MAYOR'S NEIGHBORHOOD ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY
June 9, 2014

Tracy Corr opened the meeting on Monday, June 9, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room, City/County/Building, in Lincoln, NE.

Attendance
Fifteen citizens and five staff attended:

Tracy Corr – 40th & A NA
Paul Johnson – East Campus CO
Ed Kelley – Far South NA
Scott Richert – Indian Village NA
Dennis Hecht – Meadowlane Area RA
Rick Bagby – Witherbee NA
Adam Rhoads – Health Department
Mike Renken -- Neighbor®Works-Lincoln
Shirley Schoening Scheuler – Lincoln Public Schools
Roy Christensen – City Council
Rifka Keilson – Country Club NA
Paula Rhian – Everett NA
Myrna Coleman – Highlands NA
Amy Karabel -- Irvingdale NA
Mike DeKalb – University Place CO
Lin Quenzer – Mayor's Office
Sheree Goertzen – Neighbor®Works-Lincoln
Russell Miller – Lincoln Neigh. Alliance
Wynn Hjermstad – Urban Development Dept.
Mayor Beutler

Welcome & Introductions, Volunteer to Take Notes
Meeting was called to order at 5:30 by Chairwoman Corr. Everyone introduced themselves. Adam Rhoads agreed to take notes.

Mayor's Comments
The budget process is not ready for the Mayor to provide a complete update yet, but some points of interest were provided:

- General fund increase of 4%.
- Tax increases will only be to cover storm water bonds.
- Parks and Recreation will be getting some increased funding, mostly to cover the cost of new staff.
- Sidewalk funding will be doubled.
- Work is being done to prepare for the Affordable Care Act, employee medical costs and police & fire pensions.

Micro-Homes *(by Councilman Roy Christensen)* See **Attachment 1**
Mr. Christensen has been working on this project for about a year and a half. In the 1890's, average house sizes were small -- about 800 square feet. Today, the average house size is about 2,200 square feet. Typical micro-homes are much smaller, ranging from 70 to 600 square feet.

Nationally, low-cost, energy-efficient micro-homes are becoming more popular. Hurricane Katrina, the Great Recession and the Green Movement spurred changes in the housing market that increased interest in micro-homes. The micro-home target market includes singles, empty nesters, the low-income / dollar-conscious, and people interested in simplified lifestyle choices.

Micro-homes face several hurdles to becoming a marketable option in Lincoln. One hurdle is unfamiliarity – people don't know what a micro-home is. A potential solution would be construction of a sample micro-home. This could be done by the City or some other agency.

Current zoning and building codes could also be a hurdle. Current requirements do not allow construction of micro-homes *per se*. Encouragingly, NeighborWorks®Lincoln is currently building a "semi" micro-home. While it is not *quite* as small as a micro-home, construction of the house has not triggered any issues regarding zoning or building codes.

Obtaining financing can also be challenging, because the square footage of a micro-home is generally inadequate to qualify for a normal home loan. Possible solutions to this issue might be setting up the micro-homes as investor-owned properties or creating some kind of rent-to-own process.

Some people have voiced a concern that no one would want such small houses except a "slum lord." However, micro-homes are such a big upgrade from typical "slum" houses that this concern loses validity when examined more closely.

There has been some pushback on the micro-home concept from neighborhoods with higher priced homes. They are worried that micro-homes will lower overall house values. There is currently no evidence that micro-homes affect the value of other homes.

Micro-homes are typically built one at a time for or by a person who wants one. There is no plan to build subdivisions of micro-homes all over the City. In fact, one of the advantages of a micro-home is that they can fit on small, undeveloped, non-standard lots. Often these smaller lots exist in older neighborhoods where lots were divided before current platting and zoning regulations existed. If the older housing on these lots deteriorates and ends up being demolished, the lot is left vacant because it is unbuildable given current zoning and building codes. Making it possible to build micro-homes on these lots – filling in the empty space – benefits both neighborhood vitality and property tax revenues. Currently, several vacant, non-standard lots are located in the N. 27th Street Corridor area so this could be a good place to start micro-home building in Lincoln.

Roundtable attendees wanted more details, and invited Mr. Christensen to visit again with a concrete plan and examples.

Announcements and Handouts

- Urban Development Department's *Annual Action Plan* for 2014-15 will be available for a 30-day comment period starting June 21st. A public informational meeting is scheduled for Noon to 1:00 pm on Friday, June 27th, in Conference Room 206 of the County-City Building at 555 S. 10th Street.
- The University Place Farmer's Market starts June 11th.
- Meadowlane garage sales on June 13th-14th.
- Far South annual picnic on June 21st.
- 40th & A / College View garage sales will be the weekend of June 20th
- Clean up your fireworks debris!! **See Attachment 2**
- Neighborhood Block party flyer. **See Attachment 3**

Next Month

A review of the proposed City budget.

Submitted by Adam Rhoads

Attachment 1

Micro Homes

A Brief History of Housing in America

- 1890's avg. 800 sqft. - Bungalow Mania
- 1900 to WWI avg. 1000 sqft. - 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire
- Post WWI to WWII slow growth in home size – Ranch & Cape Cod
- 1960 avg. 1,200 sqft.
- 2000 avg. 2,200 sqft.

Micro Homes/Small Homes

- Approximately 70 to 600 sqft.
- Energy efficient
- Low cost

Micro Home Movement

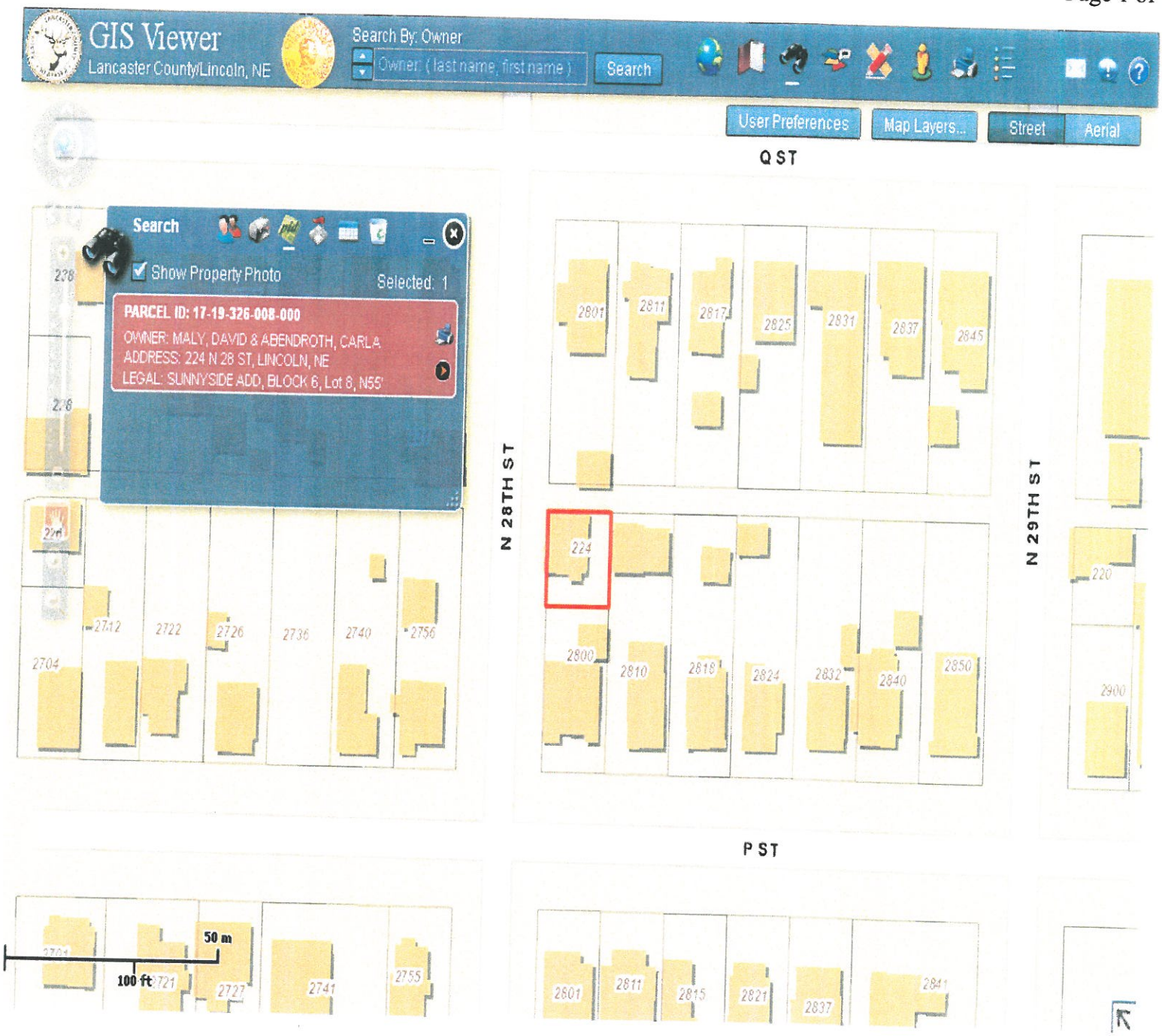
- Katrina
- The Great Recession
- Green Movement

Target Market

- Singles, Couples(old and young)
- Price Conscious
- Lifestyle
- Sustainability

Opening the Door in Lincoln

- Zoning and Code Adjustments
- Build a Model Micro Home


GIS Viewer
Lancaster County/Lincoln, NE
Search By: Owner
Owner: (last name, first name)
Search
User Preferences
Map Layers...
Street
Aerial
Q ST
Search
Show Property Photo
Selected: 1
PARCEL ID: 17-19-326-008-000
OWNER: MALY, DAVID & ABENDROTH, CARLA
ADDRESS: 224 N 28 ST, LINCOLN, NE
LEGAL: SUNNYSIDE ADD, BLOCK 6, Lot 8, N55'
N 28TH ST
N 29TH ST
P ST
50 m
100 ft

GIS Viewer
Lancaster County/Lincoln, NE
Search By: Owner
Owner: (last name, first name)
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3012
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205
136
3009
3015
3023
Map Switcher
GISVIEWER
Public GIS Viewer
Go To
Search
Show Property Photo
Selected: 1
PARCEL ID: 17-19-333-001-000
OWNER: SPATARO, ELISABETH A N
ADDRESS: 135 N 30 ST, LINCOLN, NE
LEGAL: SUNNYSIDE ADD, BLOCK 8, Lot 1, S40' & LOT 2 S40' E25'
50 m
100 ft

135

Attachment 2

If you blow it up, clean it up.

This 4th of July clean up your fireworks debris.

For a clean community • For a healthy environment • To be a good neighbor

KEEP LINCOLN & LANCASTER COUNTY BEAUTIFUL

For more information:
lincoln.ne.gov (keyword: kllcb)
402-441-8035
kllcb@lincoln.ne.gov

Reduce Fireworks Debris in Your Neighborhood

Keep Lincoln & Lancaster County Beautiful can help:

Grants
For post-holiday cleanups

Surveys
Determine extent of the litter problem

Signs
Place in neighborhood to encourage fireworks cleanup

Flyers
Distribute at community events to encourage fireworks cleanup

402-441-8035 or kllcb@lincoln.ne.gov to participate

Attachment 3

LET'S HAVE A NEIGHBORHOOD BLOCK PARTY!

A neighborhood block party is a great opportunity for neighbors to get together, meet each other, have fun, and work together on a common activity. Just knowing who lives on your block makes you and your neighbors safer. Knowing your neighbors -- where they live, their skills, and even their needs – also builds community. In a community, neighbors can share skills, labor & resources. And it's ***FUN!***

Start by recruiting a few neighbors to help organize the party. It's not that much work, but it's always more fun when you have friends helping. It is possible to take the "Lone Ranger" approach and still have a great event, but it may make it harder to find someone else to organize the next block party.

If this is your first block party, you may want to distribute a flyer to block residents explaining what a block party is and why your block should have one. Invite everyone on the street and poll them for possible dates, times and locations. Arrange a way for comments to be returned: by email, phone, or even a drop box at your front door. When working out details, keep it simple, easy and relaxed. What will work best for your block and be easy for you to organize?

Choose a date six to eight weeks in the future so you'll have time give your neighbors plenty of notice and apply for a Block Party Permit. Weekends or holidays during mid-May, June, July and August are usually the best bets.

A blocked off-street is a great place for a neighborhood party -- it's an open, public space where neighbors feel at home. If a group is small enough, it's possible to have a neighborhood party in a backyard, house, or garage – but it will feel less open to new neighbors.

Check out the City requirements for blocking off a street as soon as you think you ***might*** want a block party. Go to www.lincoln.ne.gov, keyword: *block party*. The application is also available there. Once your completed application and a check for the $45 fee are sent in, allow up to two weeks for it to be processed. If your application is approved, City staff will notify you, arrange for delivery and pick up of barricades, and notify the Police Department about the street closure.

In summary, the City requires:

- Uses limited to ***community purposes*** -- no private, for- profit uses.
- Closures limited to ***residential streets*** in residentially-zoned areas. Busy streets and bus routes can't be used for block parties. No mid-block closures and no more than one-block long closures.
- Duration of up to ***six hours*** between 10:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.
- ***Survey of all residents*** along the street. Not everyone has to approve, but they need to know about the block party. *This survey is part of the application.*
- Signed ***hold harmless agreement*** protecting the

City from liability claims and damage or loss to City property – *also included in the application*.

- Because streets are City property, ***no alcohol*** is allowed on the blocked-off street.

After your permit is approved, think through what is needed for the party and coordinate with neighbors who can provide it. For example:

- How will food be handled: potluck, BBQ, catered?
- Will everyone bring their own tables and chairs, plates, cutlery, cups and beverages? If using grills, who will bring them?
- Will pets be allowed?
- Will guests from outside the block area be allowed?
- How will clean-up be handled? Trash cans?

Distribute a final flyer with all information, ideally about three weeks before the party:

- Date, time and location
- Alternate rainout day or location, if available
- List of what will be provided
- List of what people should bring

Getting the word out will certainly be easier if neighbors volunteer their phone numbers or email addresses. Person to person is always the most effective -- talk with people working in their yards and walking their dogs. Put up a yard sign. Make an extra effort to get new neighbors out to the event. To reach neighbors in townhouses, apartments and condos, approach the manager for the best way to contact residents.

Safety is important and blocking off a street has some unique safety concerns.

- Equipment in the street during the party should not completely block ***street access***. In the unhappy circumstance that you need to call for emergency help, you'll have time to move the barriers, but probably not the tables, chairs, coolers, grills, etc.
- With most of the activity in the street in front of the houses, residents need to keep their ***back doors locked.***
- Have a ***bathroom policy*** that maintains home security. The easiest -- everyone uses their own.

Other activities: Besides the obvious sharing of a meal and visiting, other activities can help people get to know one another. Here are some possibilities to consider:

- Use a ***sign-in book*** to develop a neighbors' contact list for those attending.
- ***Name tags*** can be a great help -- decide what you want neighbors to write on their name tags (e.g. first and last names, house numbers).
- Have a ***greeter***, perhaps one of the party organizers, to help people make connections.
- Play ***games*** for kids and/or adults (some organized, some spontaneous).
- Take time to ***introduce*** one another and point to one's house.
- Make a ***map or chart*** to show address relationships.
- Have a ***talent show*** by and for neighbors. *If it will be loud, check with the Health Department to see if a noise permit will be needed.*
- Update an existing ***Neighborhood Watch*** group or start a new one.
- Take ***photos*** and catch people having fun! Find a way to share the photos – securely -- to help neighbors put names to faces.

A BLOCK PARTY TAKES TIME & WORK, BUT GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS IS WORTH IT!