

Planning

Del City developing new comprehensive plan

By Jeff Harrison
mwcbeacon@yahoo.com

Del City has big plans for the future. And they're putting them down on paper.

The city is creating a new comprehensive plan that outlines community goals and aspirations for future development. The plan will outline what type of the development the city would like to see in the future and what would needed to make it happen.

"If we wanted to put in a restaurant row where we have 10 great restaurants, we'd need to find out what that'd look like, who do we need to talk to, and are there developers interested in Del City," said J.D. Hock, Del City economic development director.

Hock said the new plan will be a "living document" and can change when necessary. It will cover 2024-2044 and replace the city's last master plan that was created in the 1980s.

"Even if we still took the last comprehensive plan at face value, it was over in 2005 and we are in 2023," Hock said. "So, we desperately needed a new one."

The plan will outline what type of the development the city would like to see in the future and what would needed to make it happen. Zoning will be a major part of the puzzle. Hock said the city has some issues with zoning including residential areas along major thoroughfares and near highways, which is traditionally used for commercial.

Another issue is the age and condition of existing buildings. Hock said the city may need to find ways to promote new development and redevelopment of existing structures.

"A lot of people don't want to take a building that is going to require a ton of changes to get up to code,"



Del City hosted focus groups and an open house to get feedback about the community and what residents and business leaders would like to see in the future. That feedback is being used to create a new comprehensive plan. PHOTO BY JEFF HARRISON

Hock said. "So do we need to consider working with developers to rebuild them and clean them up?"

City officials started looking into the comprehensive plan last year. Hock said they initially considered simply revising the previous plan, but quickly realized they needed to start from scratch. The city contracted with Halff Associates to help with the project.

Public involvement is an important part of the plan. Hock said they want to update residents throughout the process and get feedback about the plan.

"That way you have a say so in what's happening in your government and not just the five folks that vote on it," Hock said.

The city kicked off the project in

November with an open house for residents and two focus groups with community leaders. Based on feedback at those meetings, the city is highlighting three areas for special emphasis. They included Reno Ave. near Eagle Lake, SE 15th St. between Sooner Rd. Sunnyslane Rd., and SE 29th St. between Bryant Ave. and Epperly Dr.

Hock said they would like to make Eagle Lake a destination and build up the area. On SE 15th St., the city wants to redevelop much of the commercial area with new businesses. They would like to see new single-family homes built near SE 29th St. and Bryant Ave. Hock said they are still exploring ideas for the original town center area near SE 29th St. and Epperly Dr. He said they could

try to make the area a historical district and retain the original design, or try to redevelop the area with more modern structures. Either way, Hock said they want to draw more people to the area with festivals and unique businesses.

Last month, the city held a joint meeting of the planning commission and city council. The group reviewed the city's progress and ideas so far.

"They were pretty excited and want to see what we can do to make the city grown," he said.

Hock said the city will host a town hall or open house every quarter to keep the public updated on the progress. The aim to have the comprehensive plan adopted by December and implemented in January 2024.