased hotel stays or sales tax purchases. In the last few years, the City has also received additional revenues from State gas taxes and other state aid. All of those revenues help to pay for the needs of a growing city without raising the property tax rate. However, you cannot spend any of those revenues if you hit the State-imposed growth barrier. This is why it is so important for Lincoln, like other growing cities, to include the extra 1% allowed with Council approval.

The Mayor said this should not be a controversial issue. Hundreds of Nebraska cities and counties routinely approve the additional 1% growth increase to protect key services. The Lancaster County Board has approved it every year since at least 2006. Omaha, Bellevue, Papillion, Fremont, Norfolk, Kearney, and almost every other large city in Nebraska approves the additional 1% growth increase as a regular part of doing business. In fact, all of these cities and counties approve it despite the very high standard for approval required by the state: 75% of the governing body must vote in favor.

Unfortunately, Lincoln has not followed the rest of the State in this case. For seven of the last nine years, the City Council has chosen not to allow our community the additional 1% growth. While the majority of Council members consistently approve of the additional growth, the state standard of 75% approval cannot be met if even two Council members vote no. Over time, that means just two of seven Council members can eventually stop Lincoln from growing.

This is a very important issue. The Mayor hopes neighborhood leaders can help others in the community understand the serious need to take action to keep Lincoln strong.

The group commented that more Lincolnites need to understand that this choice is not about raising taxes. It is about having the spending authority to reinvest the revenues that are already coming to the city. Who wants to live in a city with declining services?

Lincoln City Libraries Facilities Plan Updates

Pat Leach, Library Director, Lincoln City Libraries: 402-441-8510; p.leach@lincolnlibraries.org

Pat Leach spoke about the Lincoln City Library (LCL) Facilities plan, "What do you call a community center that focuses on learning, literacy and literature? A library." Although conventional books are still in demand (research shows millennials prefer print books), modern libraries have to accommodate community needs beyond books and be multi-purpose, multi-media places.

LCL has been studying a new central library and updates at branch libraries. The service area of the current downtown library has a bigger population (within a two-mile radius) than any branch library. The area's diverse demographics include the highest percentage of low-income persons of all the Lincoln City libraries. LCL is considering how best to serve that population. Given the needed programming, a 90,000 – 100,000 sq. ft. building will be necessary. Any new location will need to house meeting rooms, technology, collections, media, virtual service, book processing, administration, the Polley Music Library, the Heritage Room of Nebraska Authors, and more.

Updates for neighborhood libraries include system-wide investments in processing library materials more quickly and efficiently, children's learning & discovery areas, and a variety of library-specific improvements. [See Attachment 1.](#)

Pat answered questions from the group about their neighborhood libraries. A Roundtable attendee asked if it would be possible to sell Bennet Martin as part of the revenue for a new central library. Leach said it could possibly be a part of the package.

Announcements

- The City's online Action Center began serving Lincoln residents in 2005. There have been software advances in the intervening 12 years. To tap into those advances the City is updating the Action Center to a program called *SeeClickFix*. The transition from Action Center to *SeeClickFix* will occur on Wednesday, November 8th. *SeeClickFix* has the same mobile capacity, but much broader feedback capabilities. For example, *SeeClickFix* can tell you if your issue has already been reported, ask questions to refine your issue, and automatically link into City workflow software.
- Russ Irwin expressed appreciation for the improvements on N. 33rd Street.

Next Meeting/Agenda

The next meeting of the Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable will be November 13, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. The topic will be *SeeClickFix*.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at about 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by Jon Carlson

LINCOLN CITY LIBRARIES FACILITIES PLAN

Lincoln City Libraries Facilities Plan addresses the basic physical structures of each building, and also looks into the future to note how rearrangement, reallocation of spaces, furnishings, and technology will strengthen our ability to serve the community.

The plan provides in-depth information regarding each branch library. Highlights include:

Areas for Special Investment Systemwide —

- **RFID:** Items with RFID tags may be processed as a single group; they do not require handling of items one-by-one as barcodes do. Greatly improves library efficiency, and saves time for library customers.
- **Children’s Learning Discovery Areas:** Create areas that excite children’s imaginations and support effective learning including developmental play opportunities through furnishings and semi-permanent exhibits that support literacy, learning, and literature.

Anderson Branch Library—

- Expanding this library to the edge of the roofline, which would add 1,446 additional square feet to the current 11,000 square feet. This additional space would allow for study rooms and additional meeting room space, teen space, technology area, and staff work space.
- Deferred maintenance projects include replacement of parking lot and a variety of smaller projects to freshen, update, and rearrange the interior for better customer service.

Bethany Branch Library—

- Deferred maintenance projects including maintenance and repair of concrete blocks and brick areas, replacement of framing and glass in windows. Additional projects include installation of additional electrical outlets and lounge seating.

Eiseley Branch Library—

- Major rearrangement of the service areas including new Technology Center, expanded Teen Space, acoustic treatment to contain sound, and improved staff monitoring; ability to use adjacent outdoor patio and park amphitheater;
- Deferred and related maintenance projects include repair and cleaning of outdoor areas, and changing lighting in the spine to LED lamps, replacement of linoleum floor in the lobby, modular carpet in the meeting rooms, fiberboard cabinet surfaces, and all lounge furniture.

Gere Branch Library--

- Recommendations include reducing shelving areas to create a significant assembly/programming space, Maker Space, and general seating spaces, adding access to outdoor programming spaces, and reconfiguring the service desks into smaller more flexible areas.
- Deferred maintenance projects include expanded and reconfigured drive-up book drop, boiler replacement, cooling for Server Room and Lobby, exterior signage, refreshing interior finishes, adding sound absorption panels in programming and hard ceiling areas, solar shades, and replacement of worn furnishings.

South Branch Library—

- Recommendations include reconfiguring the main entrance and providing a more extensive Teen Space through rearrangement in addition to an overall electrical upgrade. Deferred maintenance projects include linoleum replacement, carpet replacement, selective painting, and selective furniture replacement.

Walt Branch Library—

- Deferred maintenance projects include replacing linoleum floor in the lobby, modular carpet in the meetings rooms, fiberboard cabinet surfaces, and all lounge furniture. Add acoustical sound panels throughout the building and more resilient materials in areas where the walls are damaged.

Williams Branch Library—

- A more flexible service desk is needed for this branch in order to better serve customers. Most interior finishes are still in good condition.