

Questions and Answers Regarding the Center for Business & Education

Q. Can you hold until Yellow Springs decides what it wants to be?

A. The Center for Business and Education has been in the detailed planning stages for over 5 years, and in discussion stage at least 10 years prior to that. The concept has been supported by the last 7 Village Councils. It has been part of the Village's comprehensive plan since 1996. Given the timeline for all the things we need to do before McGregor opens its doors in January 2007, we intend to move ahead. We will provide opportunities for further community involvement as issues come to light.

Q. You've opened the door to other development and we're afraid of sprawl. How can you help with this?

A. We should have a common understanding of what sprawl is before we can collectively take steps to prevent it. We do not believe that adding 40 acres for commercial development, which would provide a boost to utility and tax revenues, constitutes sprawl. Uncontrolled development occurs when there is little or no process for public checks and balances. Tools to prevent sprawl are largely within the Village's control and include annexation, zoning, planning, the Village's comprehensive plan, definition of urban service boundaries, definition of green belts, etc.

Q. What are opportunities for public input in this process?

A. The development process has 3 basic stages: Annexation; Zoning; and Site Plan Development. Each stage involves Village Council and requires public hearings to be held. In addition, Planning Commission is directly involved in zoning and site plan approval, with additional public hearings required as part of that process. Public opinion expressed at these public hearings is an important factor in any decision made by the Planning Commission and Village Council.

Q. How do we prevent retail development?

A. The zoning process and site development process define the type of development to occur. There are different types of zoning "districts", some allow retail, some do not. It is the expressed intention of Community Resource (CR) to not allow retail development in this project.

Q. What were we told about the commerce park and when? What were opportunities for public involvement?

In 1989, Village Council formed a Business and Economic Development Task Force. This task force identified the lack of available space for business as a key obstacle to retaining and growing local businesses.

In 1990, the idea of a business park emerged from community-wide neighborhood forums, which brought together approximately 500 people to discuss a future vision for the Village.

A follow-up Business Retention Task Force was created by Village Council in 1993. This task force unanimously recommended Village government purchase the Vernay-owned property at the corner of E. Enon and Dayton St. for the purpose of creating a “business park.”

In 1995, Village Council expressly set as a goal the purchase of land for creation of a business park. This goal was again endorsed in 1997 by Village Council.

In 1996, the idea of a business park was included in the Village’s Comprehensive Plan. This was the first update to the plan since 1977 and underwent numerous public hearings before approval by the Planning Commission and Village Council.

In 1999, Village Council asked Community Resources to lead the effort to create what at that time was called a “commerce park”. With the support of the Village, the School Board and Township Trustees, Community Resources, in conjunction with Wright State University, produced a feasibility study on the commerce park concept. This feasibility study was discussed at length in a large public meeting in 2001.

The goal of commerce park at the corner of E. Enon and Dayton St. was again re-iterated in the 2000 and 2002 updates to the Village’s Comprehensive Plan. Each update was an extended process with numerous public meetings.

In 2003, the Village Council and Township Trustees negotiated a Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA), which set out defined terms to encourage business development in several properties on the western edge of the Village, including the Vernay-owned property at E. Enon and Dayton St. One of the expressed intents of this agreement was to identify potential sites for the commerce park. The CEDA was expanded to include one additional property next to the high school later in 2003.

In 2003, Village Council entered into a formal agreement with Community Resources to support Community Resources’ acquisition of land for the purpose of a business/commerce park. Council committed most of the Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (EDRLF) to support the effort.

In 2003, learning of McGregor’s growth needs, and in direct re-action to aggressive offers by Dayton and Fairborn, Village Council and Community Resources approached McGregor about locating at the commerce park.

The Yellow Springs Men’s Group organized a community forum in early 2004. This forum brought together leaders of local government, business and organizations to vision for the future. The “Center for Business and Education”, with McGregor as its “anchor” was a centerpiece of the vision that emerged. This forum received extensive coverage by the Yellow Springs News.

In 2004, Village Council approved the expansion of the agreement with Community Resources to commit all remaining funds in the EDRLF to support the acquisition of the Vernay-owned property at E. Enon and Dayton St.

In short, this project has received over 15 years active discussion, news coverage, public debate and planning. It has been embraced by many successive Village Councils and is reflected in the Village's goals and planning documents.

Q. Why this? Why now?

A. Strong case after much study and debate due to revenues versus spending projections.

There are small businesses that would like to expand or move but have no place to go within the Village. Not a new topic – idea of commerce park on this very property has been worked on for 15+ years.

Q. How does having McGregor on the CIC land increase the tax revenues therefore helping the community, especially if local tax money has to be spent to develop the property?

A. Retains the jobs of McGregor locally.

For the Village, revenue mainly comes from income taxes and utility fees. McGregor employees pay local income taxes and McGregor is a significant utility customer. This project enables McGregor to grow (see Barbara for details) which will increase those revenues.

Increases viability of McGregor for future applicants to the program, which brings visitors to town, which strengthens our existing retail (which helps the tax base remain).

The plum of having an anchor tenant in a new development cannot be overstated. Having a tenant of the size and position of McGregor will do more than any possible marketing program we could ever do or fund.

The balance of the businesses will be property and inventory tax payers and will incur taxable wages.

The local government is not in a position to fund the development of infrastructure for this project. We are working with federal and state funding sources for grant money. This helps the Yellow Springs community to get back some of the dollars we send to Washington and Columbus.

Q. Why does CR meet “in the dark?”

A. Community Resources is a non-profit group and must comply with state laws around transparency of outcomes. Many business confidential issues come up during the meetings. Outcomes (minutes) are publicly available. Members of the community have been invited as guest presenters.

Q. What will the Center for Business and Education look like?

A. Architectural drawings will be presented as part of public site plan reviews. Deed restrictions, covenants, design controls, etc. will be used to create an aesthetically pleasing site.

Q. What kind of business do we intend to attract?

A. Compatible to McGregor.

Through years of research and working with regional experts, we know that the number one attribute of these businesses is that they will be home-grown. We should expect upwards of 80% of businesses locating in the park to be from Yellow Springs – either existing businesses looking to grow, or new businesses started by village residents.

What kind of businesses are they likely to be? Office and research businesses; high-tech businesses; professional services such as consulting, engineering, and healthcare; small-scale light manufacturing.

What kind of businesses won't it include? Heavy industrial manufacturing; shopping/storefronts.

Q. What about the Vernay factory – why can't you refurbish that?

A. It's not ready now and property preparation, sale, and refurbishment are part of a long term process.

We have been communicating with Vernay on its use and control of the property, and they are not ready to sell yet.

Site is only 10 acres, which is how much space McGregor alone will require.

Q. What kind of Village subsidies (my tax dollars) will be used for roads, utilities, etc.?

A. We are working with federal and state funding sources for grant money.

The Village is not eager or able to pay for much.

Part of the price of land parcels as the park is built out will include these costs.

Businesses bring more revenue than they use in services – net gain for the Village.

Q. How soon will this space be full?

A. It's not going to be easy to fill this park – could take 10 years. We will have to work hard together as a community to make the case for every tenant.

Q. How much of "my" tax dollars are going to McGregor's new facility?

A. So far – zero. The EDRLF wasn't created with local tax dollars, it came from a federal grant more than 20 years ago. Village government is “cash poor” and does not have local tax dollars to commit to this project.

Q. Where does Community Resources get its funding?

A. CR has raised its funds from private contributions from the community. These funds have supported various projects including a business retention study, an economic assessment of the community, and a website with information about the Village and a comprehensive online directory of local businesses and organizations.

Q. Who/What is Community Resources?

- A. Community Resources is a non-profit community improvement corporation (CIC) with deep roots in Yellow Springs and Miami Township. Community Resources (CR) aims to foster and support economic and cultural life in the community. Community Resources was founded in 1998 after a series of public meetings involving local citizens, elected officials and business leaders. CR works on projects that are consistent with its goals. CR seeks to improve the tax base by retaining local businesses and attracting those that are community friendly. CR wants to understand how the local economy functions, and to make the needs and resources of the community readily available to all.

Q. You use the term "CEDA." What does it stand for, and can you describe the process?

- A. CEDA is Cooperative Economic Development Agreement. This was formed between the Village and Township and exchanges annexation of property into Village for tax revenue sharing. CEDA process started in 2002 with public process. Eligible properties are contingent to Village and allow commercial development, not retail or housing.

Q. Where does Community Resources stand on the development of the Fogg property?

- A. Because it is a CEDA property, we expect it will need to follow the terms of that agreement. We are interested in the ideas and plans that citizens and property owners come up with.

Q. What will the added traffic from the Park mean for Village streets? Will we have to expand Dayton Street?

- A. Traffic in/out of park will go to I-675 and state route 68 during "rush hours." County/Village will identify and direct traffic through best routes if needed. Don't know if Dayton Street will have to be expanded; however, YSI and Antioch Company have not had need for road expansion in front of their facilities.

Q. How are private CIC corporation members selected, and how does the Village loan fund works?

- A. Members are selected to represent various segments of the community including large and small businesses, community organizations, and government. The loan fund was started with a grant and its purpose is to promote business growth.

Q. Is the \$100,000 from Community Foundation funds is a gift or a loan, and whether the rest of the Center's development would be environmentally sound ("green")?

- A. Community Foundation issued a grant of \$100,000 to Community Resources to help with the purchase of land. As a grant, it does not need to be paid back. Ted Donnell with K4 Architecture is LEEDs certified and will incorporate environmentally sound designs into

the site and building plans. While there would be goals for environmental sensitivity, there would be no rigid standards for construction.

- Q. What does “zoning to exclude retail” actually mean? What’s excluded and what’s permissible?
- A. Free-standing retail would not be permitted, but that incidental retail would be allowed. This is the case at Antioch Company, which sells bookplates and other materials in its front lobby. Dan Young said that “store fronts” would not be permitted, and that the CEDA does not permit retail development.
- Q. Antioch College is the largest employer in the Village, and while attention has been focused on how McGregor could expand and aid the Village, there has been little focus on the needs of the College. There is a need for greater recognition of the importance of the College.
- A. CR recognizes the value of Antioch College to the health of the community and is working with college officials to retain this institution in Yellow Springs.
- Q. How was the original CIC membership determined? Were there women involved in the creation and selection of the original membership?
- A. Membership in CR is spelled out in the bylaws, which will be posted to the website soon. As a non-profit organization, CR must abide by governmental laws regarding membership, public disclosure of outcomes, etc. A nominating committee meets every year to select nominees to the board; the nominating committee includes at least two individuals who are not on CR’s board. Women have been part of Community Resources board since its inception.
- Q. How will this development impact the Village taxes and deficit? Won’t this project increase debt at a time of increasing interest rates?
- A. The Center will generate revenue for the Village from utility charges and the tax on the income of people employed at the Center. Increases in employment will increase revenue from the income tax. McGregor’s competition has great facilities and that the real risk is that McGregor does nothing and slowly loses out.
- Q. Can the property be zoned so that it can never have retail? Also, how can the Miller-Fogg property be controlled?
- A. CEDA prevents retail, but that it might also be possible to use deed covenants to control the kind of development. The Miller-Fogg annexation request had been withdrawn, but it will be back. Right now, this property is in the Township. The Township Board would not approve retail in the Township. Property like this is limited to 3-acre residential parcels.

Q. How many new jobs will be created at McGregor? What about the problem of having an empty Vernay building across the street?

A. McGregor added 8 positions last year, and while we can't predict that rate of growth every year, their plan calls for gradual growth. Council is working with Vernay to find a compatible use for that building.

Q. As a young Minority Group member, I feel that it will be very hard for me to stay here unless there is some growth to provide jobs.

A. We have to do something different unless we want more of the downward slope. Unless we create housing and jobs equivalent to the graduating class of the high school, we are really driving our young people out of town.

Q. Are "eating facilities" retail?

A. McGregor will need a food service facility on site. The other Antioch adult campuses have small food facilities, and that they will need a small operation, as well. However, McGregor expects to depend on the local restaurants to handle most of their food needs.

Q. What is the CEDA revenue split?

A. The Township does not lose money, but as the property is developed, the Township would get more revenue.

Q. Where are the tax incentives, and is there a marketing plan and money? What about tuition assistance for the other tenants?

A. The CIC knows that they need these things. McGregor would pay for a national speaker to help with the visioning.

Q. There needs to be risk analysis studies conducted and firm numbers given to the public so that people in the Village know what they're being asked to support.

A. McGregor's pro forma requires that the building be sized to the revenue they can expect. There will be an initial budget squeeze for McGregor, but that in a few years the building will help the programs generate additional funds. Gift funds are being sought and these will help determine the size and look of the building. Any studies done by the Village are public. The Village expects a grant to help with the sewers and water extensions.

Q. Can we see a "worse-case scenario" to determine what happens if, for example, Barbara Danley leaves? This Village does not have enough people; not enough students in the schools, churches, volunteer fire fighters, etc. As far as green space is concerned, we have the Glen, the Whitehall Farm, parks, etc. We need jobs and houses. Don't worry about retail at the Center; we need to restore growth.

- A. CR will communicate further regarding this question in the near future.
- Q. We want to maintain the greenbelt around the Village. However, we believe that the Center is the right thing to do now. The CIC has worked hard and they have given much thought to the project. McGregor is ready to put money into this project.
- A. CR appreciates public support for this project.
- Q. When Antioch went down in enrollment and financially in the 1970s, the Village suffered economically. Many of us can't stay here unless we get behind this project and focus on growth and education.
- A. CR appreciates public support for this project.
- Q. Is the Village prepared to simultaneously bring in the Center and the Miller-Fogg property?
- A. Just like the Center, Miller-Fogg is under a CEDA. The focus is on the CIC property. The Village wants to improve the Vernay property, and is working with the owners of the bowling alley, as well as other properties. The Village is trying to keep several options open because options are important.
- Q. Can revenue from sale of land at the Center only be used for added business growth?
- A. At present, Community Resources has received \$300,000 from the Village's economic development revolving loan fund, which was used, along with a Community Foundation grant of \$100,000 to purchase land for the Center. CR expects to incur further costs, including survey, utility, and tax fees for the property and marketing/communication costs used to fill the Center. When enough property has been sold or leased to cover all the out of pocket expenses, CR will begin to pay back the EDRLF loan to the Village. It is unknown whether there will be money left over after completion of the Center, but if so, it will go into the EDRLF, a Foundation project, or similar community-supporting structure.
- Q. The CIC hasn't shown the public its risk analysis. We would like to see a website with the CIC Minutes, financial and risk analysis of the project, etc.
- A. These will be uploaded to the CR website, www.yellowsprings.com/cr.
- Q. What communications have occurred between the Tecumseh Land Trust and the CIC?
- A. Members of both groups have met to discuss TLT's tools for preserving green space on the west side of town and CR's ideas for green space at the Center.
- Q. Is the CIC working with the Miller-Fogg developer?

- A. Community Resources has had discussions with Doug Miller but is not actively working with him.