



City of Conway Arkansas
Planning and Development

2013 Conway Planning and Development Department

YEAR END REPORT

Planning and Development

Staff

Director - Bryan Patrick, AICP

Planning Division

Deputy Director of Planning - Wes Craiglow, AICP

Planner - Christy Sutherland

Planning Technician - Lileha Rhea

GIS Coordinator/Planner - Jason Lyon

In February 2013, the Building Permits and Inspections and Code Enforcement Divisions were split from the Planning and Development Department.

PLANNING DIVISION ACTIVITIES

Planning Commission

Planning Division staff provided support for the Planning Commission including the coordination of monthly meetings. Planning Commission activities and reports were coordinated by Mr. Patrick. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission concerning:

Rezoning

Month	Zone Change	Acreage	Action
January	MF-1 to MF-3	20	Approved
	R-2 to MF-3	2	Approved
	A-1 to O-1	5.45	Approved
February	A-1 to R-1	3.6	Approved
March	R-2A to R-2	0.15	Approved
April	R-2A to MF-1	0.75	Approved
May	A-1 to I-3	8.84	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	1	Approved
	I-1 to I-3	1.86	Approved
	R-2 to RU-1	2.55	Approved
June	O-3 to C-2	0.55	Approved
July	A-1 to R-1	44.44	Approved
	RU-1 to MF-3	1.43	Approved
	R-1 to O-2	1.05	Denied
August	R-1 to HR	0.66	Approved
September	R-1 to PUD	3.94	Approved
October	R-2A to S-1	0.76	Approved
November	A-1 to R-1	9.46	Approved
	O1, O-3, R-1 to C-2	1.78	Denied
December	None	NA	NA

Conditional Use Permits

Month	Use	Acreage	Action
January	Public stable, Restaurant, and Event Center	5.45	Approved
February	Nursing Home	2.74	Approved
	School / Day Care	0.52	Approved
March	None	NA	NA
April	Religious Facility	0.43	Approved
	Religious Facility	2.03	Approved
May	General Retail, Commercial Amusement Facility, and Veterinarian	2.55	Approved
June	Religious Activities	0.73	Approved
	MF-1 Density in R-2	0.49	Approved
July	Electric Substation	10.8	Approved
	Fuel Center (Gas Pumps)	2.38	Denied
	General Retail	1.09	Denied
	Restricted Retail	0.477	Approved
August	None	NA	NA
September	Transmission Tower	0.12	Approved
	Transmission Tower	0.12	Approved
	Transmission Tower	0.12	Approved
October	Drive Through Window	1.69	Approved
November	Religious Activities	1.39	Approved
	Fuel Pumps in C-2	NA	Denied
December	None	NA	NA

PUD Implementation Status

August: The Planning Commission conducted a review of the implementation status of the Scherman Heights Planned Unit Development in regards to landscaping, building materials, and number of building stories at 575 Club Lane. The Planning Commission forwarded the request for review to the City Council. The Council reviewed the status and decided that the PUD was in compliance and no correcting action was required by the occupants and/or owner of 575 Club Lane.

Ordinances/Amendments

Zoning Ordinance Amendments, Sign Ordinance Amendments, Overlay District Amendments, Etc

June: An ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance to better define and allow transmission towers in all zoning districts by conditional use permit.

August: The existing New Cantrell Field Overlay Ordinance was amended adding design development regulations. The Zoning Ordinance development review section was also amended adding airport facility design standards.

September: Northeast Old Conway Design Overlay Amendment. The NEOCA plan was amended to allow transitional housing on specific lots on Jersey Street and Shannon Circle.

Subdivision Ordinance Amendments

None

Sign Variance Appeal/Ordinance Amendments

No sign variance appeals were made in 2013. The City Council was asked to review of the prohibition of electronic message boards in October. Various regulation changes were presented to the Council in November. A more specific list of possible sign ordinance amendments is currently being created and will be presented to the Council in January or February 2014.

Subdivision/Replat

Subdivision

Thirteen (13) subdivisions were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Of these Thirteen (13), Four (4) were filed in 2013. Three (3) Subdivisions that were submitted in 2012 were filed in 2013 for a total of Seven (7) subdivisions filed in 2013. City Planner Christy Sutherland completed staff review of these subdivisions.

Replat

Eighteen (18) Replats were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Of these Eighteen (18), Twelve (12) were filed in 2013. Five (5) replats submitted in 2012 were filed in 2013 for a total of Seventeen (17) replats filed in 2013. City Planner Christy Sutherland completed staff review of these replats.

Expired Subdivision / Replat

Four (4) subdivisions and/or replats expired in 2013 due to inactivity.

Withdrawn Subdivision / Replat

One (1) subdivision and/or replat was withdrawn in 2013. This subdivision was resubmitted in a different configuration.

Lot Creation

One hundred twenty-three (123) new residential units, including single and multi-family, were created through the subdivision/replat process. These residential units included Forty-six (46) single family lots.

Three (3) commercial lots, One (1) Agricultural lot, One (1) Industrial lot and One (1) Institutional lot were created through the subdivision/replat process.

The PUD process created an additional One (1) commercial lot, and One (1) residential lot.

Year	# Lots Created	# Of Building Permits
2003	567	645
2004	246	502
2005	502	488
2006	266 (+154 County)	407
2007	483 (+140 County)	314
2008	80	189
2009	192	261
2010	91	247
2011	41	152
2012	162	186
2013	46	147

Single Family Lot Creation vs. Number of Single Family Building Permits Last 10 Years

Annexation / City Limit Square Mileage

2013 saw 2 annexation actions; the old City-owned landfill (102 acres) and Toadsuck Ferry Park (13.26 acres). The old landfill annexation was completed. The Ferry Park annexation is pending Army Corps of Engineer approval. These annexations increased the square mileage of the city from 45.63 to 45.89 square miles.

Board of Zoning Adjustment

In January 2012, the Planning Commission became the zoning variance review authority as the Board of Zoning Adjustment. Planning Division staff provided support for the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment. Board of Zoning Adjustment activities and reports were coordinated by Mr. Patrick. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment concerning:

Month	Request
January	Setback variance for Conway Gardens 2740 Prince Street - Approved
February	Correction of setback variance for Conway Gardens 2740 Prince Street - Approved
June	Lot area variance - 702 Third St & 727 Fourth St
July	Allow a hospital driveway onto a non-collector street

Planning Division Reviews for the Mayor and City Council

The Planning Division prepared numerous reports and information for the City Council in 2013 including street and alley closing requests, impact fee credits, franchise agreements, street name changes, bicycle and pedestrian paths, etc. The Planning Director, due to past audio experience, helped the Mayor's Office select and oversee installation of a new sound system for the District Court Building.

Development Review

2013 marked the sixth full year of development review standards. These standards include requirements for greater trees and landscaping, buffering of adjacent properties, cross access, joint access, reduction of curb cuts, architectural

materials, etc. 14 development reviews were conducted by City Planner Wes Craiglow. There were 23 development reviews in 2011.

Type	Number	Acreage	Square Footage	Fees
Institutional	4	29.04	278,847	\$7,150
Commercial	4	15.86	56,315	\$6,354
Multi-Family	3	3	77,140	\$3,843
Office	3	4.84	25,734	\$3,106
TOTAL	14	52.74	438,036	\$20,453

Development Review Survey and Proposed Changes

Throughout 2013, a number of administrative and procedural changes took place in an effort to better support our local development community and ensure that a high level of service was being offered throughout the permitting and inspection processes. As part of these efforts, a comprehensive survey was conducted to provide insights into how well we were serving that development community. The results were clear: to stay competitive with peer cities, the City of Conway must streamline its review and approval process for all permitting activity. In 2014, the Planning Department will finally move away from antiquated paper document circulation, and implement a much more efficient and accountable digital method. This will result in a higher level of service, productivity, and cost and time savings to both developers and city staff.

Conway Brownfields Program

After a successful \$230,000 assessment grant application in 2013, there was no Brownfields additional activity. Once the City takes ownership of the Spencer/Markham Street scrapyard in 2014, a Brownfields \$200,000 remediation grant application will be made.

Small Area Planning

No new small area plans were conducted in 2013. However, a collaborative effort led by Scott Grummar in Conway Community Development, Metroplan, and the Planning Department has been launched to study the Markham Street Corridor in greater detail.

Markham Street Area Plan

Building upon the regional Imagine Central Arkansas initiative and supported by a \$180,000 grant awarded through Metroplan's JumpStart program, the Markham Street Area Plan process is a strong collaborative effort between the Planning Department and the Mayor's Office for Community Development. Personnel from both city agencies have come together to ensure every opportunity is capitalized upon and the area's full potential is met. The process began with the purchase contract for Conway Scrapmetals, which demonstrated the city's commitment to revitalizing the neighborhood, and continued with a successful grant application to support the hiring of planning consultants from Dallas, TX. The public visioning and planning process will continue throughout 2014 with a series of workshops and stakeholder meetings, culminating with the release and adoption of a master plan and implementation strategy for the area.

Imagine Conway

Imagine Conway is a collaborative planning effort started in 2013 between Planning and Community Development. Imagine Conway is an effort to provide residents and business owners a deeper look into current planning and development initiatives, as well as the ability to engage directly through the use of social media and other interactive mediums. It will

facilitate greater transparency and accessibility to city projects and programs, allowing for faster access to issues and greater depth of engagement.

Sidewalk Master Plan

Throughout early to mid-2013, the Planning Department prepared the foundation for the forthcoming Sidewalk Master Plan by assessing and categorizing the existing conditions of Conway's pedestrian network. We examined data about pedestrian traffic generators and attractors, compiled data about vehicle traffic and land uses, and gathered broad public input through surveys and interviews. The first draft of the Sidewalk Master Plan will be presented to the City Council and public for review. The Plan is targeted for final revision and approval no later than summer 2014.

Metroplan LR/Conway Commuter Bus Study

The Planning and Development Department played a key role in Metroplan's 2013 Little Rock/Conway Express (Commuter) Bus Study. The research included quantitative data in the form of traffic volumes and patterns, land use density, and scheduling. Qualitative data was gathered from public surveys and social media interaction about what commuters would most desire in an express bus line operating at peak demand hours. The finished report will communicate both the traffic levels and densities at terminus points necessary to support a bus line, as well as a clear demand for the service by potential riders. The next steps for the study include identifying regional funding sources and likely operational partnerships. Work will continue between relevant city and county agencies, the Central Arkansas Transit Authority, and Metroplan throughout 2014.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

The department has finished its second full year as staff to the Board. Through leadership provided by the Department, the Safe Routes to School Committee formally joined forces with the Board in an effort to maintain maximum efficiency. In doing so, the full Board became the guiding light for current Safe Routes To School grant balances and future applications, ensuring a broader range of voices could be heard and a more comprehensive vision could be applied. In addition, the Board moved beyond a strict focus on bicycling, and incorporated advocacy and policy recommendations for pedestrian needs, as well. With assistance from our Department, the Board applied for and was awarded a \$115,000 grant for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure needs in vicinity of K-8 schools. The Department is preparing a Sidewalk Master Plan for the City of Conway, which will be used to assist city leaders with decisions regarding sidewalk revenues, placement, construction, and maintenance. The Board has been a strong partner in this effort and will be certain to remain involved throughout the process. Finally, the Board will be applying for Walk Friendly Community status in 2013.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Mr. Jason Lyon as Conway GIS Coordinator and Addressing Administrator has maintained the City map is and its many layers of information including, street, zoning, and address information.

Mr. Lyon continues as a sub-steward for the USGS working on the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) run under ADEQ. In 2013 Mr. Lyon finished a yearlong project of updating Bayou Meto watershed and was issued a grant for \$25000.00 for the work done. Also Mr. Lyon is the continued Census contact for the City and County providing updates yearly for new annexations to assist the Census in population calculations for the City and County.

Mr. Lyon has taken over the GIS functions for the county and provides updates to the Office of Emergency Management and Roads Department 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 monies to purchase software upgrades and upgrade equipment. In 2012 the monies allowed the Planning Department to purchase a new HP Plotter which has allowed for

easier printing of large scale documents and signs for Planning Commission hearings/appeals. The County Contract with the City has continued and the \$14000 for 2013 was used to upgrade server as well to include a Microsoft SQL license to allow more in-depth GIS and eventually allow better data access for many department via relational databases. Continued upgrades of web mapping and development skills will continue into 2014.

In March 2013 the Exxon Pegasus Pipeline ruptured in Mayflower and during response various maps and data was created and disseminated to the County and other contractors helping with clean-up of the spill. Further maps have been produced for other smaller incidents as requested by various departments and entities such as the County Judge, Office of Emergency Management, City of Vilonia Fire, County Roads, City of Wooster, Conway Fire, and others.

Grant Money received in 2013 was also used to purchase ArcServer Enterprise allowing more flexibility to increase GIS usage amongst city departments. The upgrade was facilitated knowing various departments upgrading systems that will allow GIS usage, in particular is the ongoing Fire Department upgrade to allow mapping within their apparatuses. Continued assistance with Conway PD on dispatch mapping Collaborating with the Faulkner County Assessor's Office and Conway Corporation additional imagery was flown in 1Q 2013 and had been of great help viewing growth within the city and county areas. Continued membership in URISA allows more networking of GIS contacts for city as well as participation in the URISA/NENA Workshops in May and November in St Louis has helped in a better understanding of 911 Addressing and other areas of GIS usage for addressing. A trip the ESRI International Users Conference in San Diego was done in July 2013 and allowed further networking with regional cohorts and also see new development within the GIS Software. The trip was less expensive due to a complimentary pass from ESRI due to ArcServer Purchase, for 2014 and on the City now has 2 free passes for the Conference on a yearly basis valued at \$1600 per pass.

There has been continued work on web mapping to help the City and its citizens find information. Additional maps include; Map Tour for the Markham Street Jump Start Project (Imagine Conway) <http://www.conwayplanning.org/GIS/Markham/>, Bike Routes for the Bicycle Advisory Board: <http://www.conwayplanning.org/GIS/conwaymaps/bikeroutes/>, Planning Commission Map: <http://www.conwayplanning.org/GIS/conwaymaps/PCMAPS/>
The Planning Map created in September now allows City Council and Planning Commissioners to see preliminary maps and documents related to projects for the upcoming month prior to the official staff report being distributed.

Planning Workshops and Conferences

Mr. Patrick attended the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference in Indianapolis, IN in October and two Arkansas Historic Preservation Program CLG training workshops; in March (Little Rock) and November (Eureka Springs).

Memberships

Planning Department staff retained membership in the American Planning Association and the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association.

Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow 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.

Mr. Lyon retained membership in URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association).

Internet / Web Site

Planning Technician Lileha Rhea maintained the City of Conway and Planning Department websites. These sites provided valuable city information 24/7.

Presentations

Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow were guest lecturers at several UCA classes. Mr. Patrick presented to the Old Conway Preservation Society in August.

Tree Board / Tree City USA

The Planning Division provided assistance to Kami Marsh, City Staff for the Conway Tree Board. The November Arbor Day 2013 Celebration had a record attendance with the adoption of over 300 trees. Conway Corporation was the principal sponsor for the Arbor Day Celebration. The Planning Division maintained the Tree Board website and provided additional support as needed.

Conway Historic District Commission

The Planning Division acted as City staff for the Conway Historic District Commission. As HDC Staff, Mr. Patrick created monthly reports for the HDC. There were 10 Old Conway Design Overlay District and 2 Robinson Historic District reviews. \$8700 in CLG grant money was awarded the Conway HDC by the Arkansas State Historic Preservation Program. This grant was is for staff/commission training and an architectural survey to possibly expand the Robinson Historic District. Mr. Patrick attended preservation workshops and conferences as noted earlier in this report.

Other Activities

Planning staff have also worked with the Conway Public Art Committee in support of the ongoing City Hall arts display and Artsfest. Staff also provided materials for Conway Ecofest.

The Department, in coordination with the Mayor's Office and the Parks Department, continued work with with UCA's PhD in Leadership Studies Director, Rhonda McClellan, to develop a parks master plan for the city of Conway.

Interns

There were no internships in the Planning Division in 2013.