



TOWN OF ELIZABETH

PATRICK G. DAVIDSON, TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

TO: Honorable Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: Patrick Davidson, Town Administrator
DATED: October 22, 2024
SUBJECT: Events at Fitzgerald Apartments

On Tuesday, October 15, 2024, at 9:00am the Elbert County Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with the Town of Elizabeth Police Department, issued a Code Red notice for the area located around 175 Spruce Street in Elizabeth. The Code Red included a "Shelter in Place" order and advised residents to close and lock all doors and windows. At approximately 11:30am the Elbert County Sheriff's Office and the Elizabeth Police Department cancelled the "Shelter in Place" and instructed impacted individuals to resume normal activities. Numerous phone calls, emails, and comments on social media raised concerns with what transpired, so there are some items which should be addressed. Hopefully, this responds to most of the concerns.

WHO ISSUED THE CODE RED? The Code Red system is maintained by Elbert County. The Code Red notice was issued by the Elbert County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the Town of Elizabeth's Police Department.

I DID NOT GET A CODE RED AND I DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON. Code Red is a subscription service that the Town of Elizabeth and Elbert County have been asking citizens to engage with for several years. If you are not signed up for Code Red, you may do so on either the Elbert County website or on the Town's website. If you signed up, and did not receive the notice, then it is because you were beyond the area of immediate concern. Code Red directs the call to specific areas as determined by first responders. Just because a Code Red is issued within Elbert County, it does not mean you will necessarily be notified.

THE TOWN WAS VAGUE AS TO WHAT WAS OCCURRING. Yes. In conjunction with Code Red, and those who received the message, the Town tried to provide relevant information to members of the community. In some instances, such as an approaching fire or chemical spill, additional information would be provided. However, this was a law enforcement action. Providing additional information to the public also means that additional information is going out to people who may be opposed to law enforcement in the matter at hand. Law enforcement and the Town must balance the amount of information immediately released versus that information which could and should be released at a later time.

I LIVE IN ELIZABETH AND I DID NOT GET A MESSAGE. The first question is do you live within the Town of Elizabeth, or within the postal zip code for Elizabeth? The Town of Elizabeth is less than 2 sq. miles in size and has a population of about 1,800 citizens. [The easy rule of thumb is that the Town of Elizabeth is basically along HWY 86 from Taco Bell to County Road 17 by the Elizabeth Park and Recreation District.] The Elizabeth zip code is about 155.88 sq. miles and has over 12,000 residents. So, if you live in Wild Pointe, Cimarron, Pawnee Hills,



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Independence, Spring Valley, or other locations outside of the Town, you may still have the 80107 zip code for Elizabeth, but you do not live in the Town of Elizabeth, Colorado.

SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS. The Town of Elizabeth does not post to the NextDoor App and tries to not provide any critical information via Facebook. The reasons are simple. These social media sites are traditionally untrustworthy and are apt to provide false information as being “in the know.” Please also recognize that as a governmental entity, the Town cannot limit speech on these sites, even if patently and glaringly false.

If critical information must be put out to select individuals, there are means to share this information through Code Red, direct phone calls, emails, and even in person. Again, we live in a society where everyone expects immediate responses and immediate information, and this is not practical in an ever-evolving law enforcement situation.

I COULD NOT GET BACK INTO MY APARTMENT, EVEN AFTER IT WAS OVER. We understand that several residents were not allowed to immediately return to their apartments. This is unfortunate, and every action was taken to hurry up the process. However, it was still an active crime scene, which included an officer shooting and the loss of a life. Under these circumstances, patience and understanding is sought and appreciated, recognizing the fear and disruption to the residents of the apartment building.