



ELGIN COURIER



Vol. 118 No. 17

April 16, 2008

Elgin, Texas: Home of James Sprague

(20 PAGES IN 1 SECTION)

www.elgincourier.com

75 CENTS PER COPY

CNU annual conference features City of Elgin

As part of the Congress of New Urbanism's annual conference held this past week in Austin, several City of Elgin staffers including Jeff Coffee, Dennis Sheehan, Amy Miller, Gary Cooke, and council members Anthony Ramirez and Pat Frenzel attended a seminar on Sustainable Urbanism.

This international movement integrates walkable neighborhoods and transit corridors with open space and green buildings and infrastructure. More than 65 planning and sustainability experts from all around the US and Canada attended the seminar.

The highlight of the seminar was an interactive session where these experts gave advice on how to apply the principles of sustainable urbanism to the City of Elgin itself and to the entire Austin-Manor-Elgin corridor.

The advice was concise and constructive and Elgin's representatives were exposed to new approaches and ideas. Seminar leader Doug Farr, founding

principal and president of Farr Associates in Chicago, said that "Elgin staff and officials were exposed to the best thinking on how to plan and build human settlements available anywhere. This is a real mark of distinction for any town, especially a town of Elgin's size. Forward looking and small towns don't often go together which makes the leadership coming out of Elgin all the more remarkable."

Coffee noted that the workshop which placed the spot light on Elgin was of great value in not only introducing the City of Elgin to a large number of national experts, but also in giving to the City priceless suggestions on how best to achieve sustainable development along the passenger rail.

"Working with Doug Farr is an opportunity few cities have and we are glad that Doug appreciates the great opportunity that exists in Elgin to incorporate sustainable urbanism in our future growth." Farr, in his more than 20 years as an architect, has seen

sustainable development move from a hard-to-describe concept to a requirement of many projects. This dynamic discipline continues to evolve, challenging architects and planners alike to come up with new ways to meet the needs of the structure's occupants while being good stewards of the environment.

Farr's love for architect comes out as he speaks to all who have the change to engage him in instructive conversation.

"My calling is to design elegant spaces that people love, which also are high density," says Farr.

The City has previously noted that new urbanism along a commuter train line allows for not only an enhanced living experience, but also greater taxable values and reduced costs of city services.

Coffee states that Elgin has positioned itself to capture significant rewards from a commuter rail line between Elgin and Austin that allows for transit-oriented development.