

State of the City - 2007

Planning and GIS Department

2007 was another banner year for the Planning Department. We continue to experience unprecedented growth, at the request of property owners and developers, we annexed more than 256 acres into the City of Lebanon. The population of the City of Lebanon in 2006, as estimated by the US Census Bureau, was 23,702. That was an increase of 8% since the Special Census conducted in 2004 showed the City of Lebanon having a population of 21,865.

The Planning Department is charged with promoting organized growth and development of our City. This is accomplished by:

- balancing current and long-term planning needs;
- ensuring the orderly division of property; and
- requiring compliance with bulk regulations such as minimum building setbacks, maximum building heights and minimum number of parking spaces.

This year, a consultant was hired to assist the Staff in reviewing and updating our entire Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance is referred to as the “book of rules” for the physical development of our City, therefore, we felt it was important to ensure that the rules are such that they accomplish our vision for the continued growth of our City. It is important that we take into account the changes in society, the needs of our changing population and development trends. The Planning Commission, appointed by the Mayor of Lebanon, makes recommendations relating to the development of our City and promotes municipal planning within the city limits and our Urban Growth Boundary.

The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Staff assists all City departments in providing accurate data for the physical mapping of information. The work the department completes goes beyond making “pretty maps”. An example of the information available to the various City departments in the databases that our GIS Staff builds includes information about the location, material, size, condition of various items such as gas and water valves, stormwater inlets, manholes, etc. This information is very beneficial when, for example, there is a water main leak and it is necessary to find the correct water valve as quickly as possible or to assist in ensuring that the City’s infrastructure, such as sewer lines, is maintained to the best of our ability.

Members of the Planning and GIS Staff include:

Magi Tilton, Planning Director
Lynn Pruett, GIS Manager
Jeffrey Dedman, GIS Tech I
Erika Potts, GIS Tech II
Seth Rivard, Planner
Will Hager, Planner

The Planning Staff responds to questions from the public regarding development within the City, zoning of specific properties and providing information about the various development-related regulations within the City. We also provide assistance to applicants as they consider developing their property or relocating their business to Lebanon. The Planning staff provides support to the City Council, Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals and several committees such as the Neighborhood Revitalization Task Force, Financial Advisory Task Force, Beautification Committee and Public Works/Transportation Committee. We are charged with carrying-out the recommendations of the Growth Management Plan and guiding other long-range planning activities.

In 2007:

- Over 256 acres were annexed by the City of Lebanon, all at the request of the property owner or developer
- More than 2.4 million square feet of building area was approved
- More than 800 lots were approved on Preliminary Plats
- More than 900 lots were approved on Final Plats, the first years since 2005 that the number of lots in Final Plats exceeded the number of lots on Preliminary Plats)

Highlights of the year include:

- the annexation and Preliminary Plat approval of almost 80 acres on Highway 109 south of the Spence Creek development for an additional 123 single-family residential lots, called Cherry Hill Estates

- the annexation of approximately 15 acres on Callis Road for apartment development, this area west of Highway 109 South continues to evolve into residential development of varying lot sizes and types
- approval of a site plan for Baker Aeronautics, a flight school, to be located on Glidepath Way south of the airport
- two new warehouse buildings in the Commerce Farms development located on Highway 109 South, totaling over 900,000 square feet
- a 451,000 square foot warehouse building in Park 840 located on Highway 109 South
- approval of a site plan for multiple small office buildings, totaling 67,500 square feet, to be located on Highway 70 generally behind the new shopping center where Dunkin Donuts and Pizza Hut recently opened
- approval of two developments on the UMC campus, an ambulatory surgery center and new patient tower
- approval of a site plan for a Hampton Inn which would have 80 rooms located on Franklin Road and currently under construction
- approval of a Preliminary Plat consisting of 153 single-family residential lots on Rutledge Lane, called Hartmann Crossing, three Final Plats have also been approved
- approval of a Preliminary Plat consisting of 135 single-family residential lots on Coles Ferry Pike, called Millstone Farms, three Final Plats have also been approved

In 2007, the Planning Staff presented almost 90 ordinances and resolutions to the City Council for their consideration. These ordinances and resolutions were for development-related activities.

The City of Lebanon's Growth Management Plan serves as a guide for future development within the City and the Urban Growth Boundary. In addition to carrying out the Growth Management Plan, other long-range planning activities include updating the Zoning Ordinance (Title 14 of Lebanon's Code of Ordinances) and Subdivision Regulations, and conducting small area studies.

Work is continuing on the Zoning Ordinance review and update, however, Staff focused our efforts ensuring that the Land Use and Major Thoroughfare Plan updates are completed. Other projects Planning Staff is currently working on include:

- Development of an ordinance that would allow for the payment in lieu of sidewalk construction in certain limited cases
- Development of a tree ordinance that would assist Lebanon in obtaining status as a Tree City
- Development of an ordinance that addresses tree preservation and planting as it relates to development
- Development of a policy that addresses access management as it relates to the number of access points for residential subdivisions in order to provide connectivity

Members of the GIS (Geographic Information Systems) staff attended the Middle-Tennessee/Regional TNGIC Conference held October 30 & 31st. The conference highlighted current issues and topics of interest to GIS users. Members of the GIS and Planning Staff entered three posters in a contest associated with the conference.

- Jeffrey Dedman won 1st place with his poster entitled "A Growing Community"
- Erika Potts won 2nd place with her poster entitled "Defining our Community"
- Will Hager received an Honorable Mention for his poster entitled "Population vs. School Location"

On November 14th, we celebrated **GIS Day** at City Hall. This is an international event, which is intended to recognize GIS and its use in the display and analysis of geo-graphical information. Lebanon's GIS Department conducted the city's first GIS Day event. The open house included a gallery displaying maps created and maintained by the department as well as posters illustrating uses of GIS. Laptops were set up for demonstrations; refreshments were provided and door prizes were awarded.

Other projects and events that have occurred in the GIS Division include:

- GPS Training/ In -House GPS Data Collection started & in progress
- Added **Lebanon GIS Department Page** to the City of Lebanon's Website, information available on the website includes - About GIS, Maps, 5 Year Planning, and Links
- Numerous maps related to the revitalization efforts in and around the Upton heights Housing Project and Farmers Market, as well as continuing to develop maps related to inventorying our utility systems.

The Board of Zoning Appeal's regular meetings are the fourth Monday of the month, starting at 5 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Members of the Board of Zoning Appeals include:

Patsy Anderson, Codes Director (Ex Officio)
Bob Black
Pat O'Brien, Fire Marshall (Ex Officio)
Johnnie Payton
Danny Raines, Chief Building Official (Ex Officio)
Bob Schmidt
Nelson Steed, Chairman
Gary Thomas
Magi Tilton, Planning Director (Ex Officio)

The Planning Commission is responsible for making recommendations to City Council regarding proposed annexation, rezoning and Planned Unit Development requests, reviewing and approving subdivision plats, reviewing and approving site plan applications, adopting and amending the Subdivision Regulations and making recommendations to City Council regarding proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission's regular meetings are the fourth Tuesday of the month, starting at 5 pm in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Members of the Planning Commission include:

Pam Black
Ray Cravens
Don Fox, Mayor
Beulah Garrett
Joe Hayes, Councilman
Rick Jones
Mack McCluskey
Maynard Pate, Vice Chairman
Bob Schmidt, Chairman
Magi Tilton, Planning Director (Ex Officio)
Freddie Paul White

In accordance with State law, the members of both the Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals are required to have four hours of continuing education per year. Staff advising these boards/commissions is required to have eight hours of continuing education per year. Events that members of the commissions or staff attended throughout the year included:

- A workshop on Transit Oriented Development
- A presentation about trees; the appropriate planting and pruning of trees
- One hour of ethics training let by the City Attorney
- The Blueprint for America, American Institute of Architects 150th year celebration
- City Council and Planning Commission work session related to the updates to the Land Use and Major Thoroughfare Plans, and
- Follow-up session to the Blueprint Workshop where the results were presented.

In addition to these events, the Planners attended a webcast relating to the topic of LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a seminar on Stormwater and the use of Rain Gardens, and the annual state planning conference.