



Staff photos by Matthew MODOONO

Firefighters from Lincoln and surrounding communities battle the house fire on Cambridge Turnpike on Saturday morning. Lack of access to water impeded the effort.

Fire guts farmhouse

No injuries in blaze

Ian B. Murphy
Staff Writer

A one-family home on the Lexington/Lincoln line burned to the ground Saturday when firefighters from the two towns were forced to snake hoses to hydrants over half a mile away, closing both directions on Route 2 for over three hours in the process.

The three-alarm fire that destroyed the two-story residence

at 320 Cambridge Turnpike, started when the electric motor of a forced water heater built into the wall seized, according to Lincoln Fire Chief Arthur Cotoni. The malfunction caused the walls of the first-floor room to ignite, and the fire spread through the two-story home. According to Cotoni and Lexington Fire Chief William Middlemiss, there was

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Selectmen question water access

By Geoff Moore
Correspondent

The house fire in Lincoln on Cambridge Turnpike that closed Route 2 for several hours on Saturday raised serious concerns among selectmen on the availability of the water supply to fight the fire.

Fortunately, no injuries resulted from the blaze; however, the house was a complete loss. Selectman Sara Mattes raised the question of full fire coverage across Lincoln from the town's water supply. At

present 20 percent of houses in Lincoln are not on town water and as a result do not have ready access to a fire hydrant. As was the case with the fire on Cambridge Turnpike, tenders bring a pump and water tanker for immediate use whilst other fire fighters string extended lengths of hose together to reach the nearest hydrant.

Mattes said at the selectmen meeting on Monday that this has been a concern for some time. Town Administrator Timothy Higgins said that funds have been

appropriated for the water board to conduct a feasibility study on extending the water system to provide fire coverage and that the report is complete. He suggested that the water board be invited to a future meeting to discuss its contents.

Mattes noted that in the past residents not on town water, of which she is one, had been told that the water system could be extended only if they paid a betterment

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Fire destroys Route 2 home

Fire, from Page 1

a significant delay in contacting the fire department, possibly over 15 minutes.

"It had a good head start before someone noticed it," said Cotoni.

While the delay gave the fire a chance to worsen, the building's demise was most likely caused by the distance firefighters had to travel to find a fire hydrant.

"It was a big factor. My engine laid [hoses] from Gerard's Farm Stand, which is 3,000 feet [away]. It takes time to set that up, because you have to [use a] relay pump," said Cotoni. "There are about 10 roads in Lincoln that don't have hydrants on them, which is a big concern of mine, and has been since I became chief."

The two occupants of the

building made it out safely, and no firefighters were injured in their attempt to control the fire. Both departments received their first call at 9:13 a.m. Middlemiss estimated damage at \$250,000.

"It was a total loss," said Middlemiss.

Companies from Bedford, Concord, Hanscom Air Force Base, Waltham, and Weston also helped fight the blaze.

Water access a concern

Water, from Page 1

fee. It was her contention that residents not on the water distribution system paid the same tax rate as other residents, and that the rate included provisions for public safety, which was not available to them. She said that extension of the wa-

ter system should be a bond issue for the town, since if left to a betterment payment by individuals it would not happen.

Selectman Gary Taylor had questions on the insurance and property value implications on the lack of the town's ability to provide a ready sup-

ply of water for fire fighting. Higgins said that former Fire Chief John Burke had investigated the impact and that the information could be made available.

Selectmen agreed to invite the water board to share the report findings at a future meeting.