

CLEMSON

Officials: No end in sight for Clemson economic boom

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — The city of Clemson is experiencing an economic boom that shows no signs of slowing down, at least for the immediate future.

During the city's annual planning retreat this month at the Madren Center, the city's planning and codes and administration departments reported a number of achievements:

Planning and codes was able to oversee the plan review, permitting and construction inspection for \$154 million worth of work — a total that far exceeds the \$80 million that took place over the same time period the previous year. A total of 22 individual projects were reviewed and forwarded through the Board of Architectural Review and or the Planning Commission.

The \$154 million equates to a total of 2,944 inspections, including fire, building and rental, with major improvement in safety in multiple commercial establishments — all of which took place during a year in which a code change occurred.

On the city administration side, \$1,845,000 worth of business license renewals was completed in 2016, totaling 2,192 licenses.

"We have been over \$1 million in business license revenue the last five years," city clerk Beverly Coleman said. "There were close to 100 business licenses related to game-

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day and short-term parking, with more game-day parking than short-term renewal."

While the city has more than 620 in-town businesses, they have averaged 524 new businesses a year each of the last three years.

"That includes contractors coming in, not just brick and mortar," Coleman said. "Sometimes, a business will go out and a new one will come in."

Mayor pro tem Tim Fowler questioned the manner in which business licenses are required,

"People like me who don't have a business in Clemson but do business have to have a business license," Fowler said.

City administrator Rick Cotton said that is why the city uses a three-year average when determining the number.

"Last year was 650-plus (new businesses) so we skewed it down to be more realistic," Cotton said.

Coleman said she hopes to see the business license process become a little easier for applicants through placing it on the city website sometime this year or by 2018.

"Right now, you down-

load an application and you either have to email it in or fax it back and we talk on the phone,"

Coleman said. "There's several steps for a credit card payment that this would eliminate."

City officials said summer also promises to be extremely busy when an unprecedented amount of inspections will take place for mixed-use projects coming due basically around the same time.

"Everyone is racing toward that move-in by students," planning and codes director Todd Steadman said. "It's going to take all hands on deck,

and that's a big goal for us."

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