

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

June 8, 2020

Tracy Corr opened the meeting, held via Zoom, on Monday, June 8 at 5:30 p.m.

Attendance

Nineteen residents and five City staff attended:

Tracy Corr – 40 th & A NA	Gloria Eddins – Clinton NA
Richard Piersol – Country Club NA	Karen Dienstbier – Eastridge NA
Paula Baker – Everett NA	Greg Baker – Everett NA
Sue Burkey – Hartley NA	Pat Stier – Hartley NA
Andy Gueck – Indian Village NA	Geri Cotter – Irvingdale NA
Pat Bracken – Irvingdale NA	Dennis Hecht – Meadowlane Area RA
Mike DeKalb – University Place CO	Bill Vocasek – West A NA
Fred Freytag – Witherbee NA	Russell Miller – Witherbee NA
Randy Smith – Woods Park NA	Lindsay Limbach – Family Resource Center
Sarah Mason - KLLCB	Lin Quenzer – Mayor's Office
Jon Carlson – Mayor's Office	Dan Marvin – Urban Development Dept.
Wynn Hjermsstad – Urban Development Dept	Mayor Gaylor Baird

Welcome & Introductions

Attendees were welcomed and introductions made. Karen Dienstbier volunteered to take notes.

Mayor's Comments

COVID-19

The Mayor opened the Roundtable by reviewing the Directed Health Measures effective June 1 and talking about opening businesses in the city during Covid-19. Bars can be opened to 50% capacity with patrons seated 6 feet apart. She discussed the possibility that, in the future, restaurants and bars may be allowed to spread their businesses onto sidewalks and parking lots or even onto the street in certain areas such as the Haymarket and Southpointe. Spreading out would allow for social distancing and an increase of the number to people being served. If this occurs, each business will have to apply for a special license from the City.

Other decisions that were made regarding the opening up of Lincoln were:

- Athletic clubs will be allowed to open with 25% of capacity where social distancing guidelines can be maintained.
- No soccer games will be allowed at this time.
- There were no changes made to the childcare and restaurant capacities.
- Churches can open, but with restrictions. Some churches are making the decision to stay closed for now.

Pat Lopez, Interim Director of the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department, continues to consider the public health in all of the opening guidelines that she and the Mayor suggest.

Black Lives Matter

The rest of the Mayor's remarks addressed the questions and comments raised in connection with the Black Lives Matter protests that occurred in Lincoln during the end of May and the first part of June. She greatly appreciates what young leaders are doing to organize peaceful protests. Their efforts to express justifiable rage and grief, to build meaningful dialog, and actualize cultural shifts are necessary and commendable.

On May 30th *Emergency Civil Unrest* orders had to be implemented because of the violence and destruction which took place at the EZ gas station near 27th and O streets. Windows were broken, and items were stolen from the gas station. In downtown Lincoln, windows were broken and fires were set in the vicinity of the County City Building and

Lincoln Mall. In addition, the Abraham Lincoln statue on the west side of the State Capitol Building was damaged by spray paint.

The Mayor talked about police brutality and systemic racism. As Mayor, she will do as much as she can to make a cultural shift happen in Lincoln and to keep people in Lincoln safe. She was surprised by the violence that had taken place. She was disappointed in the actions of some of the protesters on the first two nights of protesting when there was destruction of public and private property. People perpetrating crimes of violence will be punished.

With City staff, the Mayor will be reviewing the Lincoln Police Department (LPD) responses to the peaceful protesters. LPD, with the assistance of the Mayor's Multi-Cultural Advisory Committee, will also be reviewing their policies regarding the use of force. They will be working to improve transparency and availability.

To hear directly from residents who want to discuss problems in their neighborhoods, the Mayor, City Council members, and other City officials (including LPD), will hold listening sessions and community conversations throughout Lincoln.

The Mayor is committed to a future Lincoln that is more just and compassionate. She is more interested than ever before in seeing change. The sense that this is a time of possibility and change makes her hopeful.

Questions and comments from the roundtable participants were directed to the Mayor and other City officials in the room:

Question: Can 4th of July parades be held this year?

Answer: The Mayor said that she would have to consult with Pat Lopez, Interim Director of Health Department, to see if something could be arranged safely.

Question: What percent of arrests for vandalism were local people and what percent were out of town agitators?

Answer: The Mayor responded that some of the agitators were from out of town, but most were Lincoln people.

Question: People of color are impacted more by COVID-19 than the white populations. Are those areas of the city being targeted for the Community Conversations?

Answer: Yes, the Mayor will be working with community leaders to organize the Community Conversations, which will be targeting the communities where people of color reside. Steve Joel, Superintendent of Lincoln Public Schools, will also participate in Community Conversations in areas with Community Learning Centers.

Comment: The Mayor remarked that safety is a big issue, as is making people feel comfortable in their surroundings.

Comment: The need for improved access to services for people of color in less advantaged neighborhoods was brought up. Dan Marvin mentioned that they are looking at ways to increase services for people in those areas of the city.

Comment: Push the conversations beyond the Mayor's Office, LPD, and the City Council to also include other departments in City government.

Comment: Some members talked about how quickly groups of volunteers came together after the violence to clean up the mess.

Question: Are there grants that the Asian Community and communities of color can apply for to help their areas of the city?

Question: Is there enough testing for COVID-19 in those areas of the city? Are there places in their communities where they can get tested? Not all residents have access to transportation.

Answer: Mayor said that tests are more available now and anyone wanting to be tested can get tested. The Health Department is looking into having the COVID-19 testing van visit those neighborhoods.

Comment: Several comments were made thanking the Mayor for her hard work during the unrest. They appreciated how well she handled the situation.

And Back to COVID-19

Mayor mentioned that sales tax receipts are down due to COVID-19; City budget will need to be cut to make up the shortfall. She will salvage what she can – she didn't have the full data on tax revenues yet. She is doing what she can to minimize the damage caused by the low receipts.

Some Roundtable attendees were wondering about the impact of the rallies for Black Lives Matter on the COVID-19 increase. The Mayor asked us to go to the daily dashboard to watch for any changes. The dashboard is updated at the end of each week. One can access the dashboard at www.lincoln.ne.gov/covid19/.

July 4th Celebrations?

At the end of the meeting we did discuss a few ideas for celebrating the 4th of July.

- Jon Carlson mentioned the inside-out bike parade where children decorate their bikes and put them in their driveway. The neighbors walk by or drive by to see the bikes in the neighborhood.
- Eastridge will be offering free ice cream cones for an hour or so. There will be no pool open this year.

Announcements

- Wynn mentioned that if the neighborhoods have a Facebook page, or other electronic ways to access their newsletters she can add a link to them in the Neighborhood area of the City website.
- Pat Bracken from Irvingdale asked for ideas for increasing membership. Please send them to INA@NEB.RR.COM.
- Opal has been a member of the City's staff for over 40 years. She is retiring soon. It was suggested that we might want to send her a thank you note and wish her well. She can be reached at ODoerr@lincoln.ne.gov.

Next Meeting/Agenda

Next meeting will be July 13th at 5:30 pm. The topic TBD. If it is via Zoom, an invitation will be sent.

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