

2018 Community Development Annual Report

The numbers don't lie, it's been a momentous year for Community Development. We've handled a tremendous workload and have reduced our staffing at the same time. The success in doing this comes not just from the hard work of the staff but also because our partners – our contractors, property owners and businesses – have worked with us to accomplish our overarching goal of ensuring the safety of our buildings. When people think of great cities, they typically think first of the physical infrastructure, buildings, landmarks, parks and homes. All of these give a community its sense of place.

In 2018 we rolled out the 353 Tax Program to encourage reinvestment in property in and around the historic downtown. By yearend, three businesses had received approval for their Redevelopment Projects and eight more have made application for the program. With just three projects complete, we've seen nearly \$1,000,000 in investment into buildings and the businesses within those buildings. Interest in the area has also increased with more inquiries into development opportunities within the area. The program is available to both commercial and residential properties.

We see signs of progress throughout our community. We've seen more than \$15,000,000 in new investment in either expansions, improvement or new commercial buildings in the community. Our single-family home growth continues to be maintained through the free permit program that was in place in 2018.

Our focus on greater customer service included design changes to the Community Development office area and increased accessibility to City forms and records online. Building permits can now be completed on the City's website and City staff can access archived plans and files digitally. All these steps contribute to more efficient and timely service to our customers.

"While the digital world is helpful, nothing can take the place of a face-to-face meeting or phone call."

-Melinda Mehaffy, Director

We realize we make progress by working together. In the coming months, our staff will be sending out surveys to contractors to ask for help in identifying ways we can improve. Are we perfect? Not by a long shot. But we are committed to problem-solving within the scope of our abilities to move forward and become recognized as innovative problem solvers.

This Annual Report is a glimpse into the work we do in community development. What you don't see is all of the "behind the scenes" work to clean up properties, finish new projects or plan for what comes next. We hope this gives you an idea of the work we are doing to ensure our community has safe buildings and homes and new investment in the community.

BUILDING TRADES

Building Inspections

Building permits, inspections, and plan reviews are conducted by the Building Inspector, Mike Thompson.

In 2018, the total building permits issued were 562, compared to 478 permits in 2017. The large commercial projects this year were:

Aldi – New Grocery Store - \$2,400,000

Dr. Craven – New Dental Office - \$1,064,597

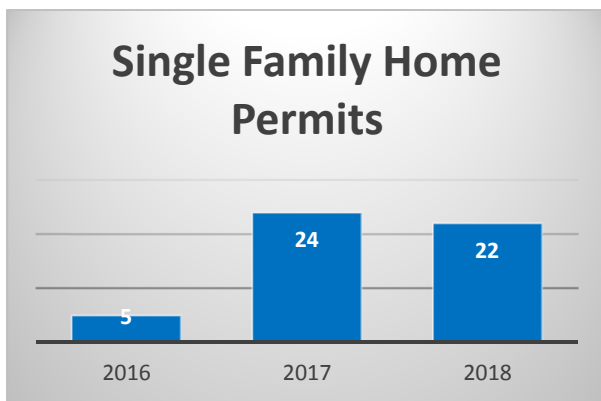
El Maguey – New Mexican Restaurant - \$1,200,000

Mid Continent Public Library – Renovation - \$1,042,000

McDonalds – Renovation - \$691,150

Thunderbird Electric – Renovation for new Electrical Showroom - \$225,000

Annual building values for 2018 valued \$15,445,583, which increased from \$8,731,686 in 2017. There were 22 new single family homes constructed this year compared to 24 in 2017.

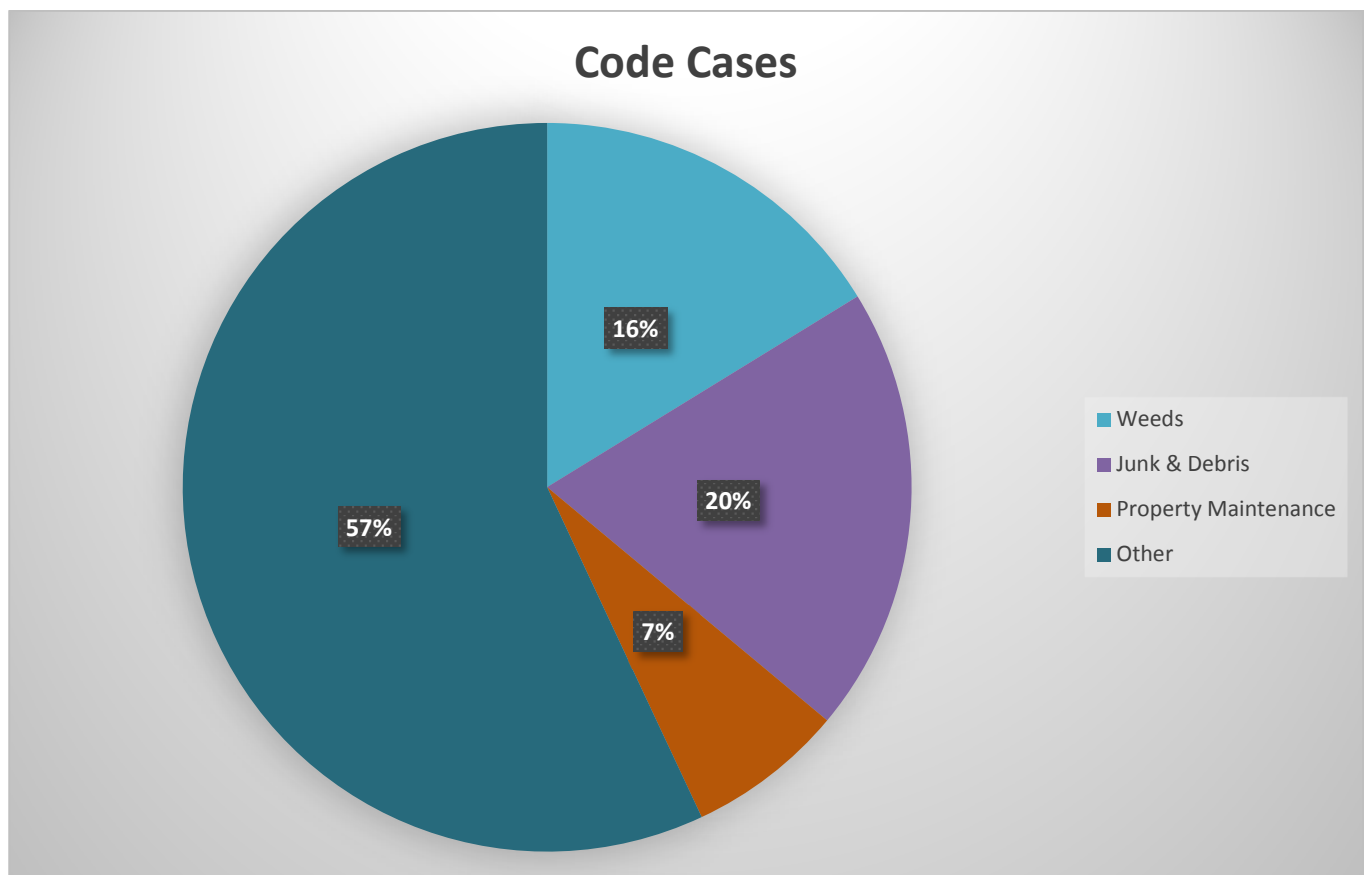


CODE COMPLIANCE

Code Enforcement

Our property maintenance program has one code enforcement officer, Cory Wartner. Our goal would be voluntary compliance without going to court however that is not always possible. In 2018, 31 cases were elevated to the court system.

Code compliance for 2018 was a total of 832 cases. These cases covered 135 weed cases, 165 junk and debris cases, 58 property maintenance cases and 474 other cases.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

During 2018, staff worked to update incentive programs which included working with Magna Seating on their Chapter 100 program, working on two Enhanced Enterprise Zone applications and reworking Tax Increment Financing at The Vintage. Council approved a 353 Program in 2017 which encourages the redevelopment within an identified area of the community. In 2018, the City worked with Clay County to complete three incentive programs. This resulted in more than \$211,133 in renovations (excluding any costs completed by tenants for tenant improvements) and \$4,717 in tax savings for three property owners. Currently, the City is working on more than three times the applications for the 2019 year.

City staff has responded to Kansas City Area Development Council (KCADC) requests for information on industrial projects. Additionally, staff continues to meet with and answer questions for individuals interested in locating their business in Excelsior Springs or expand their footprint in the area.



PLANNING

Planning & Zoning Commission

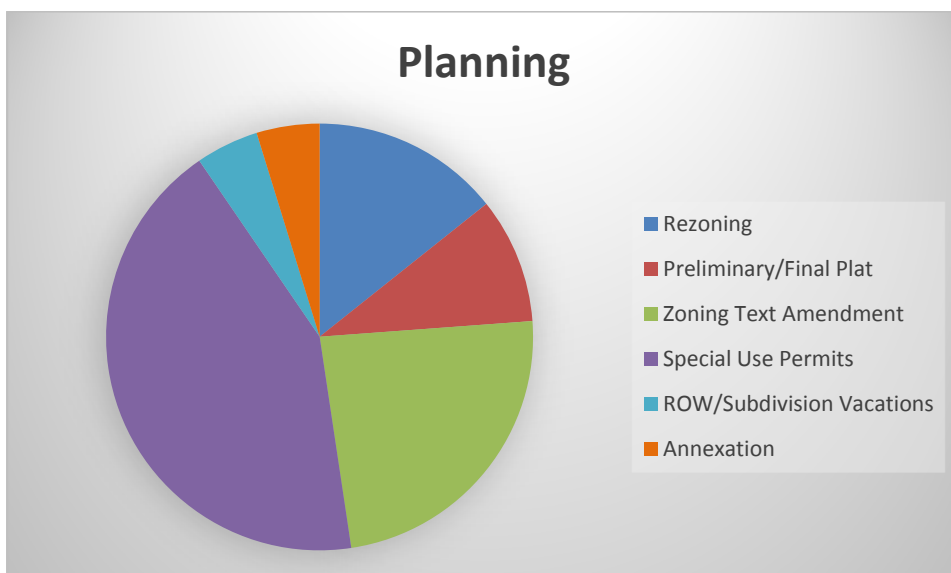
Embracing their role of providing planning and policy advice to the City Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission held a number of study sessions throughout the year, in addition to their regular activity of considering zoning and subdivision applications. These study sessions allowed the Commission to evaluate potential changes to process and regulations at a policy level to determine the most appropriate manner to address pending land use and development issues. Commissioners found these policy discussions to be most helpful in reviewing existing issues while not being focused around an active proposal. Study sessions were held on possible zoning ordinance amendments affecting solar power facilities, accessible ramps to houses, accessory residential uses in the downtown and on re-adoption of the Official Zoning Map.

"The P&Z Study Sessions are very helpful allowing us to focus on issues important to our city."

-Chair Bob Gerdes

Commissioners also took the time to conduct several study sessions to reacquaint themselves on the proper role and process of the Planning & Zoning Commission. This training helped established consistency at meetings and to ensure compliance with all legal procedures.

The Planning & Zoning Commission met once a month and considered the following applications:



Planning & Zoning Commission:

Bob Gerdes, Chair
Sandy Barnes
Mark Bullimore
Bill Griffey, III
Kenneth Manley
Jake Simmons
Pat Slusher

Board of Zoning Adjustment

The Board of Zoning Adjustment holds a unique position in the City's community development function and Board members accept this role quite seriously. While only meeting when there are applications for variance or appeal, the Board did hold a special study session this year to learn more about its duties and obligations and how the Community Development staff provides appropriate staff support to the Board.

"Board members want to know the decisions we make are both fair and appropriate."

-Chair Bill Griffey, Sr.

The Board met in formal session one time this year to consider two variance applications, both related to the construction of ADA accessible ramps to single-family homes.

Board of Zoning Adjustments:

Bill Griffey Sr, Chair
Dr. Nick Houk
Tray Harkins
Richard Andrew
Maynard Moore, Alternate

Variances:

2017 – 0
2018 - 2

Historic Preservation Commission

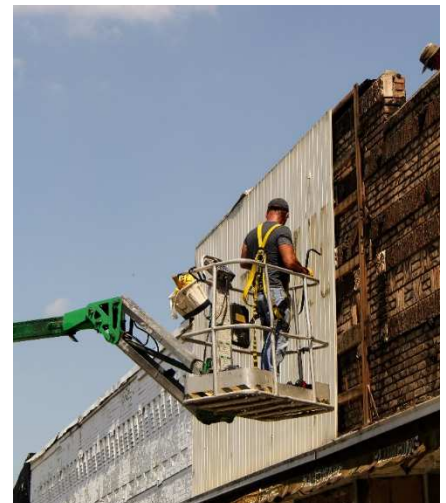
With interest in the City's historic districts on the rise, the Historic Preservation Commission had one of its most busy year's to-date. Certificate of Appropriation applications increased by over 350% over last year and Commission members participated individually in several outreach events held through the State Historic Preservation Office.

Community Development staff support was also enhanced to provide a more standard staff report and recommendation format to allow Commissioners to be well prepared for meetings and to have time to engage with applicants with suggestions and ideas.

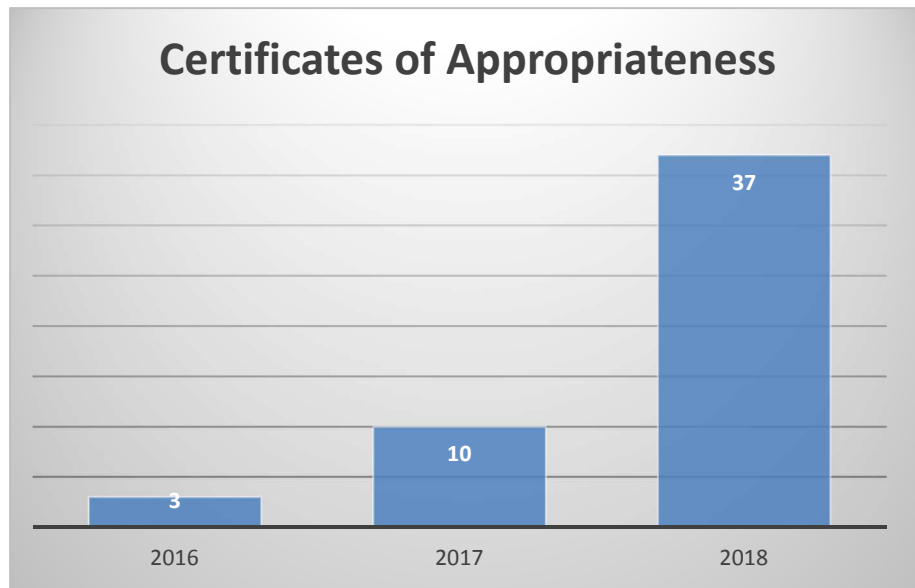
Historic Preservation Commission:

Betty Bissell, Chairman
David Adams
Darryl Coutts
Rick DeFlon
Sylvia Eales
Dennis Hartman
Marilyn Gerdes

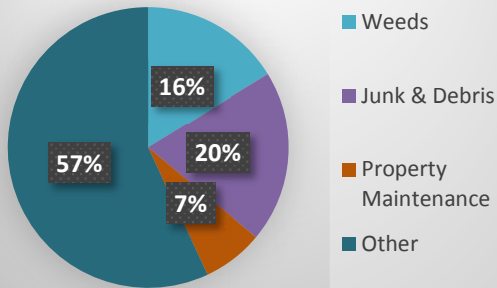
The City is a Certified Local Government (CLG) under the Missouri Department of Natural Resource's State Historic Preservation Office. The program is designed to expand the historic preservation network by creating a mechanism for participation of local governments. The Community Development staff compiles a CLG Annual Report and can be found at the following website link:
https://cityofesmo.com/eshpc/annual_reports/AnnualReport18.pdf.



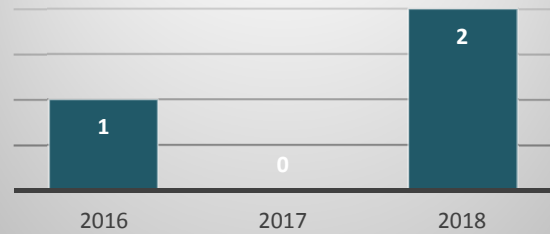
On August 24, 2018, the City received word that the Boarding House District was approved as a National Registry of Historic Places, recognizing the outstanding historical significance of the district. This recognition is the culmination of work done by consultants, neighborhood members, the City Council and a significant amount of hours by staff and the Historic Preservation Commission.



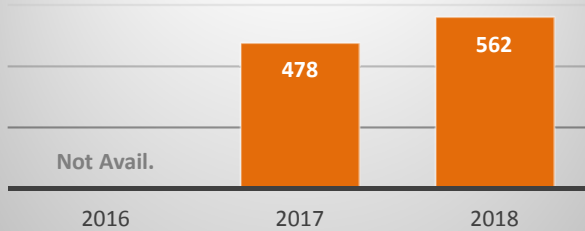
Code Cases



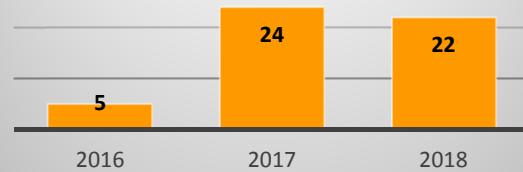
BZA Cases



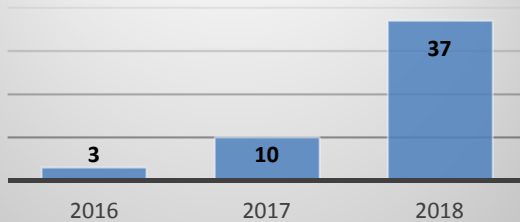
Building Inspections



Single Family Home Permits



Certificates of Appropriateness



Planning

