



City of Conway Arkansas
Planning and Development

2015 Conway Planning and Development Department

YEAR END REPORT

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT STAFF

Director - Bryan Patrick, AICP
 Deputy Director of Planning - Wes Craiglow, AICP
 Planner - J. Scott Grummer
 Planner - Christy Sutherland (*retired May 2015*)
 GIS Coordinator/Planner - Jason Lyon
 Planning Technician - Beth Sketoe

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Planning Commission

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

Rezoning

Eleven (11) rezoning requests were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. All eleven (11) were approved. Planning Director, Bryan Patrick, completed staff reviews of these rezoning requests.

REZONINGS			
Month	Zone Change	Acreage	Action
February	A-1 to R-1	14.78	Approved
March	A-1 to RU-1	10.03	Approved
April	R-1 to S-1	62.14	Approved
	A-1 to RU-1	5.00	Approved
	R-2A to O-2	0.38	Approved
May	R-2A to O-2	0.17	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	0.90	Approved
September	A-1 and R-1 to PUD	63.5	Approved
	R-2A to S-1	5.43	Approved
	A-1 to R-1	1.02	Approved
November	I-1, I-3 & A-1 to C-3	64.00	Approved

Conditional Use Permit Requests

Seventeen (17) conditional use permit requests were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Fifteen (15) were approved, one (1) was denied, and one (1) was reviewed, but not formal recommendation made as a majority consensus was not achieved. *One (1) of the approved requests was withdrawn prior to the City Council meeting at which it was to be reviewed. Planning Director, Bryan Patrick, completed staff reviews of these conditional use permit requests.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS			
Month	Use	Acreage	Action
February	Private Mental Health Practice	0.28	Approved
March	Self-Storage Facility	10.03	Approved
April	Home Occupation: Single Operator Hair Stylist	3.34	Approved
	Auto Glass Business	5.00	Approved
	Eating Place	0.38	Approved
	Mf-1 Density in R-2	0.83	Approved
	Communication Transmission Tower	0.50	Denied
	Communication Transmission Tower (amend existing CUP)	0.013	Approved
	Bank	1.00	No Action
June	Shelter for the Homeless	3.43	Approved
July	Pet Grooming & Lodging	4.00	Approved
August	Home Occupation: Single Operator Hair Stylist*	0.61	Approved
	Childcare Facility	4.24	Approved
October	Extend Restaurant Operating Hours (amend existing CUP)	5.45	Approved
November	Hospital Services	9.53	Approved
December	MF-1 Density in R-2A	2.40	Approved
	Shelter for the Homeless	0.55	Approved

Annexation/City Limit Square Mileage

2015 saw four (4) annexation actions for a total of 52.37 acres which increased the square mileage of the city from 46.21 to **46.29** square miles.

ANNEXATIONS				
Month	Name	Incoming Zone	Acreage	Action
February	Trinity Development - Castleberry Meadows	R-1	14.84	Approved
March	Ken Freyaldenhoven	A-1	10.03	Approved
September	Ova Shelby	A-1	5.00	Approved
October	Thornton-Blasioli	A-1	22.50	Approved

Board of Zoning Adjustment

Since 2012, the Planning Commission has acted as the zoning variance review authority as 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 Mr. Patrick and Ms. Sketoe. Analyses were presented to the Planning Commission/Board of Zoning Adjustment concerning:

Month	Request	Action
March	Setback variances for Lots 3 and 6-10 in Lewis Crossing Shopping Center	Approved
July	Lot development without required extension of boundary street (Allyson Lane) by Orion Capital Partners	Denied
November	Lot size and building setback variances for Ritter Communications, 1978 Old Morrilton Hwy	Approved
	Lot area and lot depth variances for Lance Johnston, 587 Watkins Street	Approved

Ordinance/Resolution Amendments

Zoning Ordinance Amendments

July: Amended to require a conditional use permit to operate a shelter for the homeless in C-1 (Central Business), RMH (Mobile Home District), and TJ (Territorial Jurisdiction) zoning districts.

Northeast Old Conway Area Specific Plan Amendments

August: Amended to allow the development of a cottage courtyard in Block 7 of the Burns Addition.

February: Amended to exempt the newly created Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan from the Northeast Old Conway Area Specific Plan.

Subdivision/Replat

Subdivision

Sixteen (16) subdivisions were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. A total of thirteen (13) subdivisions were filed in 2015, of which seven (7) were submitted in 2014. City Planners, Scott Grummer and Christy Sutherland, completed staff reviews of these subdivisions.

Replat

Twenty-three (23) replats were reviewed by the Planning Commission and within the Planning Department. Twenty (20) replats were filed in 2015, eight (8) of which were originally submitted in 2014. City Planners, Christy Sutherland and Scott Grummer, completed staff review of these replats.

Expired Subdivision/Replat

No subdivisions or replats expired in 2015 due to inactivity.

Withdrawn Subdivision/Replat

No subdivisions or replats were withdrawn in 2015. One (1) replat was resubmitted in a different configuration.

Lot Creation

Including the three (3) new PUDs that were created in 2015, there were a total of one hundred and forty (140) new single-family lots and twenty-three (23) new commercial lots created.

Year	Single-Family Lots Created
2006	266 (+154 County)
2007	483 (+140 County)
2008	80
2009	192
2010	91
2011	41
2012	162
2013	46
2014	97
2015	140

Planning Department Reviews for the Mayor and City Council

The Planning Department prepared numerous reports and information for the City Council in 2015 including seven (7) street and/or alley closing requests and five (5) easement closings.

Development Review

The Development Review standards, in their eighth full year, include requirements for greater trees and landscaping, buffering of adjacent properties, cross access, joint access, reduction of curb cuts, architectural materials, etc. Nineteen (19) development reviews were conducted by Deputy Director of Planning, Wes Craiglow. There were eighteen (18) development reviews in 2014.

Type	Number	Acreage	Square Footage	Fees
Institutional	3	9.34	97,386	\$5,701.02
Commercial	6	60.06	224,561	\$9,084.04
Multi-Family	2	2.02	42,693	\$2,622.80
Office	8	15.64	156,713	\$13,946.78
TOTAL	19	87.06	521,353	\$31,354.64

Development Review, etc. Proposed Changes

2016 will mark the year Conway's planning, permitting, and code enforcement functions enter the 21st century. After nine months of staff grading, product demonstrations, and contract negotiations, an industry leader in civic software, [Accela](#), has proven to meet or exceed the needs of our departments in virtually every criteria. In September 2015, City Council approved the contract and by mid-year 2016, the system will be fully operational. By taking all processes and transactions on-line, we will revolutionize the way we serve our real estate, development, and business communities. No more rooms of file cabinets, no more lost paperwork, no more unnecessary delays or multiple trips to city agencies. Transparency, efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability will be our watchwords from this year forward.

Grants

EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant

An EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant Application, applied for in 2014, was successfully awarded in 2015 to fund environmental cleanup of the former Conway Scrap Metal site. Funding began in October of 2015 with the completion of the site Cleanup plan, and will continue until full cleanup is complete, estimated to be around the end of 2016. This project is a continuation of the revitalization of the Markham Street Corridor, which began with the Jump Start Design grant in 2013.

EPA Urban Waters Grant

An EPA Urban Waters Grant Application was submitted in collaboration with the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC) in December 2015 for \$60,000 to go towards schematic designs for the former Conway Scrap Metal Project. If awarded, this design grant will be the precursor for other federal grants that can be applied for in order to engineer and develop the finished site. Awards will be announced in early spring 2016.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

\$1,500 in Certified Local Government grant money was awarded to the Conway Historic District Commission, by the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, for the purpose of sending HDC representatives or staff to quarterly training meetings as well as hosting an outreach even to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the passing of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Small Area Planning

Markham Street Neighborhood Specific Plan

The Markham Street Neighborhood Area Specific Plan (MSN-SP): Funded by a \$200,000 grant from HUD, and facilitated by the regional planning agency, Metroplan. This initiative, starting in 2013, produced designs and updates to the regulating plan for the Markham Street corridor, creating designs and implementation strategies to achieve stronger connections between Downtown, Hendrix College and The Village at Hendrix, leading to revitalization of the area. Designs and Plans were completed and transmitted to the City in late December 2014, which were further refined, and adopted by City Council as the [MSN-SP](#) in the Spring of 2015.

Pine Street Redevelopment

Utility Improvements began in the Pine Street Neighborhood in the fall of 2015 along Factory and Spruce streets. This initiative is being managed by Scott Grummer, City Planner, who previously worked as program manager of Community Development. These utility improvements, funded through the CDBG department, will be followed by a 12-unit housing project which has been under design and development since mid- 2013. Mr. Grummer will continue overseeing this project, with assistance from the CDBG department. Housing starts are expected in late Spring 2016, and are designed around a Pocket Neighborhood concept being utilized to facilitate revitalization of this neighborhood.

Urban Watershed Planning

Finished reports were received from the University of Arkansas Community Design Center (UACDC) in December 2015, which have been in process since late 2013 in conjunction with EPA grants and collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and Metroplan. As part of the Lake Conway Point Remove Watershed, the City of Conway's urban storm water runoff impacts the surrounding watershed. The final deliverables from this project will provide the city with proposed model ordinances which it can consider for implementation to improve storm water management and oversight within its territorial boundaries. Scott Grummer has been the lead liaison in this initiative.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

Mr. Jason Lyon serves as the Conway GIS Coordinator and Addressing Administrator. The city map is now up to date and maintains many layers of information including, street, zoning, and address information. In 2014-2015, webmapping was greatly enhanced for the city with many maps now available to the general public including Zoning, CAGIS Monuments, Bicycle Routes (<http://www.cityofconway.org/pages/gis/>) and many maps provided privately to City Departments such as a Sanitation Live Tracking Map (<http://gis.conwayplanning.org/Sanitation/>)

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. At the end of 2015 with the major flooding a webmap was created that allowed first responders and other county and state agencies to see areas of concern including road closings, damage to homes, and road damage reports.

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. The 2015, \$14,000 County Contract with the City was used to upgrade the server functions and contract out development of new server applications including a transition from proprietary MS SQL to an open source PostGRES database backend saving yearly maintenance fees as well as with the assistance of IT enabling the current city webmaps to function more efficiently.

County Grant Money received in 2015 has continued to be used to purchase additional upgrades to the GIS Server and Network, allowing other departments to utilize GIS Layers and software outside of the Planning Department. Continued refinement of web maps has made it easier for citizens, Planning Commissioners, and City Council Members to follow decisions for land use cases starting at the Staff Level and advancing to City Council (<http://gis.conwayplanning.org/PlanningCommission/>). 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. Many areas of the city, that have been platted, are now linked to a scanned copy of their plat with continued development of additional sources to ensure transparency and efficiency with the City of Conway.

Continually working on updating web maps to allow citizens to see plats, rezoning ordinances, and conditional use permits with a click of the mouse on an area. In 2015 new imagery was obtained available in cooperation with the Faulkner County Assessor Office and Conway Corporation.

Imagine Conway

The Imagine Conway website, www.imagineconway.com, was successful in 2015 in our community outreach efforts for the Jump Start Initiative, and is funded through 2016 in order to continue these outreach efforts with the Brownfield cleanup of the former Scrap Metals Yard Project, as well as redevelopment efforts in the Markham Street and Pine Street Neighborhoods.

Planning Workshops and Conferences

Mr. Craiglow attended the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) National Conference in Seattle, WA.

Mr. Grummer attended EPA Brownfield Workshops in Dallas, TX, EPA Brownfield QMP training in Houston, TX, and an EPA Brownfield Annual Conference in Chicago, IL, all funded through the Brownfield Cleanup grant received in 2015 from the EPA. In addition, Mr. Grummer attended an ESRI conference in San Diego, CA funded through a grant from the GIS department as well as the National Community Development Association Annual Conference in Little Rock, AR funded through grants from the Arkansas Community Development Association, on whose Board he serves as Vice-President.

Mr. Lyon attended the ESRI 2015 User Conference in San Diego and a 911 Seminar in Edmond, OK regarding Next-GEN 911 services and addressing. He also attended and graduated the URISA GIS Leadership Academy in Denver, CO.

Memberships

Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow retained membership as well as adding Mr. Lyon's membership in the American Planning Association and the Arkansas Chapter of the American Planning Association. Mr. Patrick and Mr. Craiglow also 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. Craiglow became a member of the International City/County Management Association. Mr. Lyon retained membership in URISA (Urban and Regional Information Systems Association).

Internet/Website

In 2015, the Information Technology department launched a redesigned City of Conway website. The Planning Department coordinated with Edward Briggler, the contract agent retained to build the site, to redevelop the Planning & Development section/child page of the parent site. Work is on-going to further develop and populate this new child-page.

Planning Director, Bryan Patrick, and Planning Technician, Beth Sketoe, maintained the original Planning Department website, www.conwayplanning.org, as well as the Planning & Development section of the new website, <http://www.cityofconway.org/pages/planning-development/>. However, the Planning website (www.conwayplanning.org) will likely be redirected to the new City website in 2016. These sites provide valuable city information 24/7.

Presentations

Mr. Patrick presented to the Faulkner County Leadership Institute in May. Mr. Craiglow presented to several groups and organizations including, Kiwanis Club, Conway Rotary, Hendrix College, University of Central Arkansas and to the Donaghey Corridor Task Force.

Conway Historic District Commission

The Planning Department acted as City staff for the Conway Historic District Commission (HDC). As HDC staff, Mr. Patrick created monthly reports for the HDC. There were fourteen (14) Old Conway Design Overlay District and four (4) Robinson Historic District reviews.

The review of the architectural survey by Sandra Taylor Smith, to possibly expand the Robinson Historic District, finished in 2014, is ongoing. Once accepted by the State, a nomination to the National Register can proceed. The Council could then examine this National Register area for inclusion into the Robinson Historic District.

Conway Tree Board/Tree City USA

The Planning Department provided assistance to Kami Marsh, City Staff for the Conway Tree Board. The 2015 Arbor Day Celebration, held Saturday, November 7, 2015 at Laurel Park, hosted a crowd estimated at 500 participants and saw over 200 trees adopted. Central Baptist College joined in the celebration as they are working towards becoming a [Tree Campus USA](#).

The Conway Tree Board also launched a new annual event known as Trees in Celebration. The inaugural event, held on February 7, 2015, saw nine trees, 1 ginko and 8 shumard oaks, planted in the roundabout and median on Prince Street nearest Laurel Park. Funds for these trees were donated by families and friends of those honored and memorialized. Each tree is accompanied by a 3"x5" plaque, installed at the base, noting who the tree honors or memorializes. The Conway Tree Board will maintain these trees for their lifetime.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board

In 2015, The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) accomplished a major milestone by leading Conway toward its first recertification of Bicycle Friendly Community Bronze status. This is a prestigious national recognition which demands a clear vision, community activism, political will, and hard work. The award and what it signifies about Conway's culture and dedication to quality, serves to reinforce the notion that we are building one of the great mid-sized cities in the region. In addition, the BPAB presented recommendations for Bike Master Plan updates, recommendations for arterial cross-sections within new large-scale developments, and a substantial increase to community engagement through a blog, social media, and surveys. Finally, the BPAB hosted or supported multiple community events including Walk To School and Bike To School Days, EcoFest, and the Faulkner County Urban Farm Fest.

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.

Interns

There were no internships in the Planning Department in 2015.

Personnel

Christy Sutherland, City Planner, retired in May. Mr. Scott Grummer joined the Planning & Development Department as a City Planner from Community Development in May.