

- ▶ HOME
- ▶ NEWS
- ▶ COMMUNITY
- ▶ SPORTS
- ▶ OPINION
- ▶ OBITUARIES
- ▶ PLACE WANT ADS
- ▶ GARAGE SALES
- ▶ AUCTIONS
- ▶ STAFF CONTACT
- ▶ ADVERTISE
- ▶ BONUS COVERAGE
- ▶ SUBSCRIBE
- ▶ ARCHIVES *New!*



Council OKs plat for theater; other projects in the wings



Excelsior Springs City Councilmen Brent McElwee and Jim Nelson, Mayor Ambrose Buckman and Mayor Pro Tem Chad Taylor voted Monday night to approve the plat that will allow for construction of a movie theater, and then heard an update on the long-running project from developer Sony Parker of CHAP Land Co., LLC. (Photo by Eric Copeland)

By [ERIC COPELAND](#)
Managing Editor

The Excelsior Springs City Council voted 4-0 Monday night to approve the Vintage Plaza 10th plat, completing the second-to-last hurdle before construction begins on a new movie theater in Excelsior Springs and several contingent projects to follow.

Councilwoman Carolyn Schutte, who is still recovering at an out-of-state facility from a serious heart attack in late June, was absent from the meeting.

The Excelsior Springs Planning & Zoning Commission had approved the plat at their June 21 meeting, but the council only held a full session one time in July and the issue was not on the agenda at that meeting.

The roughly-four-acre plat, delineated on the north by the Vintage Estates residential subdivision, on the east by Estancia Street, on the south by Vintage Drive and on the west by McCleary Road, is divided into two lots—a larger piece, upon which the theater will be built, and a smaller one tucked into the corner that is set aside for construction of a sit-down restaurant.

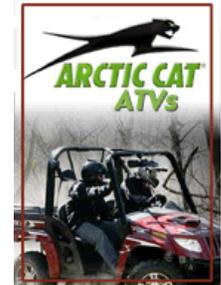
Grading at the site is already mostly done. CHAP Land Co., LLC, the developer for the Vintage Estates, will build Vintage Drive on past the plat in question to connect onto McCleary Road near the VA Clinic.

At the P&Z meeting where the plat was first reviewed, some neighbors had spoken of their worry that the project would increase the amount of storm water runoff onto their properties, but the developers reassured them that a new storm water system that would accompany the street's construction would actually help to lessen the amount of runoff they see.

Sony Parker and Nick Houk, partners in the CHAP company, were present at the meeting. And since the project has been in the works for nearly three years, the council also gave Parker an opportunity to update them on the project.

"The theater is on course," he said. "We are progressing."

He explained that things did not happen nearly as fast as he and his partners, who also include Chuck Anderson and Robert Craven, had wanted due to a lack of financing available to Chuck Shoemaker, the area resident who is building the theater.



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Parker said CHAP felt they were fulfilling a need in the community, as surveys taken during the compilation of a comprehensive master plan stated that a movie theater was near the top of local features people wanted to see.

"We have the drawings done and everything is in place, and we're waiting to get the bids back," Parker stated. Ground-breaking could happen as early as September, but must be no later than October. "(Shoemaker) hopes he can get it under a roof and have the parking lot finished this year."

Platte Valley Bank has submitted a letter of commitment for the project's funding, assuming that bonds are issued in conjunction with the process.

And Parker also stated that several nearby projects are ready to move, but each of them hinges on the theater's construction.

For more on this story, see the print edition of Tuesday's *Standard*.

Main Street Connection group to explore historic downtown district

By [ERIC COPELAND](#)
Managing Editor

Downtown Excelsior Springs has come a long way in recent years, and next week they'll be showing off their progress to people who know a little something about downtown revitalization.

The Missouri Main Street Connection will have their annual conference in Kansas City from Aug. 9-11, and a centerpiece of the event will be an evening in downtown Excelsior Springs.

"Get Plugged In...Downtown" opens up with a pre-conference workshop next Tuesday and follows up with more sessions on Wednesday, including four different in-field educational tours of various areas of Kansas City.

But from 6 to 9:30 p.m., Wednesday, Aug. 10, between 70 and 80 of the conference participants will be traveling northeast to Excelsior Springs, where they can get a firsthand look at what's being done here.

"Right now, we're what the Missouri Main Street Connection calls an 'aspiring community,' and we've applied to move up to be an 'affiliate community,'" explained Keith Winge, executive director of the Downtown Excelsior Partnership. "What that says is that we, as an organization, are doing certain things. We're refining our position here, and we have to justify the change, and they're recognizing our efforts and getting in there and working hard on downtown."

The Wednesday night event didn't just happen. Over the past year, Winge said he and the DEP in general have been reaching out by getting more involved in the Missouri Main Street Organization. Next week's visit is a result of the DEP's efforts to find out how they could participate in a more meaningful way in the larger state organization.

"The people coming here will be from all over the state," Winge said. "There will be some downtown organizations, some city officials and some representatives of chambers, economic development groups and state agencies. We're also inviting our local dignitaries to come out and take part."

The evening will include dinner at Blue Moon, a new banquet hall on Thompson Avenue, with the food catered by downtown restaurants. There will be a presentation about the DEP's accomplishments to date and their goals for the future, and also a tour that will include downtown businesses and the Hall of Waters.

[Return to top](#)

NEWS Briefs

ESCT's 'Barefoot in the Park' opens Thursday, continues to Aug. 14

Excelsior Springs Community Theatre's Slightly Off Broadway Players will present Neil Simon's classic romantic comedy, "Barefoot in the Park," starting this Thursday at the Slightly Off Broadway Theatre, 114 N. Marietta St.

The show, starring Colonsay Selby, Patrick Rippetto, Tanya Duncan, Wayne Day, Larry Tesar and Bryan Cresswell, will be performed

Flags at half-staff for guardsman

Flags throughout the state are flying at half-staff today at the order of Gov. Jay Nixon, in honor of Specialist Jordan House. The Independence man was a member of the Missouri National Guard who was helping Missourians affected by recent flooding. He died July 25 of injuries sustained while on state emergency duty service.

The flags at state buildings in Jackson