

Belleville laying out plans for ‘strategic’ development

By DENNIS GRUBAUGH

Coming off a pandemic slowdown, the city of Belleville still has several projects on the horizon, but it’s the long-term fore-



Cross

cast that occupies the mind of one of its newest city officials. Clifford “Cliff” Cross, director of economic development, planning and zoning, has been on the job about three months.

“I think the biggest positive is we are starting to position ourselves to be more focused on a strategic plan for economic development. That will help us to identify strategic areas of development and business attraction and retention,” he said.

Such a plan would help the city better understand the needs of certain areas to help its goal of sustainable growth. The city expects to soon seek a request for proposals to hire a consultant on a strategic plan, Cross said.

Belleville is also moving forward with its infill housing program, designed to take city lots on which derelict houses have been razed and bring in private developers that would build homes on them, consistent with the neighborhoods. Those structures would be deed restricted so they would be owner-occupied for a period of at least 10 years. The lots are located “all over the city,” Cross said.

The city is also working on

code rewrites, aimed at making the city more business friendly.

“We’d like to have a yearly work plan to show our goals and our measurables. Ultimately this will lead into the process of adoption of a new comprehensive plan, which will most likely take place in 2023,” he said.

Cross said last year’s state-approved extension of its TIF 3 district, which encompasses most of the city, was “vital.”

“It is probably one of the largest TIFs ever. We were able to get a second extension of it for 12 years, which gives us time to evaluate it, best utilized it and ultimately close it out.” He believes there are in excess of 9,000 parcels in the district.

As for newer upcoming projects, two of the biggest will be on Illinois Route 15.

One is a new Freddy’s restaurant, and potentially others, at Belleville Crossing, along Frank Scott Parkway.

The other is a major expansion under way for Eckert’s Inc., where the city has approved a site plan for a 5,500-square-foot, outdoor dining pavilion, and music venue, with a 700-square-foot stage and a 500-square-foot restroom building.

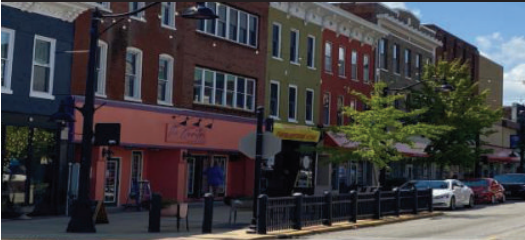
Cross, 49, has a long background in urban and regional planning, most recently in University City, Mo.

He has a Master’s in Urban Planning from Indiana State and a Master’s of Public Policy and Administration from Northwestern University.

“I loved U City. I wasn’t looking to make a job move but being from Illinois I’d bought a little home in Belleville and when the position came open it was a perfect fit for me,” said Cross, who is a native of Shelbyville.



The City of Belleville, IL has a thriving business climate with an excellent quality of life for our residents to embrace. Our community is complete with affordable housing options, great schools, parks, bike trails and a Downtown district that includes entertainment and shopping. We host nationally ranked art and cultural events that value and promote our 207-year history. Another advantage of doing business and living in Belleville, IL, is that we are just 20 minutes east of St. Louis, MO, allowing for easy access to all the arts, cultural and sports amenities that few cities can provide and deliver.



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C.Green & Associates expands services for overloaded marketing execs

It has been a tough year for business leaders and marketing professionals. Change has become almost constant and



Green

Associates, Inc., a strategic market-

communicating with customers is a real challenge.

“You can no longer write a marketing plan to guide a company for years at a time,” says Carolyn Green, president of C.Green &

ing firm in Edwardsville. “Yet not being strategic is disastrous.”

Green’s solution is to “Plan as You Grow.” That’s what she calls her program to help growing organizations build an in-house system to deliver consistent and sustainable results for marketing.

After more than 20 years as a marketing consultant, Green realized most of the people that came to her for help were overworked professionals in companies where healthy growth had become overwhelming.

The year-long Plan as You Grow process she developed for them helps business leaders win the support they

need to get consistent and sustainable results from their marketing.

“In 2019 I focused on what needed to be done to help clients be more strategic without getting overwhelmed,” said Green. “By the end of 2020, I was focused on how to make it more affordable.”

As a result, she not only has personalized guide services, but she also has group programs to lead groups of leaders through the process at a reduced rate.

Green said it is like a mastermind where everyone is tackling the same big-picture challenge with colleagues at their level who can help them troubleshoot the day-to-day challenge.

Together these groups of leaders can find clarity in the process, unite their staff and bring new energy to their marketing.

“Strategic marketing has never been more important, business who don’t adapt are not going to survive,” said Green. “If you need a quick evaluation, help with a project, or a system for making your marketing more strategic please check out our website and give us a call.”

Hopefully 2022 will be a year where more businesses are able to regain a little bit of control. Transition is hard but Green reminds us, it is possible to plan as we grow.

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