BALANCING THE SCALES A PUBLIC INFORMATION PROJECT FOR THE YELLOW SPRINGS COMMUNITY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In the recently held Economic Planning Forum (EPF) sponsored by the YS Men's Group participants identified a negative image of the community as an important factor which might discourage both economic and population growth here. The workshop groups acknowledged the tendency of the media to publicize sensational events here with little or no recognition of the positive aspects of the community. The Forum concluded that a deliberate attempt should be made to gather and make available information about the community which was balanced and true but perhaps less known. In response, the Yellow Springs Men's Group, Inc. proposes to take on this challenge as a part of our public education mandate.

We do so because we have established a track record of responsible community education and we are in a good, and perhaps the best, position to do so by virtue of our leadership in sponsoring the Cost-of Living study and the subsequent Economic Planning Forum. We already know what this is about and have a running jump on getting it done in perhaps a shorter and more effective time frame. We propose to begin by reviewing similar efforts which were successful but not continued in the 1980's and building upon that good beginning. We could offer improvement this time by creating a mechanism for continuity after the initial planning and implementation phase. We will also enlist the aid of those involved in the previous effort to assist in guiding the effort and assuring its success.

THE PLAN

Specifically we propose a three-phase approach:

Planning and Design Phase

Time = 6 Mos Total = 6 Months

Research and review all previous efforts to compile and distribute useful information about the community and update and expand that information.

Enlist the aid of 3 to 5 people who have experience in this kind of activity including those who were involved in the earlier village effort to serve as a research and steering committee to guide this effort.

Develop a complete plan for public information materials and information delivery systems and specify each. A budget is appended outlining all of the projected costs of the project.

Materials and Methods Development Phase

Time = 9-12 Mos Total = 12-15 Mos

With the resources provided and the guidance and expertise of the steering committee, we will engage a local individual or team to undertake the specified activities over a three-year contract period.

The public information project specified will be based upon a plan to be developed as the first task and will include development of information and informational materials, distribution of such materials, planning and implementation of informational events and reporting to a broad range of jurisdictions and constituencies.

As a part of the planning effort, we will develop a model for long-term continuation of the activity and identification of an appropriate agency to serve as a manager of the activity.

Implementation Phase

Time = 18-24 Mos Total = 30-36 Mos

Once planning and research are complete and information materials designed and developed an implementation program will be carried out. Comprising most of the time and most of the effort of the 36 month activity, this phase will include formal and specific distribution activities and events such as real estate broker, builder or developer receptions, ongoing information source systems such as an active and dynamic website, periodic news releases to media, etc. Detailed and specific work plans will be prepared in the first phase of the project and progress reports made to sponsors, interested public officials and residents.

TIMELINE

The entire project will be designed to be completed within 3 years. Some of the phases above will transition into each other with some overlap but all are expected to be complete within 30-36 months. Estimate time lines for each phase are shown above with the phase descriptions. We believe that continuation of the planned activities should carry forward beyond the time frame of 3 years. As part of the planning effort we expect to provide a model for continuation including both funding and management by some appropriate agency that is also yet to be identified. Because this project will be accelerated and with overlapping phases it will require assured funding for the entire program period before beginning. This will be a long-term effort the results of which may be indiscernible in the short term but which will with certainty accelerate with time.

FUNDING

The budget page shows both projected expenses and anticipated revenue. This proposal is intended to both solicit comments and suggestions about the project and funding to implement it. The revenue-side planning includes major contribution to get the project up and going promptly and in response to the need for major expenditures early on to develop information materials and methods. Once that effort is made we believe the program could and should be sustainable principally by those segments of the community which receive the benefits at a more modest level of expenditure on an ongoing basis for as long as it is needed. Under that scenario there should be no need

for long-term philanthropic support. Informal discussion has already resulted in a pledge of \$1,000 for each month of the time frame in support of this project or up to \$36,000 from a local source through the Dayton Foundation. The balance of the funds will need to be raised.