

By Russ Pankonin The Imperial Republican

Representatives with Miller & Associates will be in Imperial Tuesday, May 6, to seek citizen input on proposed changes to the city's zoning regulations.

The meeting will be held in the council chambers beginning at 6 p.m.

Updating the zoning regulations is part of the process to update the city's comprehensive plan last completed in 2000.

City Manager Jo Leyland said this will be the public's first look at the proposed changes to existing zoning regulations.

She noted it's really important to get citizen input at this point in the process.

Specific areas with significant changes include mobile home parks, signage, fences, hedges and walls.

Entire new sections will be added to the zoning regs for commercial and meteorological towers, and commercial and non-commercial wind energy systems.

Citizens can obtain a copy of the proposed changes by contacting the city office.

After taking input from next week's meeting, the plan will be further revised or sent to the planning commission for their review. They will make a recommendation on its acceptance to the city council, who will take final action.

Public hearings will be held by the planning commission and city council before it can be formally adopted.

Community plan

Leyland said work is still underway on the community plan. A preliminary draft may be available at Tuesday's meeting but the main focus will be on the proposed zoning regulation changes.

The comprehensive planning process provides an analysis of where the community stands today in terms of existing facilities and services, etc., and where the community wants to go in the future.

In their analysis, the planners with Miller & Associations look at population trends, housing stock, the local economy, recreation facilities, transportation, land use, community services, energy and the environment.

That analysis will help provide the road map for the future of Imperial by setting goals and the development of strategies to reach those goals.

An updated plan is also an important piece whenever the city is seeking government grants for new projects.

The plan is also a useful tool for city leaders and local organizations.

For the planning process to be successful, Leyland emphasized it requires input from a wide range of local citizens.

More input meetings are planned before the completed comprehensive plan goes before the council for approval.