

**Council for the Village of Yellow Springs
Special Council Meeting Minutes**

Rooms A&B, 3:00 P.M.

Monday, June 23, 2025

CALL TO ORDER

President of Council Kevin Stokes called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

ROLL CALL

Present were Council President Kevin Stokes, Vice President Gavin DeVore Leonard and Council member Brian Housh. Police Chief Paige Burge, Planning and Economic Development Director Meg Leatherman, Project Lead Elyse Giardullo, Finance Director Michelle Robinson, Solicitor Amy Blankenship and Village Manager Johnnie Burns were also present. Carmen Brown arrived at 3:16pm. Trish Gustafson was not present.

WORK SESSION: CONSIDERING POPULATION GROWTH: WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY DO WE WANT TO BE?

DeVore Leonard chaired the Work Session. The session kicked off with each Council member providing their position regarding village growth.

Housh stressed the need for sustainability and resilience, commenting that both require some growth. He cited efficiency of utility services as one factor in his favorable view of growth.

Stokes stated that he supports smart growth, and will look to capacity of village infrastructure to inform that position.

DeVore Leonard stated that he is not interested in growth for its own sake, but looks to enable as many people wishing to share the benefits of the village community to live here. He cited need for more affordable units, a lowering of the median age, and an increase in overall diversity.

Regarding priorities and concerns, Stokes agreed that maintaining diversity of population and serving all residents well is key. He added that support for local businesses plays into both aspects.

DeVore Leonard stated interest in learning how best to achieve the goals of lowering median age, increasing diversity and reducing housing costs.

Brown agreed, but added that socioeconomic diversity should be included in the definition of overall diversity. She stated a priority to provide workforce housing so that those who work in town can live here.

Addressing the question as to what kind of growth is needed, Housh stated adamantly that he does not support more single family homes. He expressed favor for conservation development, for workforce housing and for apartment units.

Brown commented that the Village needs to attract employers and support homegrown businesses, using Xylem as an example.

Stokes stated that he did not want businesses that don't fit local values, and stated that homes need to be available for the employees of those businesses. He added that he is open to any housing on the Glass Farm.

DeVore Leonard stated that he supports the concept of walk-rideability, with increase in density and maintaining green space areas. He agreed that those who work in the village should be able to live here.

Addressing the question of developing beyond the recommendations of the Bowen Housing Study, Stokes indicated he was not in favor of doing so.

DeVore Leonard commented that the number of single family homes suggested has been largely achieved and that the focus needs to shift to workforce housing.

Housh stated that the Urban Service Boundary is his guide, and as long as growth is within that boundary, he is not concerned with whether or not the suggested numbers are exceeded.

Burns commented that the Bowen study did not consider infrastructure or staffing. He added that staff is currently pursuing capacity studies to address growth potential.

Leatherman presented information on conservation easements, deed restrictions currently in place, the Urban Service Boundary and zoning, explaining that the current code allows single family dwellings by right, which makes those types of developments easily approved. She stated that amending the zoning code is the most effective way to address the housing issue if what Council seeks is ways to increase density within the Urban Service Boundary (USB).

DeVore Leonard commented that while those objecting to village development often cite sprawl, the ability for sprawl seems very limited by conservation easements and the USB.

Chief Burge reported on the public safety aspect of service provision, noting that more people means more staff, more equipment, technology, etc. needed. She stated that the PD receives about 16,000 calls for service annually.

Brown asked Burge to research the call volume when the village had a population closer to 4,700 and to determine as far as possible what types of calls were being received.

Burns stated that staff is trying to find a provider for a system impact study for electricity. He stated that staff is currently working with AMP to determine how much growth can be accommodated before another substation is needed. Burns noted that a center circuit is being created now to better accommodate demand. He added that reliance upon electricity has increased dramatically with the increase in technology.

Burns opined that the water plant can readily provide all the water the village might need, but that Choice One has been engaged to produce a water model study related to water delivery, since addition of a plat of homes, for example, would significantly impact water pressure.

Responding to a question from Stokes, Burns stated that a third water tower might be required in an additional location should a number of homes be added, since greater pressure cannot be added to a gravity-fed system in which the pipes are old, because it will cause those pipes to fail.

Regarding sewer, Burns reported that the village is at 60% of capacity. Once 80% of capacity is achieved, he said, the village will likely need to increase capacity. He added that the Village force main has not been inspected in over 30 years. Burns noted that should the Village indeed become a city, EPA requirements and plant classification would change.

Burns stated that in terms of administrative staffing the Village is “pushing capacity”, and advocated for a smart growth approach.

Burns commented that about eleven years ago, the Village shifted its perspective to become growth-positive. Now that the village is attractive to developers, he asked, what is an acceptable pace for development? Does that change if a developer is willing to absorb infrastructure costs?

Responding to questions, Burns stated that the Windsor PUD projects are ideally located with regard to utilities.

DeVore Leonard asked whether utility costs would be reduced if shared among more users.

Burns responded that this is not the case. He stated that the reason the Spring Meadows development did not add cost to the Village is that the infrastructure is new. More people equals more power purchase, he said. He added that while water rates will not drop with more users, they may remain steady.

Blankenship presented information on development incentives, noting that should the Village decide to pursue any of the options, an Economic Development attorney from her firm would engage in that work for the Village.

Blankenship stated that developers are well aware of incentives available and will seek these out. She cited Tax Increment Financing and Community Reinvestment Act (TIF and CRA) as the most common. Both require legislation, she said, so the community would be well informed regarding either of these tools being considered for a project.

Blankenship described each type of incentive, that a TIF diverts taxes into a special fund for infrastructure that supports the development, while a CRA allows for non-payment of property taxes for a certain period of time.

DeVore Leonard commented that Windsor has brought up their desire for some form of incentive, though no decisions have been made.

Blankenship noted that Woda Cooper stated their intention to pursue incentives if the LIHTC project was awarded.

Blankenship said that she was aware that developers have reached out to the Village to inquire about available incentives. She suggested that the CBE could be considered in a CRA.

Burns commented that the “City vs Village” conversation should include Miami Township and YS Schools, since they would be impacted.

DeVore Leonard suggested another meeting of the taxing entities. Council and staff held a brief discussion regarding cost of living implications, including taxation, if a significant number of new homes are constructed.

Housh asked that a future conversation center around scenarios currently on the horizon.

Leatherman stressed her desire to delve further into impact fees.

Stokes asked which of the impacts of larger-scale development will be addressed and potentially mitigated by the zoning code.

DeVore Leonard asked that a folder be created with the following documents: Visioning 2010; most recent Comprehensive Land Use Plan; Bowen Housing Study; Rural Housing Needs Assessment; Land Use Maps, and a recent McKee Group study.

Housh mentioned gathering data from Oakwood and Springfield regarding cost of living and utility costs.

Burns responded that those communities—and many others—are now realizing what Yellow Springs realized over ten years ago, that their infrastructure would need costly and significant upgrades to meet EPA requirements and to serve growing populations, making those older studies unreliable. Along the same lines, he added that staff is looking into updating the Bowen study.

DeVore Leonard asked that a method of reaching villagers who do not typically respond or who may not have been targeted in the past be devised to produce robust results for any survey or study conducted.

Stokes noted that this effort is an expected aspect of a strategic plan.

Housh commented that surveys are needed and added that a forum on social justice held several years ago and facilitated by Village Mediation had seemed successful.

Burns stated that he is still working on capacity studies and should be able to provide updates in November.

DeVore Leonard suggested that a subcommittee on Growth be formed.

That discussion will take place at the next Council meeting.

DeVore Leonard listed the following as next steps for consideration:

- Possible code amendments regarding single family dwellings
- Creation of a Growth-related materials folder
- Obtain comparison of call volumes/types for YSPD calls for service (present vs higher population timeframe)
- Obtain threshold volume for higher or lower costs (infrastructure)
- Consider tax impacts of growth
- Set up meeting with School Board and Miami Township to discuss Growth
- Review impacts of City vs Village status
- Update Bowen Housing Study to reflect current housing costs
- Committee Membership for Growth Subcommittee
- Explore implementation of impact fees

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:59pm, DeVore Leonard MOVED TO ADJOURN. Stokes SECONDED, and the MOTION PASSED 4-0 ON A VOICE VOTE.

Signed: _____
Kevin Stokes, Council President

Attest: _____
Judy Kintner, Clerk of Council