



2017 CONWAY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT YEAR END REPORT

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PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF

Director- Bryan Patrick, AICP
 Assistant Director of Planning- Jason Lyon
 Planner- J. Scott Grummer
 Planner & GIS Coordinator - Michael Sakinejad
 Planning Technician- Beth Sketoe

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Conway Planning Commission

Planning Department staff provided support for the Conway Planning Commission, including the coordination of monthly meetings. Planning Commission activities and reports were coordinated by Director of Planning, Bryan Patrick; Assistant Director of Planning, Jason Lyon; and Planning Technician, Beth Sketoe. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission concerning:

Rezoning

25 rezoning requests were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. 22 were approved as requested and 3 were denied. Of the 3 which were denied, 2 were appealed to City Council. Bryan Patrick and Jason Lyon completed staff reviews of these rezoning requests.

REZONINGS			
Month	Zone Change	Acreage	Action
January	A-1 & R-1 to PUD	20.0	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	0.78	Approved
February	A-1 to R-1	12.90	Approved
March	R-2A to PUD	0.54	Denied
	R-1 to PUD	3.83	Approved
May	A-1 to R-1	39.65	Approved
	R-1/RU-1/MF-1 to MF-3	13.90	Approved
June	R-2A to PUD	0.74	Approved
July	R-2 to MF-3	1.37	Approved; Denied by City Council
	R-2A to O-2	1.0	Approved
August	A-1 to R-2A	6.08	Denied; Appealed to City Council, but Applicant withdrew request prior to appeal hearing
	A-1 to R-1	55.0	Approved
	I-3 to C-3	40.61	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	0.73	Approved
	I-3 to C-3	10.03	Approved
September	R-2A to O-2	0.33	Approved
	R-2 to MF-1	0.29	Approved
	A-1 to PUD	30.62	Approved
October	A-1 to R-1	10.83	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	6.26	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	10.4	Approved
	A-1 to RU-1	2.0	Approved
	Amend Club Villas PUD	1.02	Denied; Appealed to City Council where item died due to lack of a motion
November	I-3 to MF-3	19.77	Approved
December	R-2 to MF-3	1.9	Approved

Conditional Use Permit Requests

16 conditional use permit requests were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Of these, 13 were approved, 1 was not considered by the Planning Commission as the applicant’s circumstances changed, and 2 were denied. Bryan Patrick and Jason Lyon completed staff reviews of these conditional use permit requests.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS			
Month	Use	Acreage	Action
January	Nursing Home in A-1		Approved
March	MF-1 in R-2A	0.32	Approved
May	Amend Permit No. 1366 to extend business hours and to allow outside activities	2.0	Approved
	Amend Permit No. 1223 to remove limitation to applicant and type of business	0.17	Approved
July	MF-2 in C-2	3.65	Approved
	Restricted Retail in O-2	1.00	Denied
August	Religious Activities and Homeless Shelter in R-2A	12.8	Not reviewed ¹
	Restricted Office in R-2	0.19	Approved
	Childcare Facility in R-2	0.28	Approved
	General Retail in O-1	1.43	Approved
October	Transmission Tower in C-3	0.13	Approved
	O-3 in R-2A	0.32	Approved
November	Automobile Sales in CMU of the MSN-SP Plan	0.29	Denied, applicant is appealing to the City Council Jan 23, 2018
	Amend Permit No. 1288 to allow up to 24 dwelling units per acre	16.5	Approved
December	Religious Activities in A-1 zoning district	6.08	Approved
	MF-1 density in R-2 zoning district	5.2	Approved

¹This request was not reviewed as the rezoning request [A-1 to R-2A] for the subject property that preceded it failed, making the conditional use permit request for the homeless shelter unallowable.

Annexation/City Limit Square Mileage

The City did not annex any property in 2017.

Board of Zoning Adjustment

The Conway Planning Commission acts as the zoning variance review authority, the Board of Zoning Adjustment. Planning Department staff provided support for the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment. Board of Zoning Adjustment activities and reports were coordinated by Bryan Patrick, Jason Lyon, and Beth Sketoe. Analyses of 6 zoning variance requests were presented to the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment concerning:

Month	Request	Action
January	HAVEN request to allowed reduced building setbacks and landscape buffer, 3225 Tyler St	Approved
April	Brett Franks request to allowed reduced building setbacks, 1907 Clifton St	Approved
May	Sketoe request to allow reduced [south] side building setback, 1270 Old Military Rd	Approved
June	St. Joseph School Endowment request to allow reduced front building setback, 1120 Brookfield Dr	Approved
November	Paguya request to allow reduced building setbacks, 2307 Stout St	Denied ²
	Rush-Hal Development request to allow reduced corner lot width, Lots 18, 22, 23, & 27 Cherry Hill Subdivision	Approved

²A portion of this request was approved, to allow the out of compliance [new] structure to be modified to align [on the west side] with the existing, non-compliant original structure.

Ordinance/Resolution Amendments

Zoning Ordinance

The Conway Zoning Ordinance was amended in July 2017 to decrease the minimum lot square footage [to 6,000sf] and to increase the maximum lot coverage area [to 40%] in the R-1 zoning district. O-17-80.

In August 2017, the Zoning Ordinance definition of office and the allowed zoning districts were amended. The allowed zoning districts for pharmacy and pharmaceutical compounding were also updated. O-17-91.

Subdivisions/Replats

Subdivision

A total of 50 plats were submitted for review in 2017, 13 of which were major subdivisions requiring Planning Commission review. A total of 25 plats were filed with the Faulkner County Circuit Clerk by the City. Scott Grummer completed staff reviews of these subdivisions.

Replat

Of the 50 plats submitted for review, 30 represented minor subdivisions or replats that did not require Planning Commission Review. Scott Grummer completed staff reviews of these plats with Bryan Patrick, Director, approving.

Expired Subdivision/Replat

2 subdivisions were presented to the Planning Commission for a 1-year extension of time to file.

Withdrawn Subdivision/Replat

1 subdivision was withdrawn in 2017 and none were resubmitted in a different configuration.

Lot Creation

For all subdivisions, replats, and PUDs submitted in 2017, there were 534 residential lots and 35 commercial (including multi-family) lots created. The total number of lots created from plats filed in 2017 (including plats from 2016 reviews) were 131 residential lots and 19 commercial (including multi-family lots).

Year	Single-Family Lots Created	Commercial Lots Created
2008	80	-
2009	192	-
2010	91	-
2011	41	-
2012	162	-
2013	46	-
2014	97	-
2015	140	-
2016	100	18
2017	131	19

Planning Department Reviews for the Mayor and City Council

The Planning Department prepared reports and information for the City Council in 2017, including 1 street right-of-way closing request, 2 alley closing requests, and 5 easement closing requests.

Development Review

The Development Review standards include requirements for additional trees and landscaping, buffering of adjacent properties, cross access, joint access, reduction of curb cuts, architectural materials, etc. 34 development reviews were approved by Jason Lyon, 6 developments reviews are currently active in review; of the 6 projects, 2 appear to be stalled and will be resubmitted in 2018. Please note that, with the implementation of the Accela citizen relationship management (CRM) platform, tracking of development has changed to projects being assigned a record ID upon submittal, rather than approval. With the new tracking there is some overlap of numbering from 2016 to 2017, all numbers presented are for approved projects only. There were 32 development reviews in 2016.

Type	Number	Acreage	Square Footage	Fees
Institutional	4	25.7	378,802	\$8,170.54
Commercial	17	27.2	165,266	\$10,988.00
Multi-Family	4	3.06	54,029	\$2,166.70
Office	6	4.26	23,929	\$2,438.36
Industrial	1	8.7	5,600	\$325.00
Parking Lot	2	9.95	48,988	\$650.00
TOTAL	34	78.87	676,614	\$24,738.60

Development Review - Proposed Changes

In mid 2017, Accela citizen relationship management (CRM) platform was implemented. This platform automates and modernizes Planning and Permitting input, processes, transactions, and internal data management. The platform will also make inter-department development review of multi-family, office, and commercial projects more timely and efficient. The public web based interface will become available in the first quarter of 2018. The public interface will allow the general public to conduct planning transactions and apply for building permits online. The public portal will also allow developers to track the development review process as well as surveyors/property owners tracking of the subdivision review process.

Grants

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

\$2500 in Certified Local Government grant money was awarded to the Conway Historic District Commission, by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, for a consultant fee to prepare a National Register of Historic Places nomination for a National Register historic district along part of College Avenue. The nomination was completed in December 2017. The nomination is under review by the National Park Service in Washington, DC.

Small Area Planning

Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan

A continuation of the Jumpstart Markham Street project initiated by a \$200,000 grant from HUD, and facilitated by Metroplan in 2013, Procurement for Engineering Services were completed at the first of 2017, awarding Garver Engineering the contract for Markham Street Engineering Design. 50% plans were completed by year end, in coordination with Conway Corp Utility Design, with procurement and construction scheduled for late 2018 after Utility improvements have been made. Public meetings were held with positive feedback, and business/property owners were engaged to plan for modifications to existing access from Markham. Estimated costs for street only improvements were estimated in 2013 to be \$3.5 Million, but this appears to limit the scope of the project from Van Ronkle to Mill St. based on current cost estimates. Project costs will be re-evaluated when designs are at the 90% submittal point in early 2018, at which point it will be determined if Phasing of the construction will be needed based on project cost. Funding for this project comes from AHTD with a 20% Match requirement by Conway.

Pine Street Redevelopment

Spruce Cottage Housing, a Pocket Neighborhood development initiated by Scott Grummer in 2013 completed design and pre-development work by the end of 2016. Pre-sale of homes were anticipated to begin in early 2017, but were delayed due to an opportunity to initiate a Phase 2 development which would utilize the remaining city land holdings in the neighborhood, allowing the city to maximize its investment in the neighborhood and outcomes of affordable housing. Following community input and city administration review, the Spruce Cottage public private partnership was put on hold pending approval of designs of the Phase 2 project, which happened by late fall of 2017. The City and developer are currently discussing options to move forward with development of the Spruce Cottages in 2018, pending review of a proposed modification to the developments affordability strategy, in an effort to lower housing costs for the project, in keeping with community feedback.

Old Conway Village, a Row House and Single Family Cottage design, being Phase 2 of the cities Pine Street Redevelopment and another public private partnership, is with a developer out of Missouri to develop forty four (44) housing units utilizing the Federal Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program (LIHTC). The city submitted advertisements for proposals for affordable housing on city owned land in early 2017, with Creason Development being the only firm responding to the request for proposal. A LIHTC application was submitted to the State by Creason Development, and tax credits awarded in August of 2017. Old Conway Village, LLC was formed upon award, designs were presented to the city, and after various stages, final designs were approved by the Conway Historic District Commission in December of 2017. Development review is scheduled for early 2018 with Construction slated for late February 2018.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Michael Sakinejad assumed the GIS Coordinator duties in June 2016 as Mr. Lyon transitioned into the Assistant Director of Planning role. In the time he has been with the City, Mr. Sakinejad has developed a new look for the City of Conway web maps. Updates to the city's interactive web maps have included increased functionality and the deployment of a unified theme across all GIS web assets, making these online resources more intuitive for citizens and city officials. The GIS office maintains upwards of 10 interactive maps that are available to the public through the city's website. The most popular public facing web application is the City Zoning map (gis.cityofconway.org/zoning). The GIS office also maintains web applications for internal use by city staff, including a common data viewer for all city staff to view GIS data (gis.cityofconway.org/internal). This web application replaces local installations of Google Earth with static KML/KMZ files, ensuring that all users are able to see authoritative data as soon as the GIS office commits changes. The GIS office is committed to customizing web applications for all city departments to improve access to pertinent data, and modernize workflows.

GIS staff have maintained 3D modeling capabilities by acquiring licenses for Esri CityEngine, a GIS/3D modeling software that allows for modeling development scenarios. In addition to improved web applications and 3D capabilities, staff have implemented an open GIS portal, Conway OpenGIS (<http://data.conwayargis.opendata.arcgis.com/>). This portal is built on the city's Esri platform and leverages existing software licenses and infrastructure. Conway OpenGIS allows then public to view and download various spatial datasets as needed at no added cost to the city. The Conway OpenGIS portal is the first of its kind in Arkansas.

Mr. Lyon continues to be the Census contact for the City and County providing annual updates for new annexations to assist the Census in population calculations for the City and County. Mr. Lyon remains over the GIS functions for the County and provides updates to the Office of Emergency Management and Road Departments as requested. The agreement also allows the City and County continued collaboration while allowing a single GIS Dataset that may be used for the City and County operations. This cooperation provides the City Planning Department more funds to purchase software upgrades and upgrade equipment. The 2017, \$14,000 County Contract with the City was used to continue upgrades to the enterprise system used by the City and County.

Accela

The GIS office maintains the Accela citizen relationship management (CRM) platform. This system is the most advanced CRM platform out of any municipality in Arkansas. Jason Lyon handled implementation and administration of the platform between through early 2017. Mike Sakinejad currently serves as the Accela Administrator. The GIS office has committed hundreds of person-hours to standing the platform up, duplicating and automating planning and permitting workflows, reports, and analysis. The Permits and Inspections, and Planning departments have been operating in Accela since the first quarter of 2017. In 2017, 1,859 records were entered across both departments.

The Accela platform includes the Citizen Access Portal, public web based interface (<https://aca3.accela.com/CONWAY/>); will become fully functional during the first quarter of 2018. The public interface will allow the public to conduct planning transactions and apply for building permits online. The public portal will also allow developers to track the development review process as well as surveyors/property owners tracking of the subdivision review process.

Workshops and Conferences

Bryan Patrick, Jason Lyon, Scott Grummer, and Michael Sakinejad attended the March 2017 Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference held in Hot Springs. Mr. Patrick acted as a trainer at Planning Commissioner training workshops held at Hot Springs in March, Little Rock in June, and Bentonville in September. Mr. Patrick attended a May National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Commissioner Assistance and Mentoring Workshop (CAMP) in Conway.

Mr. Grummer attended the Arkansas Community Development Association annual meeting in the spring. He also served as a Board Advisor to the Community Development Institute to UCA, attending four board meetings throughout the year, and volunteered at its Poverty Simulation event in August and December at UCA. He attended the Regional EPA Brownfield Grant workshop in Addison, TX in October.

Mr. Lyon and Mr. Sakinejad attended the 2017 Esri User Conference in San Diego. Both also attended the 2017 National Alliance for Public Safety GIS (NAPSG) meeting in Tuscaloosa, AL. Mr. Sakinejad also attended the ESRI GeoDesign Summit in Redlands, CA focusing on 3D Analysis and Planning by Local Governments.

Memberships

Bryan Patrick and Jason Lyon retained membership in the American Planning Association and the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association. Mr. Patrick retained membership in the American Institute of Certified Planners. Mr. Patrick retained membership in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Forum, National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, and the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas. Jason Lyon retained membership in URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association). Scott Grummer retained membership in the Arkansas Community Development Association, the Lake Conway Point Remove Watershed Alliance where he serves as President, and Simmons Bank Community Advisory Committee. Michael Sakinejad retained membership in URISA and the American Association of Geographers (AAG).

Presentations

Bryan Patrick spoke with the Conway Morning Optimist in January, led Dr. Hostetter's UCA honors class on a planning discovery tour of the Salem and Prince Street area in February, led the Faulkner Area Leadership Institute attendees on a Conway planning/development tour in August. Mr. Patrick, along with Jason Lyon, spoke at a joint Conway School Board and City Council planning session in May. Mr. Patrick spoke with the Noon Optimist in October.

Scott Grummer presented on EPA Brownfields at Regional Brownfield trainings in Jonesboro, Arkadelphia, and Addison, TX. He taught the 3rd year class of the University of Central Arkansas-Community Development Institute in August on Affordable Housing. He spoke on Affordable Housing at the Break Through Solutions Conference for U of A Cooperative in June and, along with Jason Lyon, spoke about Planning and Development to the Bigelow High School Senior Class in February.

Conway Historic District Commission

The Planning Department acted as City staff for the Conway Historic District Commission (HDC). As HDC staff person, Bryan Patrick and Beth Sketoe created monthly reports for the HDC which included 6 Robinson Historic District reviews and 21 Old Conway Design Overlay District reviews. Mr. Patrick approved 2 minor projects in the Asa P. Robinson Historic District and Old Conway Design Overlay District. These approvals were reported to the HDC.

The 2014 architectural survey, by Sandra Taylor Smith, of an area south of the existing Robinson Historic District was reviewed in 2016 by the Conway HDC and the Arkansas Historic Preservation program. It was determined that 2 possible National Register of Historic Places districts could possibly be created; a 22-structure district along College Avenue and a 2-structure district along Conway Boulevard. In August 2017, the 2-structure Scull National Register Historic District nomination was prepared pro-bono by Aryn Denette. Mrs. Denette presented the nomination to the State Review Board in August. The nomination was approved by the state and subsequently by the National Park Service. The College Avenue National Register Historic District nomination was prepared by Sandra Taylor Smith with an AHPP grant. This nomination was presented to the State in December and is under review by the National Park Service.

Mr. Patrick attended a May National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Commissioner Assistance and Mentoring Workshop (CAMP) in Conway. This event was sponsored by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program and coordinated by the Conway Historic District Commission and Planning Department. The Conway Historic District Commission supplied a sub-grant to \$3500 to the Faulkner County Museum for an engineering drainage study. This study was conducted and completed in July. The sub-grant money originated from a surplus Certified Local Government grant from the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

Conway Tree Board

The 2017 Arbor Day Celebration, held Saturday, November 4, 2017 at Laurel Park, hosted a crowd estimated at 500 participants. The Conway Tree Board also held its annual Trees in Celebration event during Arbor Day, and had 10 trees donated in memory/honor of a loved one. The trees were planted in the roundabout on Prince Street across from Chick-Fil-A and in the medians along Prince Street. Funds for these trees are donated by families and friends. Each tree is accompanied by a 3"x5" plaque, installed at the base, noting whom the tree honors or memorializes. The Conway Tree Board will maintain these trees for their lifetime. Richard Klerk is the new Extension Office Staff for the Conway Tree Board, as Kami Marsh is over the county 4H program now.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

In 2017, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) was comprised of 7 community members and 5 ex-officio members. The BPAB restructured its website and hosted or supported multiple community events including Walk To School and Bike To School Days, and EcoFest.

In March 2017 the City implemented the Zagster bike-share program with 5 Internet/GPS enabled bike rental stations located at the Chamber of Commerce, Simon Park, Conway Station Park, the Kinley Trailhead at Salem Road, and the Kinley Trailhead at Gatlin Park. The response to the program has been good.

Other Activities

Staff provided materials for Conway Ecofest. Clinton School of Public Service Practicum Program initiated by Scott Grummer in 2016, concluded in the Spring of 2017. The project evaluated the cities court system, provided statistics and made recommendations for reducing the volume of outstanding warrants.

Personnel and Interns

Mr. Michael Sakinejad's position as GIS Coordinator was reclassified to that of City Planner in March 2017. Will Dane served an internship in the Planning Department during 2017.