



Department of Community Development City of Duncan, Oklahoma - February 2018

From the Director's Desk: Spring Rains Cleanse Away Winter

Having spent the majority of my life living further north, where winter would dump inches, if not feet, of snow on the ground, I look forward to the spring rains that will cleanse away the winter blues. Also, these early rain events would wash away all the salt, sand, and grime that communities have to put on the ground to make it safe to travel during the winter months.

Now that I live in Duncan, Oklahoma, the spring rains mean a bit more. The spring rains indicate a birth of a new and exciting new year where we, as a community, will see new growth - new buildings, new job opportunities, new investment into the community! As a community we get to see our trees bud and flowers bloom!

I have also realized that there is a greater need that we, as property owners, take responsibility for our own properties and keep them clean of trash and debris. Yard brush, trash, and other materials can be washed into our drainage ways cause flooding issues for others and potentially damage private property; erosion of rights-of-ways that can damage infrastructure that will result in taxpayer funds to be used for repairs that could have been avoided; and potentially the loss of life.

So I challenge everyone, this spring before the rains start washing away the winter, to make sure your personal property is maintained to keep items from clogging our drainage systems.



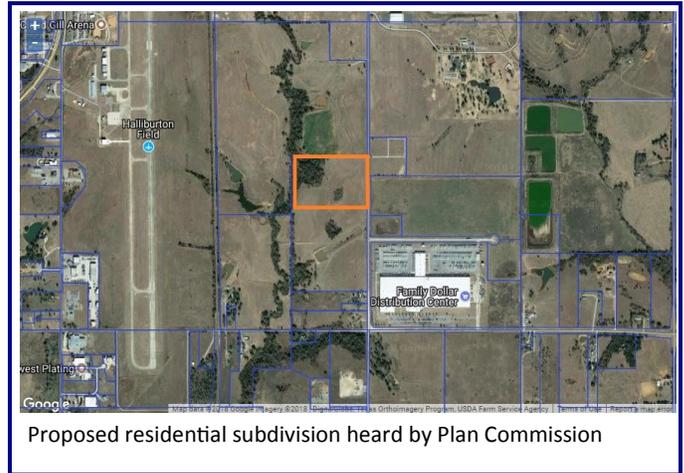
During a recent rain event in 2018, the Department of Community Development found a drainage way that is full of trash and debris. As noted in this photo, the trash is acting like a dam and water is being backed up onto adjoining properties. Also seen in this picture, we see erosion occurring toward a City of Duncan street. As erosion continues, there will be costs associated with repairs that will be incurred by the City of Duncan should the infrastructure be damaged. It is the responsibility of property owners to maintain the drainage infrastructure (keep them clear of trash and debris, mowed, etc.) in order to alleviate flooding.

Department Activity for February 2018

During the month of February, the Department sent out 41 violation notices to property owners. This number is up slightly from one year ago which is a result of having a full staff that handles inspections and code enforcement. Most of the violation cited during the month were for residential outside storage (items that should be inside the home such as couches, freezers and televisions) and other trash and debris items.

During this same time period, the Department of Community Development issued 12 permits and collected \$1,002.91 in permit fees. The number of permits issued during the month of February is down slightly from 2017, however the fees collected was only about \$200 less than the previous year. This can be seen as an indication that larger remodel projects are underway in our community. The Department is also seeing more interest and discussion on the development of new homes.

The City of Duncan Plan Commission met in February hearing three requests. The first request was to review a preliminary plat for a new residential subdivision on south 2nd Street near the Family Dollar Distribution Center. This plat was accepted as submitted. The next request was for voluntary annexation of the same land that was heard for the preliminary plat for residential development. Plan Commission members voted to send a favorable recommendation to City Council to annex this property so that city utilities could be provided. The third item heard was a request to de-annex a property from the City of Duncan so a property owner could enjoy the use of the property without oversight of the City of Duncan with regards to development



Progress Towards CDBG 2017 Grant Blight Removal

The Department of Community Development is proud to announce some early success in combating blight throughout the 2017/2018 CDBG Small Cities Grant Project Area! Fifteen properties were initially identified as being contributors to blight within the area and were processed as such. Owners were notified of a public hearing requesting status and plans of their structures. The first goal is to save those structures that are worth saving and work with the property owners to see this happen.

Of the fifteen properties identified, 8 property owners have come forward to share their short term and long term repair plans to these structures - one of which already has new doors and windows installed. It is encouraging to the Department that these owners want to leave a positive impact on our community and are willing to work to make improvements that we ripple throughout the neighborhoods in which these current dilapidated and uninhabitable structures are located. The remaining structures, in which no one attended the public hearing, are being processed to be torn down with the funding that has been made available through the hard work of the City Administration and staff of the Department of Community Development.



The Department of Community Development sent (and posted) 15 properties for potential demolition throughout the CDBG Grant Project Area. This particular property, located on South 11th Street, was one of the properties that was posed as it is in very poor condition. Thankfully, the property owner of record (in this case the Stephens County Courthouse through failure of the previous owner not paying taxes) has agreed to take this structure down through their own funding streams. The Department thanks the Commissioners for working with the City of Duncan.

Violation: Residential Outside Storage

During the month of February, the Code Enforcement branch of Community Development focused on “Residential Outside Storage” throughout the community. Simply described, residential outside storage are those items (such as furniture and appliances) that are being kept outside when they are intended to be inside the home. This would include couches, chairs, refrigerators and freezers, televisions, and other similar items.

In just one day, during a three hour period, the Department wrote up over 50 properties with just couches and recliners sitting in the front yards. It is important to consider that this furniture, having been made of cloth or similar materials, are not made to sit outside. The materials will hold moisture creating an opportunity for mold to grow, will deteriorate quickly in the elements, provide a “home” for rodents and insects, and in general give an appearance that our community does not care about itself.

Once these properties were written up, and the notices of violation were sent to property owners, the Department of Community Development began receiving calls from the owners complaining, “why are you picking on me?” Once the staff members were given an opportunity to explain that over 50 properties in a three hour period were written up, and the reasons why storing these items outside is not appropriate, the majority of these property owners took it upon themselves to remove the items from their property avoiding the abatement and citation process.

For the next several months, the Department will put more focus on one type of violation, while still addressing all violations that we come across, in hopes of educating the community on our local ordinances and why these ordinances have been adopted. If you have any questions about what might be a violation within the City of Duncan, please contact our office at 580-251-7711.



Heritage Trails - A Path to a Healthier Community (UPDATE)!

The Heritage Trails is moving forward and the committee that has spent several years working diligently to make this community amenity a reality is looking for investment from our citizens and local businesses! The committee has already raised enough money to fund the first 5k portion of this trail - a trail that will eventually see over 18 miles of paths connecting all corners of our great community!

It is an exciting time to live in Duncan to see an amenity such as the Heritage Trail become a reality. It will help provide new opportunities to grow as a healthier and stronger economic diverse community for years to come. The Department of Community Development encourages you to become involve with the trails program, either through donation of volunteerism.

Move It March!

During the month of March, the Code Enforcement branch of Community Development will be focusing on inoperable and unlicensed vehicles throughout the City of Duncan. Per City Ordinance, vehicles that are inoperable and/or are unlicensed are a violation because this situation creates a public nuisance that is disruptive to the public wellbeing.

It is important that we, as property owners, maintain our properties in a manner that complies with our local codes and ordinances. Many of which are intended to create an attractive environment that will help entice future development, job growth, and tourism to our community.

The Department of Community Developments asks for your assistance in making Duncan a community that we can all be proud to call home. If you see properties that you feel might be out of compliance, please contact the Department at 580-251-7711.

Shade Covers for Sitting Areas around Splash Pad being Planned for 2018!

The Parks Board has heard our citizens request for shade covers to be installed at our two splash pads in the City of Duncan. The goal is to select appropriate shade structures to be placed at Hillcrest and Douglas Parks near the splash pads so our citizens can sit under some protection from the sun while their children enjoy the cool water recreational opportunities that currently exist!

The covers will provide new color, and hopefully fun excitement, to our splash pad complexes. The Parks Board recognizes that past color schemes may not have been as fun and exciting as they should be, and we hope that the changes and additions to our park network over the next several years will show that we too want to have fun!

In addition to the shade covers, the Parks Board is also considering some improvements to the seating arrangements that exist near the splash pads in hopes that the improved amenities will encourage more residents to utilize this fantastic recreational amenity that our community has to offer!



DETA Plans April Clean-Up

The Duncan Enhancement Trust Authority has once again been awarded a grant through the Keep Oklahoma Beautiful program that will help volunteers in our community clean up our community. In 2017, DETA worked with several volunteer groups to help clean up Fuqua Park, leaving not only a lasting impression on our beautification efforts but also allowed new friendships to be made through fellowship! It was a great time in 2017, even with cold weather, so hopefully we will be blessed with warmer weather that will allow more citizens to come out and take part in our 2018 Keep Oklahoma Beautiful efforts!

The proposed event will likely occur the last weekend of April, and more information will be made available through the Department of Community Development.

