

**City Council Meeting Minutes**  
**April 27, 2017**  
**Special Session**  
**6:00 p.m.**

The Xenia City Council met in a Special Session on April 27, 2017, at 6:00 p.m., in the City Council Chambers, City Administration Building, with the following members present: Wesley Smith, Edgar Wallace, Dale Louderback, Sarah Mays, Jeanne Mills, Marsha J. Bayless, and Michael D. Engle.

**Simon Kenton RFP.** Mr. Duke said staff did not have a formal presentation; however, he presented a summary of the process that brought staff to their recommendation. As directed by City Council, staff engaged in an RFP process and received proposals from three organizations: 4 the Kids LLC, Simon Kenton Bridges of Hope, and Community Action Partnership (CAP) of Greater Dayton. A committee of staff members was formed to review the responses, and after evaluation, the group came to a general consensus. Staff felt that CAP's long history and experience in providing service in addition to its access to resources presented the greatest feasibility and likelihood of success. While the other two proposals also offered positive benefits to the community, staff's recommendation is that Council accept CAP's proposal.

President Engle said Council will permit an unusual format for a Special Session to allow each group to speak to Council for up to 10 minutes on the merits of its proposal. Then there will be a question and discussion session from Council before taking a vote. He invited a representative from 4 the Kids LLC to come forward to address Council. Seeing no one, he invited CAP to come forward to address Council.

Tim Donnellan, President & Chief Executive Officer of Community Action Partnership (CAP) of the Greater Dayton Area, provided the following background of their multi-county agency and information on their RFP:

**Background**

- CAP serves an eight-county area including Darke, Preble, Greene, and Montgomery Counties.
- They have significant history with housing efforts including new construction and renovation construction for senior citizens, temporary rental assistance, etc.
- They have single-agency audit every year because their funding level is over \$300,000 annually, which is a federal requirement. He noted their audits are impeccable. They believe they spend money responsibly, and their audits support that.
- They have a Board of Trustees that meets bi-monthly and is made up of representatives from their major counties (the four counties in which they do significant programming). They use an Advisory Council in each county for the alternate months to ensure those counties have the benefit of CAP, and they are responding to each county's needs.
- The Advisory Board in Greene County is absolutely wonderful and is chaired by Dr. Jim Phipps, professor at Cedarville University. He noted Councilman Louderback is also a member of the Greene County Advisory Board. The advisory board helped facilitate their new location on Dayton Avenue by acquiring a vacant building and bringing it into compliance.
- The program revitalizes neighborhoods, and they have had great community support. They offer a clothing distribution program each year for low-income families to help kids go back to school, which they feel is a major contribution to the community.

- CAP has been deeply involved with housing in Greene County since 1964. They had a rehab program in the 1990s that helped first-time buyers purchase a home and CAP assisted with renovations to the properties.
- CAP started a shelter in Xenia called “The House that Jack Built” in 1992 to help with homelessness.
- CAP is currently a member of the Greene County Housing Coalition, which included the Greene County Metropolitan Housing Authority, Interfaith Hospitality Network, Xenia Community Schools, Fairborn City Schools, Greene County Housing Programs, and Housing Solutions of Greene County, Inc. All the principals in the County who work with housing are a part of the housing coalition.
- CAP weatherized 112 low-income homes in Greene County this year. The standard to meet is a 28% reduction in the cost of utilities, which was achieved.
- CAP prevented utilities from being shut off for 415 Greene County residents through their HEAP Program.

### **Proposal for Simon Kenton**

- CAP is the appropriate bidder for the Simon Kenton property, and their statistics speak for themselves.
- Members of the Greene County Housing Coalition wrote strong letters of support in their favor.
- CAP is also a part of the Continuum of Care, which is mandated by the State of Ohio. CAP is in partnership with Clark and Greene Counties, and it works out well for all parties.
- CAP has a two-phase homeless prevention program: Phase One is homeless reduction through rental assistance and placement, and Phase Two is their Rapid Rehousing Program that took the place of the “House That Jack Built” for homeless people. Eighty percent of the tenants in that program have moved on to housing in 2016. The purpose of the program is to get homeless into housing, which is the model that both the State and CAP have adopted. CAP has been very successful with the program for a long time. They have even utilized funds to temporarily put people up in hotels for a short period of time, which is a band aid fix to a permanent problem.
- CAP has helped some homeless people get their GEDs, which is also included in their plan for Simon Kenton.
- CAP will have a homeless shelter as a short-term goal at Simon Kenton for three years, but they would like to go beyond that concept to have supportive housing on a permanent basis as a long-term goal. This would be a comprehensive holistic approach to the homelessness issue. The potential for the Simon Kenton building is incredible. CAP does not want to make promises they cannot achieve; however, they are looking into the future for additional services.

Finally, he has concerns regarding the plight for homeless veterans, which seems to be increasing in Xenia. He feels it is equally important to provide shelter for homeless veterans. He personally had a 28-year career with the National Guard and served in the Vietnam War, and he feels he knows every veteran. If CAP had a shelter here, they could more easily provide services for homeless veterans. For all the above-mentioned reasons, their proposal should be considered.



Councilman Louderback said he has to recuse himself from the vote, which was tough. He has worked with CAP for years, and there is no better organization. CAP takes care of the homeless, and they have an extensive homeless plan. He did not have anything against Bridges of Hope, but Council has given them several opportunities. Unfortunately, they cannot come up with the funding they need; however, CAP has the funding and resources needed for the facility. Although, he cannot vote and has to recuse himself, he supports CAP. He feels CAP is far and above the other two organizations competing for the Simon Kenton building. Mr. Donnellan said there may be some misunderstanding that CAP was shown the property, and immediately after the tour, they became involved; however, that is not the case. The Greene County Housing Coalition was shown the property—not CAP. CAP is a part of the Greene County Housing Coalition, but CAP itself was not shown the property.

Councilman Wallace said he heard that Bridges of Hope paid \$8,500 for a redesign proposal for the Simon Kenton building, and CAP asked to see that information. Mr. Donnellan said he did not do that, and he has no knowledge of anyone else making that request. Further, they (CAP) would have a design tailored around their own specific program. Councilman Wallace said Council asked CAP to work with Bridges of Hope on a partnership several weeks ago in an effort to come up with a combined program. He understands little—if any—effort was expended by CAP towards a partnership. Mr. Donnellan said organizations must possess a building and know what they are talking about in order to address the needs of the building. CAP's position has been that it would difficult to combine agencies and form a program until they know who will have possession of the building. However, he made a commitment to Bridges of Hope to sit down and work something out, but it is a 'first-things-first' process. CAP will not make promises they cannot keep. There are still a lot of questions, and the process requires a close look at the building before attempting a partnership. As he has said before and will say again, "partnership" is in their name, and they are absolutely 100% willing to talk to anyone interested in being their partner—they do it all the time. There is an old saying "you can delegate authority, but cannot delegate responsibility." CAP cannot delegate responsibility for Bridges of Hope, which is what the MOU required. He cannot promise something until he knows more information.

Councilwoman Mays thanked Mr. Donnellan for speaking on behalf of CAP. She is somewhat familiar with CAP, and the information he provided was helpful in giving her a better understanding. She said it seems as though a majority of CAP's work is with housing, and she asked if they did anything in conjunction with homeless in conjunction with addiction or if they just focused on housing and homelessness. Mr. Donnellan said they are certified as an addiction specialist through Montgomery County, but they are willing to explore that option for Greene County.

Mr. Stokely asked about the relationship between CAP and the Greene County Housing Coalition. Mr. Donnellan said they are all part of the coalition organization and have common goals, but they remain their own entity. Mr. Stokely asked if they had common ownership or other business relationships. Mr. Donnellan said there is no common ownership; they are all individual entities with their own 501(c)(3) designations. They meet and discuss issues in the community and how to address those issues, but they remain their own entity.

Vice President Smith said he has always felt that the Simon Kenton facility held some value as an asset. He asked if CAP had alternative options if the Simon Kenton facility was not available

for them. Mr. Donnellan said CAP is motivated by the cause and would look at other locations. However, they have not pursued any other options because they hope to be chosen for the Simon Kenton property. Councilman Wallace said if the Simon Kenton building goes to Bridges of Hope, he asked if a second shelter (through CAP) would even be needed. President Engle suggested that would be an item for discussion among staff, CAP, and other parties. Mr. Donnellan said they build programs to meet the need, and that would be determined after the Simon Kenton situation has been determined. He wanted to be clear—CAP wants the building.

President Engle invited anyone from Bridges of Hope to come forward to speak.

Dan Jordan, Pastor, Xenia Grace Chapel, and President of Bridges of Hope, said the dream for Bridges of Hope started at a Council meeting where he provided the invocation. Council held a discussion on the Simon Kenton property, and he recalled other communities utilizing vacant school buildings as a ministry hub for churches to meet the needs of the community. He began thinking about a plan to bring churches and people together to use the building as a ‘house of hope’ instead of the City enduring the cost to demolish the building. He provided the following specifics of the project:

- The project would be a faith-based ministry covering all the denominations and types of faith to bring the body of Christ together. He shared his thoughts with several other people in the community, and the project grew from there.
- The Bridges of Hope board members have a wide range of experiences and resources including 53 years in pastoral experience, 50 years in poverty-related experience, over 40 years in nursing, 31 years in mental health and criminal justice, and 35 years in addiction recovery experience. The Board possesses the resources to achieve their ministry.
- Bridges of Hope has a three-fold focus: homeless, poverty, and addiction. One of these issues cannot be addressed without addressing the other issues because one will either precede or follow the other.
- Bridges of Hope is faith-based, and they believe that the greatest change in a person’s life is internal. Internal changes give people the strength, self-esteem, skills, and resources to take care of many of the addiction, poverty, and homeless issues. Presently, Bridges of Hope is addressing all these areas with the help of area churches, Bridges of Hope board members, and warming centers for the homeless. They all want a larger, more centrally-located ministry.
- They have plans in place for a shelter at Simon Kenton for next winter if they are chosen. They contracted with Brentwood Builders to do a study and have spent \$13,000 on utilities and plans for the building. They have done physical work at the site and have offered to replace the dollars spent by the City and taxpayers to maintain the building. They want to work with the City to allow for the road and fire station at that site to be completed in the future.
- Their greatest resources are not dollars—it is the people and volunteers willing to help this project. The Xenia Area Association of Churches and Ministries has endorsed the project and hundreds of volunteers are ready to assist. There are at least four different groups willing to help with the project; therefore, people are Bridges of Hope’s greatest asset. It is simply people helping other people. Poverty and addiction issues require mentorship, relationships, and someone willing to walk alongside them through these changes in their lives. Dollars will not fix the issues because it requires people walking alongside the individual to achieve success.
- Bridges of Hope is committed to the project and would like to have the building. They will continue to look for an alternative site if they do not get the building, but the Simon Kenton building has a great location, showers, lockers, etc.
- They have begun to reach out to the veterans in the community so they can have a presence at Bridges of Hope.

Councilman Louderback asked Mr. Bazalak and Mr. Duke how much the City had invested in Simon Kenton to date. Mr. Duke said he did not have the exact number in front of him, but he believed it was over \$100,000. Councilman Louderback said Mr. Merriman told him it was \$125,000. He asked Mr. Jordan how Bridges of Hope's offer of \$25,000 would cover the cost the City has already incurred. Mr. Jordan said he was not aware of that figure. They tried to make an educated guess as to what the City had spent over the last three years on utilities and upkeep. He noted Bridges of Hope mowed the grass for one summer.

Councilman Louderback reiterated that he must recuse himself because he serves on CAP's Board. However, he asked how many MOUs have been extended to Bridges of Hope. Mr. Jordan said probably one or two, and they appreciated Council's patience. Councilman Louderback said Council approved at least two or three extensions, but Bridges of Hope has not been able to raise the money. He said Mr. Jordan claimed they have area churches on board with them. There are 88 churches in the City of Xenia, and they haven't come together to help Bridges of Hope. Bridges of Hope cannot raise enough money for the project; it is as simple as that. Mr. Jordan said they have raised \$75,000 to date. He asked if Councilman Louderback reviewed the letters and materials. Many said they have resources and are prepared to donate to the building once they take ownership. It is difficult to raise dollars without a deed to show where the money will be spent. Even though they did not raise the \$150,000, they have raised \$75,000. Councilman Louderback said the \$125,000 benchmark was part of the agreement between the City and Bridges of Hope.

Mr. Stokely said he did not think it was appropriate for Councilman Louderback to participate in asking questions of the applicant when he already recused himself from the vote. Councilman Louderback said he recused himself from the vote but not from the conversation. Mr. Stokely said he thought it was inappropriate for Councilman Louderback to further comment on the issue when he has already recused himself, which includes participation in the hearing. He noted Councilman Louderback can listen to the hearing and observe the process, but he should not participate in questioning per the Ohio Ethics Law. Councilman Louderback said Mr. Stokely was from a law firm and this was his first Council meeting, and he knew nothing about the subject. Mr. Stokely said he reviewed the Ohio Ethics Law prior to the meeting. Councilman Louderback asked what the ethics rules say. Mr. Stokely said the rules say that if a person recuses themselves from the vote, then they are not supposed to participate. President Engle informed Councilman Louderback that Mr. Stokely is the City's [acting] Law Director. Councilman Louderback said he did not care. President Engle said Councilman Louderback was out of order and asked that he come into order.

Vice President Smith thanked Mr. Jordan for his presentation. He conducted research, which showed there are roughly 600,000 homeless people in America. He asked Mr. Jordan how many homeless people utilized the warming shelter and how many were women and children. Mr. Jordan said a year ago the Christ Episcopal Church averaged somewhere around 30 people per night. This year, many of the homeless built shelters in the woods due to the mild winter, but they would not leave their shelters because they did not want their belongings to be stolen. However, they believe the numbers would be the same or higher if the shelter were reopened every night. Dayton set a record last winter of over 100 children per night at St. Vincent's

shelter. He asked Marlene Labig from Living Stones Christian Church to provide additional information regarding the warming center.

Ms. Labig said most of what Mr. Jordan said was accurate. Their numbers were not as expected, and the most that stayed on any one night was approximately seven; however, they fed 20-25 per night. This past winter had very mild temperatures, and they only opened the warming center on nights that fell below 20 degrees, so there was no consistency. These are the same problems Christ Episcopal Church saw when they first started their shelter. A shelter or facility needs to be open every night to bring people in out of their tents. Their original plan was to put a temporary shelter in Bridges of Hope last winter. Unfortunately, they were unable to do that so they opened the church as a warming center. Most homeless chose to stay in their tents or make-shift shelters to protect their belongings since the warming center was not open on a consistent basis.

Vice President Smith said he appreciates that the Bridges of Hope shelter would house families, women, and children and not just single individuals. He also appreciates that Bridges of Hope is dealing with the addiction crisis, which has grown to epidemic status. He felt that Narcan has been a blessing because everyone's life has a value. One in ten people is facing an addiction issue in America, either by themselves or with a family member. He appreciates Bridges of Hope for stepping up to address the addiction crisis because he believes that the homeless issue is related to addiction. Housing facilities may keep someone overnight, but dealing with the addiction requires counseling. The biggest concern for him is the financial situation for Bridges of Hope. He understands their plight and the difficulty in raising funds in Xenia; therefore, he would like to look at this as fundraising for the County and not just Xenia. Everyone has to look beyond that small picture. When he Googled "homeless shelters in Xenia," there are absolutely none in Greene County, but Bridges of Hope would be "Greene County's" shelter. He appreciates that Bridges of Hope is dealing with the addiction problem, which he supports.

Ms. Labig said some of the people who are willing to donate to Bridges of Hope are not Xenia residents. Bridges of Hope has reached out across the county, but there are multiple issues in raising funds when they do not have a permanent location. A Board member from the Jeremiah Tree works with the Attorney General's Office on the addiction issues and shared information about a program for RCOs (Recovery Community Organizations) that will be started by the State of Ohio, which is basically Bridges of Hope to address the addiction epidemic for the recovery community. She anticipates money from the State in the future to help address some of the issues, and Bridges of Hope is already connected to that program.

President Engle entertained additional questions from the Mayor and Council. Hearing none, he entertained a motion for disposition of the Simon Kenton property.

Motion by Vice President Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Mays, to authorize the City Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions for the transfer of the Simon Kenton building to Bridges of Hope. Discussion followed.

Mayor Bayless said she will recuse herself from the vote. She is a board member of Greene Metropolitan Housing Authority and is affiliated with the Greene County Housing program. She wanted to make a lot of comments but felt it was best to recuse herself due to her affiliations with those organizations.

President Engle said this is a very difficult decision and feels both CAP and Bridges of Hope have great merit in the community; however, his greatest concern is the monetary aspect and Bridges of Hope's ability to fully accomplish their stated goals. Mayor Bayless and he met with both parties approximately a week ago and highly encouraged both organizations to work together to establish some type of cooperative, but that did not appear to be possible until ownership is established. He will be voting "no" on the motion, but he supports Bridges of Hope and wishes them the best. His primary concern and reason for voting "no" is because he is much more confident in CAP's ability to fully renovate and bring the building into more immediate use than Bridges of Hope can offer at the present time.

Councilwoman Mills said she will also vote "no" because she was concerned about Bridges of Hope's ability to obtain adequate funding. She read the letters of support for Bridges of Hope, and feels God will find a building that is perfect for their project. She has prayed about the issue and believes God has a bigger and better plan for Bridges of Hope than the Simon Kenton building. She feels there is a two-fold aspect to the issues, and Bridges of Hope seeks to address both issues. However, CAP has also mentioned both issues, which is homelessness and drug addiction throughout America and not just in Xenia. If homelessness is addressed by CAP, then Bridges of Hope can put forth all their efforts into addressing the addiction aspect. She hopes both parties can work together. In the meantime, she feels the homeless will be well received and cared for by CAP.

Mr. Duke asked President Engle to clarify the motion and if the motion's intent was to authorize the City Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions for the transfer of the Simon Kenton facility and enter into a contract with Bridges of Hope. President Engle said yes, but only after successful negotiation. Mr. Bazalak noted staff would ultimately have to bring back an ordinance to transfer the property. Therefore, a motion to negotiate the terms and conditions for the transfer would be a sufficient direction this evening.

Councilman Wallace asked if a motion would pass with two recusals, two nays, and three ayes. Mr. Bazalak said three aye votes would prevail. He noted it is just a vote to enter into negotiations. However, an ordinance to transfer the property would require four aye votes.

Councilman Wallace said both parties must agree to work together in order to walk together. Historically, that has not occurred with Bridges of Hope and CAP. He understands that President Engle and Mayor Bayless held a meeting last week with Bridges of Hope and CAP, and Bridges of Hope was present but CAP was not. President Engle said he believed that was due to an administrative error. Mayor Bayless noted it was a phone conference. President Engle confirmed. Councilman Wallace said regardless, one participated and one did not. He "heard" that CAP was not interested in working with Bridges of Hope because it is a faith-based mission. There is no prohibition for faith-based organizations to be involved.

Councilwoman Mills noted the community will win no matter which direction the vote goes because something will be done to help the community either way.

The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Smith, Wallace, and Mays

Nays: Mills and Engle

motion carried.

Councilman Louderback and Mayor Bayless recused themselves from the vote.

At 6:51 p.m. Council adjourned their Special Session to prepare for their Regular Session immediately following.

Michelle D. Johnson  
City Clerk

Michael D. Engle  
President, Xenia City Council