



THE PONCA CITY NEWS

PONCA CITY, OKLAHOMA

What Is Comprehensive Plan?

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As Ponca City's consultants for the Comprehensive Master Plan wrap up days of meetings with stakeholders, their real work is just beginning.

The consultants with Kendig Keast Collaborative will review comments from citizens, reports from city staff and the Vision 2020 report over the next several months as they draft the Comprehensive Master Plan.

The plan, which communities are required by law to have, is necessary in order for the city to qualify for state and federal grants and other funding sources.

Ponca City last updated its Comprehensive Master Plan 23 years ago.

"Ponca City is at a turning point," Mayor Homer Nicholson told members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee. "We've had a particular culture for many decades and that has changed. This plan has come up just as we're trying to determine which Y in the road to take."

Nicholson said the Vision 2020 report which was written in 2006 was a starting point in the process.

"Without 2020, we would be starting further back," he said. "It fits right in and this is the next step. This is how we implement what we want to do."

About 30 Ponca City residents are serving on the Comprehensive Plan Committee, which will meet monthly during the process of developing the plan. It is expected to take almost a year to draft, review, revise and present the plan to the City Commission for approval and adoption.

"Kendig and Keast is very in-tune with our part of the country and our lifestyle," Nicholson said. "Bret Keast and Jonathan Grosshans came highly recommended."

Bret Keast, vice president and part owner of the consulting firm, said citizen participation is critical in developing the plan.

"We cannot do this process and do this process very good without your participation," he said Thursday night at the committee's kick-off meeting. "This will take a good amount of time and some work will be involved."

Kendig Keast will draft the plan and manage the involvement process.

"It often takes months to help communities define their vision. You've already done that with the Vision 2020 project," Keast said.

The consultants will confirm the information from the Vision 2020 report and update it with any newer information that comes from the stakeholders' meetings, reports and the planning committee.

"This will be a 20-year plan. We will look at trends and will think of five-year projects and some action steps," Keast said. "We will look at what happens to the economy and how that will affect the way we live."

Keast said all plans have goals and objectives.

"Goals are rosy-sounding ideas. You have to decide if you have what it takes to achieve those goals. How far do you want to go to implement them?" he asked.

Each participant on the committee was asked to introduce themselves, say how long they have lived in Ponca City and give one word describing what they would like the future of Ponca City to be.

Keast told the committee that they will review drafts of the plan, be the critical readers and editors of it and sometimes will be asked to act as the cheerleaders for the plan.

The chapters of the plan will focus on a community overview; land use and character; growth capacity; transportation; housing and neighborhoods; economic development and implementation.

The committee is expected to meet seven times over the next year. The City Commission will receive a briefing in November.

In March 2009, there will be an open house on the drafted plan. A public hearing will be held before the city's Planning Commission in April and the document will be presented to the City Commission in May.

Citizens are asked to participate by completing a survey on the Ponca City web site, www.poncacityok.gov, by July 18. Documents related to the development of the plan also will be available online, along with meeting notices.

Following their introduction to the timeline, committee members were asked to describe Ponca City's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

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