

MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE

Monday, May 9, 2022, 5:30 p.m. Via Zoom

Meeting Notes

Welcome and Introductions; Volunteer to Take Notes

Tracy Corr, Chair, began the meeting with introductions. Karen Dienstbier volunteered to take notes. Thirteen residents and four City/County staff attended:

Tracy Corr-40th & A
Gloria Eddins-Clinton
Richard Piersol-Country Club
Karen Dienstbier - Eastridge
Greg Baker-Everett
Pat Stear-Hartley
Andy Gueck – Indian Village

Geri Cotter-Irvingdale
Pat Bracken-Irvingdale
Dennis Hecht - Meadowlane
Teresa Thompson - UPCO
Russell Miller-Witherbee
Tut Kaelech, NeighborWorks Lincoln

Staff: Jon Carlson, Mayor's Office
Dave Engler, Chief, Lincoln Fire and Rescue (presenter)
Mary Carol Bond – Lincoln-Lancaster County Health - KLLCB
Wynn Hjermstad, Urban Development

Mayor Gaylor Baird Comments

Mayor was unable to attend the May Roundtable meeting.

Fire Chief Dave Engler, Lincoln Fire and Rescue (LFR) – 402-441-6822; dengler@lincoln.ne.gov.

- 16 fire stations strategically located around the city.
- Ideally, they would get to your home in 4 minutes – for medical and fire emergency.
- 16 fire engines – hold the water, and are the first responder to medical emergencies.
- Fire fighters riding on the fire trucks are trained to do everything needed for emergency situations except transporting. That must be done by ambulance.
- 4 ladder trucks in Lincoln – carries ground ladders, limits damage, search and rescue is their primary job. 1954 was then the last ladder truck was added.
- Engine companies put out the fire; ladders limit the damage, tarping furniture, technical rescue equipment, their primary duty is search and rescue.
- Ladder truck does salvage work – they get by with the 4 trucks, but they really need to have 6 ladder trucks for the size of Lincoln; they have not kept up with the growth of the city.
- Major ambulance – 7 front line units – 8 minutes priority times; higher priority calls get lights and sirens.
- Lincoln people do not move over for fire trucks the way they should.
- Non-emergencies are considered broken ankle, fire alarm going off at a building, but no fire, or a fire alarm going off at a school, but no fire.
- Critical emergencies are cardiac arrest, or a car fire next to a building, for example.
- 2 battalion chiefs for each shift – one on the south of the city and one on the north.
- There is one Haz Mat unit; they protect the environment. Chemical spills are contained by the fire dept. – the health dept. works in concert with the fire dept for chemical spills.
- In the near future they will be getting a brush rig: a specialized rig to take care of tall grass areas – carries water and other equipment.

- Last year they attended to 30,000 emergencies. By contrast, in 1996 there were around 15,000 – 16,000. There were 13 fire stations then compared to 16 now. With the city growing, the need for their services is growing. LFR has been keeping up fairly well.

Stations:

- Replacement of some of the older fire stations or upgrades: two years ago a study from fire station experts evaluated 11 older facilities. There is no facility manager.
- Analysis was done to determine needs to bring them up to date. Priorities: three need to be torn down and rebuilt. The City has budgeted for a new Station #8, which is 75 years old, located at 17th & Van Dorn. It is built on a cistern which is imploding and is monitored by structural engineers. No new location has been identified; they are contemplating rebuilding at the old location.
- In the meantime, they are looking at options and hope to work with Bryan hospital. The best interim location is the training facility at 3rd and South Street. Response time will be affected. The medical unit and ladder trucks will be moved to other locations.
- The neighborhood will have input on the exterior design of the new building. Hopefully, the timeline will be May of 2024. Cost for the station is projected to be \$11 million, though it could be less than that and excess funds could be used for renovations needed at other stations. Stations need to be a certain size. They will try to include all the surrounding neighborhoods. Demolition will be this fall with a May 2024 completion date.
- Station #17: Future fire station to be located at 40th and Yankee Hill Rd. The land has been purchased. This is a critical location as the area grows. The current location will remain to service existing areas.
- Station # 18 will be in the area of 112th and Van Dorn. Land has not yet been purchased.
- Stations needing upgrades are:
 - The Cotner and A St station is squeezed on the corner. They would like purchase the house next door because it is up for sale. This would give them room to expand.
 - #3 Second and N St – needs to be rebuilt.
 - #9 Cotner and Vine – needs to be rebuilt.
 - O St and Sun Valley Blvd
- The rest of the stations will be renovated at some time in the future. Havelock station has 10 personnel, for example, and just one shower - it will need to be modernized. Some are in worse condition than others.
- LFR wants to be part of the neighborhoods and when feasible, will attend any neighborhood events. Go to the LFR website to complete a form asking for public education or a rig demo. They don't have an education coordinator so this is the best way to make a request.
- Call the fire chief if you have any questions.
- Comments from the group:
 - Thank you to the Fire Dept. for coming to a public event – good job.
 - Most fire depts. do not have time to come to events. Chief Engler said they are making time to attend if there is no pressing need at the time the event is scheduled.
 - Can Fire extinguishers be refurbished? LFR does not do this. Call General Fire Co. to see if they can do maintenance or dispose of your old extinguishers.
 - Do we have EMTs or paramedics? Paramedics are on every engine and medical unit so there are two paramedics on every call. Lincoln has one of the highest response rates in the nation for cardiac arrests – they train daily for cardiac arrests.
 - How much water is carried to a fire? Trucks carry 500 gals of water which is used up in 4 minutes.
 - There was a Hz Mat emergency near UPCO, do you know the outcome? Yes, they were able to cap the leak and bring in contractors to fix the leak. She is grateful.
 - How many LFP employees are there? There are 332.25 employees, 315 sworn fire fighters.

- How is recruitment? It is difficult now. Recruitment is not experiencing the same downturn as the police, but their numbers are going down. The people they do have are high quality folks. The .25 is the postal person who delivers the mail daily to the fire stations.
 - Can you explain Urban Search and Rescue? LFR is the sponsoring agency which is 100 % federally funded. Five people are assigned. Ours is one of the most used in the country because it is a highly trained, great team.
 - What is the average length of employment? Generally, 25 to 30 years for fire fighters to work for the department. Lincoln fire fighters, who are highly trained, are called to disasters in other states.
 - How long does it take to train someone? It takes 19 ½ months, plus a 180 hour course, and a six month probationary period.
 - How many women in the force? More than the national average of females. There are 36 women in the dept right now which is not a lot, but for comparison, Omaha has 37 with double the personnel. More females are coming in the next class this spring. We are doing a good job recruiting.
 - Do you need any volunteer work? No, there isn't much volunteer work available but they do appreciate people stopping to say hello. It is a very stressful job.
- Chief Engler mentioned that not one fire company was out of service due to COVID outbreaks.

Announcements

- Wynn Hjermsstad, Urban Development, announced the *FY22 Annual Action Plan for Federal Entitlements* is available for public review and comment. The Plan describes how federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), HOME, and Emergency Solutions Grant funds (ESG) will be used in the next fiscal year beginning September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023. Funds are used primarily to benefit low-and moderate-income people and neighborhoods, and homeless service providers. The Plan will be before City Council for public hearing on June 13th. It is available on the Urban Development website at Lincoln.ne.gov/urban. The public comment period is open until May 25, 2022.
- Mary Carol Bond with the Health Dept. is now the contact person for Keep Lincoln-Lancaster County Beautiful.
- Kudos to city for the prompt service removing hazardous trees.

Next Meeting / Agenda

The City budget will be presented at the June meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Dienstbier