



Department of Community Development

City of Duncan, Oklahoma - January 2018

From the Director's Desk: Let's Work Together in 2018 to Build a Better Duncan!

The last few months of 2017 were pretty busy and I apologize for not completing several newsletters as I focused on other projects. I really enjoy preparing this newsletter as I feel it provides our great citizens an opportunity to see some of the behind-the-scenes on projects and activities that occur in my Department as well as in the City of Duncan. I also hope that by providing this information I am building bridges with the community so that we can see great projects, community reinvestment, and improved quality of life together as a team!

Speaking of this newsletter, I was honored several weeks back while on the phone with a former citizen of Duncan who now lives in California. It was shared with me that they read this newsletter to stay in touch with their "home" and are happy to see such great things happening here! I will speak for myself, but I hope you share the feeling, hearing people acknowledge that they see great things happening in Duncan motivates me even more!

So let's continue to work together and make 2018 a spectacular year for Duncan! Let's continue to Build a Better Duncan!



Community Development Year End Review

2017 brought many changes to the Department of Community Development and to the City of Duncan. First and foremost the Department has taken many steps to become more efficient in how permits and violations are processed. 2017 saw a slight drop in the total number of violation notices sent out, down to 1088 notices sent to property owners, but also saw an increase in the number of liens placed on properties for the work that had to be contracted out. Since midyear, the Department is issuing notices of about 15 lien notices each month in addition to issuing tickets to property owners that have ignored the notices sent requesting that their property be brought to compliance. The Department is not proud that we have to file liens on properties or issue tickets to property owners, but for too many years the Department has seen growing trends throughout the community where property owners and tenants do not take the local ordinances seriously - keeping in mind that these ordinances are adopted to protect the overall health and wellbeing of our community.

2017 was extremely exciting for both the Department of Community Development and the Parks Department as several grants were obtained. Community Development secured grants for beautification, infrastructure improvements, and removal of blight throughout the community. The Parks Department secured a grant to install new playground equipment in an effort to provide additional recreational opportunities for our children. Being able to apply for these grants was made possible by our City Administration, Mayor and City Council working together to bring our audits up to date and also their continued work to improve the overall health of the City finances.

2017 also brought new commercial growth and redevelopment to the City of Duncan. Several developers have committed on how the permitting and review process has improved in our community over the years - this is important as we need to be inviting to new businesses while making sure that adopted codes and regulations are being followed for the safety of our citizens. To be able to continue this trend in bringing new opportunities to our great community, we must continue to think and act positively when discussing Duncan. Businesses that are looking to relocate and expand research a community by reading social media, local newspapers, and conducting interviews with citizens. If we present ourselves in a positive manner, because Duncan really is a great community, hopefully we will catch the attention of that next opportunity that wants to make Duncan home!

Department Activity for January 2018

The City of Duncan Board of Adjustments met on January 8th to hear an application filed by Chisholm Holdings, LLC to allow an industrially zoned property (zoned I-3) along the railroad tracks to allow the use of a gravel parking lot to serve as a sales lot for heavy equipment and implement components. Per the City Code, parking lots are required to be paved and/or sealed as to not create dust. The Board heard testimony from the applicant and input from citizens that attended the meeting. The Board of Adjustments approved this request to allow gravel for the property as long it is used for the retail sales of new heavy equipment and implement components.



The City of Duncan Plan Commission met on January 16th to hear two applications made by Chisholm Holdings, LLC. The first item was to vacate platted, but unimproved, section of Cypress Avenue that was platted between 6th Street and railroad tracks. This item was sent unanimously to City Council with a favorable recommendation. City Council approved this request at their regularly scheduled meeting on January 23rd. The second item was to hear a Use on Review request to allow a sales lot to occur on a property zoned I-3 for new heavy equipment and implement components. This request was also approved unanimously by the City Plan Commission.

During the month of January, the Department issued 20 permits and collected \$2,962.50 in permit fees. During this same period, the Department also sent out 62 violation notices to property owners requesting that their properties be brought back into compliance with adopted code.

Address Changes and Compliance with Federal Mandate

The Department of Community Development continues to work on the non-funded federal mandate regarding the E-911 address changes that are required. In 2017, City Council passed an Ordinance for the addressing of all properties throughout the City of Duncan to follow the federal guidelines and to work towards compliance of a mandate that will a uniform addressing system through the entire United States. This program seeks to allow the other communities effectively assist each other in responding to natural and man-made disasters. Also, the new address system will allow first responders to utilize GPS units while conducting search and rescue operations in our community in order to improve response times and ultimately save lives.

As part of coming into compliance with this mandate, the Department has been working diligently in reassigning addresses. This process is being done in a manner to hopefully reduce undue hardships to our citizens and business owners, knowing that any change in an address will be a process that will have costs associated to these changes. Understanding this, the Department of Community Development asks for patience from our citizens and business owners alike as we work towards compliance.

The Department's mission is to focus on areas of the community and complete all the address changes in that area at a time. This will help delivery companies, utility companies, first responders, and visitors to our community the best opportunity to find your property. As a Department we are focusing on those areas that are seeing, or have the potential of seeing, new development occur. As a Department, we want to see new structures start with the properly assigned E-911 address and this means that those existing structures will also need to be brought into compliance.

The Department has discussed this process at meetings hosted by civic clubs, provided information on our Facebook page, and will continue to provide regular updates to citizens and business owners. We appreciate your understanding during this transition, and the Department understands that this process may cause some temporary hardships. The Department is working closely with the USPS and utility companies to hopefully minimize any delays in services that might otherwise occur.

Finally, as part of this non-funded mandate from the federal government, if the City of Duncan fails to come into compliance then the community risks any future reimbursements to natural and/or man-made disasters that could cost our community thousands if not millions in tax payer dollars.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Department at 580-251-7715.

New Electrical Inspector Hired

The Department of Community Development is proud to announce that Terry Russell has been hired to serve as the new Electrical Inspector. Terry's years of electrical work experience will benefit our community and businesses alike. In between getting out and inspecting several residential and commercial projects his first month, Terry has also begun attending code classes so that he can be a better resource to our public. If you are in need of an electrical inspection, or have electrical code questions, please contact Terry at 580-251-7714.

Terry will also be assisting the Department in various code enforcement activities as we continue to enforce adopted City Codes and Ordinances. Being able to assist on the code enforcement projects in our community will help improve the overall quality of life, health and well-being of our great citizens.



Heritage Trails - A Path to a Healthier Community!

The Heritage Trails Committee has been working diligently the past several years to bring the first leg of a trail system to Duncan, Oklahoma. The first leg will consist of a 5k that will be located around the Duncan Regional Hospital, Chisholm Trail Museum, Simmons Center, and Horace Mann Elementary School. This first leg of the project is just part of over 15 miles of trail planned for the Duncan community!

This first 5k has seen much of the funding come from an Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) grant which is just another example of our local leaders working hard to bring alternative funding streams to our community to make projects happen! As the Heritage Trail works towards a ground breaking for the first 5k, hopefully early spring, the group continues its efforts to raise funding and awareness for the other components of this project.

Looking beyond the initial 5k, the Heritage Trails will in addition include a nature trail components, public art, and work towards the ultimate goal of providing 15 miles of trails to our citizens. Ultimately, this trail will cross into all four City Wards and provide recreational opportunities, improve the quality of life, and hopefully serve as a catalyst for future economic growth.



Christmas Decorations for 2018

Staff for the Department of Community Development would like to let you know that you have less than 11 months to prepare for Christmas 2018! As part of this friendly announcement, the Department is working towards finding a way to bring back our Christmas light displays in 2018!

Christina Nowlin, Plumbing Inspector for the Department, was sharing memories of the wonderful displays that showcased what made Duncan special years ago, and we feel we should take similar steps that were used to bring back the Fourth of July Fireworks Display of 2017 (Yes - the Fireworks Display is slated to occur again in 2018). As such, the Duncan Enhancement Trust Authority discussed ways of making the Christmas lights happen once again in our city parks and public spaces.

The City of Duncan acquired a display that was donated by Gaylan and Donna Hunt this year. The display consists of lighted reindeer, Santa on his sleigh, and a lighted Christmas tree. This display will be placed in front of the new City hall for the 2018 Holiday Seasons.

Tentatively, the discussions have been forming a public/private partnership with business owners and citizens that want to purchase displays. The details are still being worked on and further discussion with the City of Duncan Parks Board is needed. If you would like to share your input, please contact the Department at 580-251-7715 or by email at nschacht@duncanok.gov.

Olen Sledge Park is Getting New Playground Equipment!

The Department of Community Development is excited to announce that Olen Sledge Park is getting new playground equipment as part of a grant opportunity that was made available in 2017! The new equipment will replace much of the date units at the park and will also provide several components that are ADA (American with Disabilities Act) compliant. This is an effort by the City of Duncan Parks Board and City Council to provide recreational opportunities for all citizens!

The new equipment will require some of the older units to be removed. At this time, the tall slide and swing-set will remain in the park. The two jungle gym units, the merry-go-round and the small slide will be removed and if possible will be placed in a different park here in Duncan to provide additional recreational opportunities to parts of Duncan that are underserved.

2018 is going to be an exciting year for the City of Duncan Parks Department!



DETA Plans for 2018

The Duncan Enhancement Trust Authority is looking to continue the success from 2017 well into 2018 and beyond with efforts to beautify our community. Beautification means so much more than flowers and landscaping, though these are very important components, and DETA members understand this. There will be a greater emphasis on focusing some attention on our local amenities and community. Beautification is bringing the community together and providing opportunities that we can all be very proud to share with those outside of Duncan!

DETA members put together a soft work plan for 2018 that would allow the allocation of funding streams to continue to make improvements. The main goals for 2018 include:

- Splash pad shading at benches - DETA members have heard the voices of our citizens for a request to provide shade opportunities for families visiting our splash pads. DETA members are working with the Parks Board to find a way to provide shading at both splash pads and potentially additional shade opportunities at the swimming pool.
- Welcome to Duncan solar lighting - Entering Duncan, visitors are greeted with "Welcome to Duncan Pump Jacks" that are very visible during the day. At night, these welcoming signs may be lost in the darkness so DETA is looking at solar light options to make these signs more visible to our visitors.
- Continued Memorial Park improvements - Memorial Park is one of the first notable open spaces Duncan offers to visitors to our community as it sits along Highway 81. DETA wants to finish out the areas set aside for additional benches and finish placing the light fixtures to this park.
- Park Gateway Signs - DETA members believe in our parks and understand the value these recreational spaces provide our citizens. DETA is planning on upgrading the park signage at Hillcrest, Douglas, and Abe Raizen parks. If funding is still available then DETA will also look to upgrade the signage at Olen Sledge park as well.
- Community Wayfinding Signage - DETA plans to work with several organizations and committees to begin establishing wayfinding signage throughout the community. Wayfinding signage is a form of signage that advertises districts and unique amenities that our community has to offer. Larger communities have been embracing this form of advertisement as they build their tourism opportunities.
- Landscaping throughout Duncan - DETA believes there are beautification opportunities that can be focused on during 2018. This might include planting additional trees and shrubs in our publically owned open spaces, planting proper plants in existing flower gardens, and cleaning up the overall image of Duncan.

The Duncan Enhancement Trust Authority is excited for 2018! The members hope to engage more of our citizens in projects to see that the community does care and does listen to the voices of those that want to leave a positive impression on our community for generations to come.
