

**City Council Meeting Minutes**  
**December 16, 2014**  
**Special Session**  
**6:00 p.m.**

The Xenia City Council met in a Special Session on December 16, 2014 at 6:18 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, with the following members present: Joshua Long, John Caupp, Dale Louderback, Marsha J. Bayless, and Michael D. Engle (arrived at 6:32 p.m.).

Councilman Smith and Councilwoman Mills were absent. Vice President Long started the meeting since President Engle was running late.

**Economic Development Initiative (ED 360).** Mr. Merriman said the purpose of the presentation was to update Council on staff's recommendations and suggested priorities for economic development moving forward. The presentation will identify some items as suggested in their last budget conversation so Council is aware and supportive of additional resources that have been included in the final budget for next year. Staff will make a brief presentation then open the floor to questions and comments.

Mr. Merriman said they have traditionally approached economic development in a linear model rather than a three-dimensional approach; it was well-intentioned but yielded limited results as things in the environment continue to change. In many cases they have been more reactive than proactive and they recognize they are at a critical point in this community's history. They have needed to re-evaluate their economic development efforts and look at how they can amend those efforts to position the City more successfully moving forward. To advance their economic base, they have to be more contemporary. They need to combine effective traditional economic development programs with more advanced concepts and more intensive efforts. They also recognize that addressing just the essential economic development subjects without attending to broader community issues is a mistake and fairly short-sided. Therefore, they will also look to expand efforts to address poor community development. Offering a holistic approach means looking 360 degrees around economic development to identify economic assets to capitalize on as well as improving community deficiencies. In doing so, it will give them ED 360, which is the code name of their new strategic approach to ensure economic success in Xenia.

Mr. Merriman said ED 360 will essentially evolve as their Economic Development Strategic Plan, and they must determine what the plan needs to include to be successful:

- Comprehensive—It needs to be comprehensive and must address a diversity of economic and community opportunities and efficiencies.
- More Intensive—It needs to be more intensive; in addition to just laying out fancy concepts, it has to be rooted in an action-oriented strategy and must be pro-active and consistent.
- Measurable—It has to be measurable. As they take on more work and invest more financially, they need to ensure they are moving in the right direction and wisely investing. Therefore, programs need to be measurable and consistently monitored.
- Greater Financial Investment—There needs to be a greater financial investment, which they have all talked about for the past year. To gain a greater return, they need to provide a greater investment; therefore, they are recommending new resources that will be strategically allocated to maximize effectiveness.

- X-Plan Integration--Finally, it should be integrated with X-Plan. Staff and Council have committed to X-Plan as a definitive directional document and set of strategies, so the strategic economic development efforts must be aligned with or an extension of the core strategies and priorities of the X-Plan to ensure consistency.

The ED 360 consists of 13 priority investment areas:

## ED 360

1. Downtown Revitalization
2. Retention & Expansion
3. Business Attraction
4. Entrepreneurship & Business Planning
5. Marketing, Branding & Image Enhancement
6. Workforce Development
7. Infrastructure Readiness
8. Town & Gown
9. Quality Education & Healthcare
10. Tourism & Special Events
11. Housing, Neighborhood Revitalization
12. Recreation, Entertainment, Trail System
13. Regulatory Environment



These priority investment categories are interconnected and in some cases overlapping to ensure comprehensiveness. They are not all within their unilateral ability to control, but they are all essential categories within the community that must be addressed, and they all point to economic success. He will highlight some specific categories that staff feels are some of the most critical, most important, and some that include some continuing or new initiatives, particularly those for which they are requesting additional resources in the budget:

### Downtown Revitalization:

- Design Assistance Program (DAP) and the Design & Code Assessment Program (DCAP) are two programs launched over the last two years.
  - Programs are focused on providing assistance to downtown property and business owners to position them to address facility needs in their buildings downtown
  - Recommending \$40,000 from the 233 Special Miscellaneous Improvements Fund for 2015
  - Within those program areas, they are looking to achieve three specific goals:
    1. Downtown Housing – which they all recognize as a vital component of a really vibrant downtown. Providing these resources would encourage more downtown residential occupancy.
    2. Reduced Vacancy – they want to position the building owners to have marketable and inhabitable facilities downtown.

3. Code Compliance – to ensure the facilities are not only compliant with the Zoning Code, but also the Fire Code and Building Code to ensure they are safe and secure for the future.
- Hub District Task Force\* – they have already focused some time, effort, and attention on the area around the Eavey building and the adjacent brownfield properties southward to Xenia Station.
    - They will continue to highlight that area as a priority in 2015.
    - They have had some really positive discussions and deemed the project a long-term (five years or more) project to realize some type of significant revitalization and redevelopment.
    - It is such an encompassing project that they need to start strategizing now.
  - Xenia Towne Square Redevelopment\* – continuing emphasis.
    - They are continuing to work with several development entities on projects, and they are in the final phases of locking down investors or investments to capitalize on a Family Entertainment Center. They are still on-track for work beginning on the facility in January 2015.
    - There was a very positive meeting with the developer and representatives from the Fire Division, Building Department, and Planning & Zoning to make sure they are fast-tracking and streamlining efforts to ensure code compliance.

Mr. Merriman said downtown revitalization is a key category and is a driving force as a sign of a prosperous community.

**Retention & Expansion:**

Mr. Merriman said this continues to be one of the most important priorities. Small businesses are a major provider of jobs and a diverse local economy.

- Open X Program – This is a new program and staff is suggesting a \$5,000 line item be included in the budget. (He briefly passed the presentation to Mr. Brodsky.)
  - Mr. Brodsky said the Open X Program is a result of conversations he had with neighboring counterparts with similar programs.
  - Many small businesses are good at running their business but need assistance with future expansion issues; this program would provide guidance and assistance with those decisions.
  - Xenia would hire Carter & Cline, LLC consultants for their expertise in commercial construction around the Miami Valley. They have an excellent relationship with many commercial contractors and sub-contractors and would act as an owner's representative. The City would pay for the first 4-5 hours of their time to consult with businesses to help them lay out the best option for their expansion(s) and work through the process of hiring a contractor(s). It would then be up to the businesses to continue the service with Carter and Cline, LLC at their own cost. Mr. Merriman

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\* = Not seeking additional funding at this time, but in the future, additional resources will be required either through thinning phases, direct capitalization, or incentivization.

noted that would be a direct professional service provision to local businesses as a resource to bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be.

- Business Outreach Program – They will pick up where GAIN left off and continue to build relationships with local businesses and business leaders. Understanding the needs, obstacles, and opportunities of our local businesses can go a long way towards helping them grow and expand.
- Special Programming – Highlighting Local Businesses
  - Recommending resources (\$5,000) in the budget to help facilitate two programs.
    1. Suggesting a program similar to a “Taste of Xenia” to highlight local food service. The program would provide an event for the community while allowing an opportunity for local businesses to share and market their products.
    2. A Business Fair is a tried and true method that would provide new options to get more awareness of local businesses while providing a connection between service and material needs in the community.
- Industry Roundtables – This is a new program to facilitate opportunities for growth and expansion by connecting different industries within our community and provide an opportunity to have dialogue for troubleshooting, problem solving, and a potential use for mutual resource allocation.

#### **Business Attraction:**

- Industrial Recruitment Plan – They want to document a strategy behind how they are recruiting new industries in this community. (He briefly passed the presentation to Mr. Brodsky.)
  - DPL Certified Site Program\* will position them to move quickly with a shovel-ready site. Mr. Brodsky said many states have Certified Shovel-Ready Site programs, but the State of Ohio does not. DPL hired the nationally known site-certification firm McCallum Sweeney Consulting (MSC) who are putting together a program to gather all the necessary comprehensive information needed to certify sites. They are currently exploring the OVCH site along Innovation Drive and the Arnovitz site in the Xenia Industrial Park for site certification. They anticipate a site visit in January before moving on to Phase 3, which will require up-front financial resources. He noted Mr. Arnovitz will cover a portion of the cost but is asking for the City to assist with some of the cost. The County appears to be willing to make the investments necessary on the OVCH property. (Mr. Brodsky turned the presentation back over to Mr. Merriman.)
  - Water Resource Focus is another critical component of the Industrial Recruitment Plan. The City of Xenia is blessed with an aquifer that is rated at 11 million gallons per day (MGD) and the water plant is designed to pump and treat 8 MGD. Currently, the City produces and distributes less than 4 MGD. With this ample supply and capacity, they want to position and market the City to industries that are heavy water users because it is a natural and plentiful resource that they can provide very inexpensively.
  - Agriculture Focus is another area they have not placed enough emphasis and attention towards. Due to their geography and history combined with Central State University’s

1890 Land Grant status, they are uniquely positioned to be a home to services and resources that support the agricultural industry.

- Retail Recruitment Plan – Feedback from local businesses and citizens helped to determine two key areas to focus on:
  - Hospitality is the first area to address. Visitors, CSU associates, or potential business owners need a quality place to stay while they are in town.
  - Quality, Diverse Food Options are needed in the City. Some fantastic new restaurants have opened up recently, but they have a significant leakage issue when it comes to a lot of the retail components and food service is one of them. Staff wants to have a well-planned product to present at the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) meeting in the spring to maximize the opportunity.
  
- Agility Program Funding is an additional \$10,000 (General Fund) to allow the City to have resources available and the opportunity to quickly respond to various situations in regard to economic development.
  - The funds could be used for specific studies or appraisals in conjunction with economic development.
  - Staff is trying to position the City to move at the speed of business rather than the speed of bureaucracy.

**Marketing, Branding & Image Enhancement:**

- Marketing/Public Relations Office – This is a critical area that staff is requesting a significant investment to address deficiencies and meet needs. They recognize the budget is tight, but they feel this investment will more than pay for itself if successful.
  - They recommend an additional full-time position to provide comprehensive marketing and public relations services with the caveat that if it can be done successfully with part-time employment, they will make adjustments accordingly.
    1. The position would be multi-faceted with certain core-skills and abilities that they can build on in the future. The individual will have the ability to look at, develop, enhance, and manage the City’s overall brand position; would serve as the primary public relations coordinator and would maintain the economic development and primary websites; handle external communications with development press releases and other special information; and publish the City’s newsletter, both internal and external.
    2. There may be additional work to narrow down the overall marketing approach and possible brand identification; therefore, staff is suggesting additional contractual services may be necessary.
  
- Streetscape & Physical Enhancements
  - There is something to be said for a psychological image, but there is also a lot to be said for the physical image of the community.
  - Continued emphasis on the public spaces, entryways, Main Street enhancement downtown to make sure they are well-attended and taken care of for a positive physical representation for the City.

**Workforce Development:**

- STEM Education Initiative\* – This is one of the top areas to focus efforts and attention.

- Increased efforts to workforce development because they cannot attract industries if they cannot provide a workforce to meet the labor needs for those industries.
  1. Continue discussions with CSU regarding partnerships for their 1890 Land Grant in regard to dollars that are available to them.
  2. They want a diverse array of educational partners, including Xenia Community Schools, GCCC, Clark State University, and any area educational institutions, to achieve success.
  3. They want to tap into local industry partners to understand what labor force needs have a connection back to STEM education.
- Training & Innovation Center
  - There is an opportunity to work with a local developer who has property and has developed some related facilities at other locations in Ohio to create an environment to train skill-trade laborers for this area and regionally.
    1. There are excellent skilled-trade jobs that do not require a college degree and offer opportunities for individuals to start their own businesses.
    2. Partnering with area colleges and other institutions to establish these programs.
    3. Partnering with local industries to ensure they are driving training in the right direction to meet their needs.
- Internship & Work Shadowing Programs – new dollars are becoming available at state and federal levels for these programs.
  - Shifting dollars internally and partnering with one of the area universities to provide a paid internship opportunity in the City Manager’s Office this year.
  - Additionally, there are work shadowing and experiential [unpaid] internship opportunities that the City, local businesses, and industries can offer to provide quality experiences.
  - A Job Fair can connect people with job openings and job openings with people to make sure local businesses have their labor needs met and the locally unemployed are aware of the opportunities that are available.
  - Reverse Job Fair may be one approach and has been done in other areas with some positive success.

**Town & Gown:**

- Joint Service & Purchasing – They have already initiated discussions with CSU and Xenia Community Schools on how to collaborate and partner with them relative to fleet maintenance and the purchase of commodities, which will provide enhanced services, reduce costs, and bring value in the community for all the entities.
- Advanced Partnerships
  - CSU Annexation – The City has officially received a letter from CSU requesting a discussion on annexation, which can provide enhancement opportunities to the City while reducing operating costs for CSU. Staff will put together a process layout and present that to the CSU Board of Trustees in the first quarter of 2015.
  - Business Incubation Program – They are looking to partner with CSU to open up new opportunities within the City.
  - TAWAWA has made an initial commitment for the Old East High School through the 1890 Land Grant status to commit dollars for capital improvements/renovations to the facility to preserve it for the entire community.

- Market Connections – Staff has talked with regional universities about service and supply needs that local businesses can meet through market connections.

**Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization:**

- Neighborhood Outreach – As they position the City to reach economic success, they need to look at factors other than economic development. They can position themselves to attract new businesses and new jobs, but they need quality and diverse housing options for those individuals.
  - Neighborhood Clean-Up – Look at initiatives to provide opportunities and resources for the community to get involved.
  - Rumpke and the Greene County Solid Waste District have offered commitments and assistance to provide assisted resources to support the neighborhood clean-ups. Staff will be recommending moving from recycling bins to carts to create a cleaner and more contained environment, which should have immediate aesthetic results during trash collection periods and improve recycling rates that will ultimately lower the cost for trash collection services via reduced tipping fees. He noted Xenia is one of the largest trash producing areas in the Rumpke service area with only a single-digit recycling rate, which is a problem.
- Enhanced Code Enforcement – This is a priority area for Council and they will continue to move forward in 2015.
  - Adding a Seasonal Code Enforcement employee from approximately April thru September with no additional costs due to the previous rate increase.
  - Doubling efforts on the successful Vacant Building Program despite some obstacles and challenges. He noted they have become a leader in this area with other communities requesting information on the program.

**Recreation, Entertainment & Trail System:**

- Play Xenia has been a year-long initiative that included outreach to the community to assess their entertainment and recreation needs. The information received is evolving into some actionable steps:
  - Rec Center – Staff plans to come back to Council in the first quarter of 2015 with recommendations on a Recreation Center in conjunction with the YMCA. Staff has had discussions with the Combined Health District and Senior Center for potential partnerships as well as Xenia Nazarene for property opportunities. They are trying to filter the recommendations down into a model that is financially workable. They are trying to leverage as many resources as possible but recognize a ballot initiative may be necessary.
  - Park Enhancement Program – As discussed in the Five-Year CIP, they have put in the budget and are recommending three parks for additional build-out and new amenities to include a splash pad at Shawnee Park (or possibly at another park) and amenities and development at Sol Arnovitz and Sterling Green Parks. At this point they are all still in the budget, but they may have to reduce the scope of projects to two parks. There is concern about staff's capacity to manage three park development projects with the slate of capital and administrative projects that are set for next year.

- Xenia “Trail and Arts Festival” – Staff has discussed with Council and the community including members of the biking community about not utilizing Xenia’s trail system asset to his fullest potential. They think there are opportunities to partner with a number of public and private interests to host a significant event that is focused on the trails.
  - They are recommending some initial seed-money of \$10,000\* (General Fund) to start to identify individuals who can assist with the process, which could take up to three years.
    1. Year One – line up parties to help coordinate initial interests to help fund and organize the event professionally and cost-effectively.
    2. Year Two –plan the event.
    3. Year Three – carry out the event.

**Regulatory Environment:**

- Zoning Code Update – He applauds Council for approving the funding and the City Planner for taking on this significant project of updating the Zoning Code.
  - Two-Year project from today to getting a new code on the books.
  - Focus on contemporary standards and contemporary needs and allow for the ease of conducting business in the Xenia community.
- Business Friendly Environment – This is a philosophy that staff wants to carry forward that is solution-oriented. Instead of telling businesses what they can’t do, they will try to find ways to meet their needs and find solutions to problems.
  - Multi-Agency Streamlining is one way to be business friendly. Staff has already initiated discussions with the Building Department and the Health Department to make sure they are streamlining business or residential projects through the process as much as possible.
  - Centralized City Services – They would be pleased to offer centralized city services, and completion of the City Hall project would accomplish that. All critical regulatory services, including the Fire Division, would be located within a block of each other.

Mr. Merriman said he was unable to cover every aspect of ED 360 but he tried to provide an overview of the direction staff wants to take with economic development efforts in general. The takeaway is that ED 360 is a multi-faceted effort seeking a contemporary and comprehensive approach to economic and community developmental opportunities with key areas of focus:

1. Address marketing needs and enhance our outreach to better position the City.
2. Establish and reinforce a business-friendly environment.
3. Invest strategically.
4. Leverage partnerships and relationships.

With regard to additional financial resources, they have to be mindful of how they are utilizing their time, how they are interacting with people, how they are leveraging partnerships, and how they are positioning the City and themselves for success. He then opened the floor for questions or comments.

Vice President Long asked if some of the low amounts allocated for some of the programs are just initial amounts that will be re-evaluated and adjusted in the future. Mr. Merriman said that is correct. Staff wants to make sure they are establishing symmetrics for some of the programs and

if they are successful, they can expand and continue them, if they are not successful, they can be amended or replaced. These are low initial investments to make sure they are utilizing those very scarce resources effectively without putting too much into a program.

Vice President Long said staff wants to create a public relations position but noted the amount listed was \$30,000-\$80,000 (Various Funds). He asked if that amount was for the one position or if that included contractual dollars as well. Mr. Merriman said a part-time position of less than 30 hours per week, which would keep the City under the ACA Healthcare requirement, would be approximately \$30,000; however, if a full-time 40+ hours per week (over-time exempt) position with benefits (healthcare & pension) would be closer to the high-end of \$80,000. The position would cover a diversity of responsibilities and roles and the funding would be split among the General Fund and Utility Funds, which is a typical practice with administrative positions because they provide services for our water system, sewer system, etc. A good example is our annual Consumer Report, which is currently produced in-house. A professional could produce a better quality product by taking the core information and putting together a report the community could better absorb and utilize. Therefore, it makes sense to utilize some additional funds to offset the overall cost from the General Fund. Mr. Bazalak said the amount of funds split between the General Fund and the Utility Funds will be determined by the position.

Vice President Long inquired about brand development. Mr. Merriman said additional work needs to be done, and they will look at developing an RFP/RFQ process to line up those services. They will pick up where they left off last year and make sure they are really zoning in on the best brand position and put together a marketing package that puts the city in the best light to emphasis local opportunities. These are skills staff does not possess in-house and even the new position will still need third-party assistance. Vice President Long asked if Council would see more information when it comes to dollar figures. Mr. Merriman said absolutely.

Vice President Long noted the City of Xenia controls only a small portion of the business friendly environment with zoning and utilities; the County controls the largest portion with health inspections, electrical, plumbing, and building in general. He asked if there was a plan to sit down with the County in 2015 to determine how to help make a more business friendly environment for businesses and residents in dealing with the County. He said he gets a lot of calls from contractors who express frustration with the County processes. Mr. Merriman said the City is in a unique position to handle the situation; the County Building Department is working for the City of Xenia through a financial arrangement where they are subsidized through a fee structure to provide those services for the City. He thinks they have a willing party through Al Kuzma because his experience is that he is very good to work with and very solution-oriented. His experience is also that some of his inspectors are not so great to work with and they have already begun to engage that discussion with them and also the Health Department. The Health Commissioner is top notch and understands the challenges they face with people's perception of their operations. They are zealous about what they do and are very effective but they want to position them as more business friendly. Vice President Long noted it would take little cost to start those conversations. Mr. Merriman said the Open X Program can really help on both those fronts by serving as an initial platform to help guide those businesses through the process.

Councilman Louderback thanked staff for the thorough presentation; he agrees with almost everything especially the concept of being business friendly. Several new businesses have

opened in Xenia this year, and he visits all of them. All the owners have expressed good thoughts in dealing with the City. He is glad the City Manager and the Development Director are going to the ICSC training. He believes it is very important that the City has a presence at these conferences, especially to hone in on hotels and food services. He has also received complaints about the Building and Health Departments, but there is a new Health Commissioner and Al Kuzma is more in tuned to work with the City. Mr. Merriman said if the City does not step in to facilitate better operations and relationships with these departments, things will deteriorate again. Councilman Louderback said he is a big fan of economic development and thinks the whole Council made that their #1 priority. He does not have a problem with doubling the budget for economic development. He believes they should hire a top-notch experienced person to fill the Marketing/Public Relations position rather than an intern because you get what you pay for. Economic development equals jobs and that is what Xenia needs.

Councilman Caupp asked if Downtown Revitalization, Retention & Expansion, and Business Attraction are the top 3 in priority of economic development. Mr. Merriman said they are definitely among the top priorities but they selected some that were key to economic development noting they would not be able to cover everything in one work session. Some areas are critical, such as health care and education, but he chose not to cover those subjects because they do not have unique control over those things. Among the most important are marketing, work force development, business attraction, and retention & expansion efforts. He likes the ED 360 model because all the categories have an interplay with each other, feed off each other, and are very comprehensive. Some areas are certainly more important than others, but they all carry their own weight. Councilman Caupp asked how they are lining up with the top priorities with X-Plan. Mr. Merriman said ED 360 was built with priorities of X-Plan as the backbone. A matrix will be included in the final document that will cross-reference all of it. The City Planner spent quite a bit of time going through and categorizing all aspects of the ED 360 plan. After the first year of X-Plan, they realized one thing they lacked was a process or document to continue to carry out a lot of what X-Plan prescribed, and ED 360 serves as that process to take them to the next level to move some of the specific goals and objectives of X-Plan into reality.

Councilman Caupp asked if they are looking at \$172,000 for marketing. Mr. Merriman said that is a ballpark figure. Councilman Caupp asked if they have the resources or expertise in-house to achieve these top priorities. If not, he asked what kind of criteria will they look at to get someone to accomplish these goals. Mr. Merriman said it has been the mutual goal of staff and Council to position them to build a capacity in-house, so as they look to these categories, they have made some steps in the right direction and need to continue to engage outside of Xenia at training and conferences. He strongly feels they need someone in-house who would be available on a regular basis to coordinate efforts with regard to brand management, marketing, and public relations. They are doing this every day, and they have been relying on staff, which has been effective although maybe not efficient, in producing materials, but there is a better way to do it. It is a lot of money to bring another position on, but he feels the flexibility, consistency, and core capacity that is built by adding that position is worth the cost.

Councilman Caupp said the reports from GAIN talked about business retention and programs designed to attract new businesses that align with the current businesses, but he is concerned that Carter and Cline may only focus on entrepreneurs. He thinks staff needs to be on the forefront and communicating with the businesses every single month to find out what their needs are

rather than them coming to the City. He noted the City spent a lot of money on GAIN last year and asked how the new programs will align with what has already been achieved so they do not spend time and money doing the same things over and over again. Mr. Merriman said staff is changing that trend and the ED 360/X-Plan is evidence of that change. In past years, these programs may have been put on the shelf, but you can see that X-Plan is being carried out with specific goals and objectives that have already been accomplished. He has already reiterated to his staff that they are not going to do a study just to do another study. If a study is needed, then implementation is the objective. As they look at business outreach and retention & expansion, the key factor is relationship building—it is establishing a rapport with our business community and business leaders individually to understand their workforce needs, regulatory challenges, labor market, and other challenges they face. Then, they need to position this community to meet those needs or to remove obstacles. Everything comes back to establishing relationships, establishing a rapport, and advancing things. He knows they do not have all the answers on all these issues, and they will have to continue to grow and expand their capacity. With that said, he is consistently impressed with staff's ability to rise to the challenge. They have some quality people.

Mr. Merriman said as they discussed before, they have staff who traditionally are not associated with economic development but play a very important role in economic development and are absolutely essential in these efforts such as the City Planner, City Engineer, Fire Chief, etc. In discussions with Mr. Beauregard, one of the best compliments received was how good it was to work with the Fire Chief and how unusual it was to have the Fire Chief sitting at the table on a project like the Family Entertainment Center. So again, making the extra effort to leverage the capacity of staff and building on that capacity through training and experiential efforts all boils down to working with the people in our community and developing relationships.

Councilman Caupp asked if there would be specific and measurable outcomes placed on economic development and the Development Director to gauge what they are doing. There are seven Council members who do not know what the Economic Development Director does every day. Mr. Merriman asked that Council put the expectations of economic development on him. If any department or department head was not meeting Council's expectations, they report to him and Council should let him know so it can be corrected. He has had discussions about areas that are deficient and need improvement. He wants programs to be measurable and not throw money at programs and projects that do not yield results. They cannot measure by how many jobs are created, because they cannot control that. When looking at the specific programs, they can establish metrics for the programs that help determine the relative success while continuing to look at unemployment rates and local trends. They have to be strategic in what measures they apply so they are fair to the programs they are measuring. He recognized they have not been very focused on performance measurement, but it is an area in which they are attempting to turn the corner.

Councilman Caupp said he has personally worked with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce and is concerned the City wants to take on the "Taste of Xenia" and Business Fair instead of the local Chamber of Commerce. He asked if staff has talked with the Chamber about these programs not being the City's responsibility and more of the businesses and Chamber's responsibility. Mr. Brodsky said one thing to keep in mind is that the Springfield Chamber of Commerce handles all of the economic development for the City of Springfield, unlike Xenia

where they are separate entities. Mr. Brodsky said he and Mr. Merriman agree the Xenia Chamber of Commerce needs to be an active partner especially with projects like a “Taste of Xenia” or a Business Fair because they have the ability to reach out to their members and help supplement the City’s outreach efforts. Most of the City’s outreach efforts are concentrated more on the industrial base and not so much the retailers. He can work actively with the Chamber as a partner and get them engaged to help. Councilman Caupp felt they needed to have a hard conversation with the Chamber to encourage recruitment of chamber members. Mr. Merriman noted staff meets regularly with the Xenia Chamber of Commerce and the County Development partners; they are tremendous resources and he feels positive about the relationships they have with each respective entity and its director. He feels the Chamber is a bit introspectively focused on their current membership and may not see the value of expanding their membership. However, the Chamber is a separate entity, and they want to be a partner with them without dictating to them.

Councilman Caupp asked how Carter and Cline’s role aligns with what the City has already done in regard to retention and expansion. Mr. Brodsky said they would fill a very specific role by acting as an owner’s rep with contractors. The role would include helping businesses assess their facility needs but only when they are ready for expansion so they can make a good decision about an expansion or to determine if a new facility is needed, which will not occur on an everyday basis. Carter and Cline will also assist new businesses in assessing their feasibility in regard to leases, space needs, etc. Mr. Merriman noted the City needs to leverage additional relationships, such as with real estate agents, and other areas to aid in economic development. There are other areas to be addressed that are involved in ED 360; he reiterated the presentation only covers some key areas.

Councilman Louderback asked what issues TJAR had in the Xenia Industrial Park. Mr. Brodsky said TJAR looked at expanding their building but found it would be an exorbitant amount to expand and determined it was actually cheaper for them to relocate into another building, which they did relocate into the old Brown Publishing building on Cincinnati. Councilman Louderback asked if that is an example of what Carter and Cline would do. Mr. Brodsky said they could have assisted with determining which building, location, and cost would have best suited their expansion needs.

Mayor Bayless said this is one of the most exciting and great plans that she has seen in a long time. She commended Mr. Merriman and his staff on doing an excellent job of listening, researching, and developing a clear picture of what Xenia can be about for economic development. She noted most of her questions have already been answered through other Council member’s questions, but she wanted to say that during the presentation, it was exciting as the whole picture was presented, which is a great future for Xenia.

President Engle congratulated Mr. Merriman and his staff and noted this is the best plan on this subject by far that he has seen since he has been on City Council, that more importantly is being integrated into the X-Plan, which has already been studied, is being implemented, and is now integrated with economic development activities. He feels the Town & Gown activities involving partnerships with CSU and Xenia Community Schools are very important both for our present, given our financial situation, as well as our future opportunities over many years. These partnerships put together opportunities that will benefit both the City of Xenia and our partners,

will bring more value to them, and make our operations more efficient. He believes the Workforce Development piece, the STEM Education Initiative, and the Training & Innovation Center will put Xenia 5-10 years into the future. He comes from an engineering background and greatly appreciates where they are going as a nation, and overall Xenia has been modest to slow in that area. An initiative in this area, tying back to some of those partners that they will be assisting economically through partnerships, is truly an excellent way to plan for our 5- to 10-year future. At the same time, he recognized that a great deal of the workforce still enjoys working with their hands; other than the Greene County Career Center (GCCC), they are not very well equipped in the County for training personnel for that. Finding partnerships in Xenia to meet this need would go a long way since much of Xenia will be requiring those kinds of services for many years to come because this is an older community. He congratulated staff on those goals.

President Engle said he is a true believer in the Internship & Work Shadowing (Co-op) Program. He encouraged the City Manager and his staff to look for those opportunities with these partners wherever possible. They may not be the top mind in a particular area, but they will certainly be an individual who is probably far along in their education and has been instructed by some of the best local professors and such and will be on the cutting edge of new-thinking in different areas. He thinks bringing that into the city will bring long-term benefit both immediately as well as many years into the future. ED 360 is a superior piece of work and looks forward to seeing the implementation and details regarding how funds will be allocated and what specific steps and metrics will be put into place, which will be the true measure of how successful it will be.

Mr. Merriman reiterated that a lot of what has been talked about in the different proposals is the relationships and partnerships with institutions and entities. He noted they are really blessed to have the leadership that has emerged from a lot of these local institutions and agencies that are very community-minded and are behind the City and this community. The City cannot do any of this alone and needs their help. They have recognized there is a symbiotic relationship there and they have embraced it. So far, he has had a tremendously positive response when reaching out for these initiatives.

Mayor Bayless said she has had numerous meetings and extensive conversations with the president of CSU. Along with these partnerships and sharing from one to the other, they also have to think about the effects it has on neighborhoods. The Old East High building is located in an area that people often think is neglected and there is nothing there, but the CSU president has a plan to fix up the building and all kinds of educational opportunities can emerge from that. There can be far-lasting results from these types of programs. She was introduced to a CSU student who is participating in the Internship Program at the Water Plant, and she understands that the WTP Supervisor is very pleased with his work. Good things are happening.

Councilman Caupp asked about a timeline for recommendations, budget, etc., to get started. Mr. Merriman said most of the items discussed, with a few exceptions, are included in the most recent budget documents that Council has received. Some final tweaks to the final budget are necessary, which are pending Council's general consensus tonight. Assuming Council supports the new Marketing/Public Relations Office position, he would like begin the process right away, which could take up to three months. Councilman Caupp asked if they will compare that in-house position to contractual services. Mr. Merriman said they can, and noted staff has done

some research with other comparable areas leading up to this recommendation and discovered many of them have a model similar to this with a full-time internal position. He thinks having that capacity is very, very important to the City on a number of different planes. Staff will have to look at the contractual role more in-depth and refine through the specifications development process what the RFP will include. President Engle noted the individual would become a member of the community, be fully invested in it, and grow with the city as they grow the different pieces of the ED 360 pie.

Councilman Caupp asked if they are looking at the end of January for some recommendations and a more formal plan and timeline to start the process. Mr. Merriman said he thinks most of the initiatives will be started and they will begin to engage them moving forward over the first quarter of next year. This is a lot, and they are very administratively challenged in-house. He does not want to overload anyone, and it will involve a number of different departments (Planning Department, Public Safety, Public Service, etc.). They will have to stagger and stage the processes. He noted the City Planner has already initiated the Zoning Code update. He would like to get rolling on the marketing piece and anticipates getting that position filled and engaging in contractual arrangements for the additional pieces hopefully by the end of the first quarter 2015. He is trying to being realistic in terms of the administrative workload.

Mr. Bazalak said assuming Council was in agreement with most, if not all, of what has been put forth today, as soon as it becomes able to be worked on, a temporary budget could be approved at the next meeting. Those items will be in a temporary budget and then the final budget. If Council was looking for an additional approval process beyond what has been discussed tonight, then the City Manager would need to know so he can move forward with what was proposed today or plan additional steps.

Councilman Caupp said other than the marketing position, he asked if there will be contractual services for some of the items or if all of it would be done in-house. The plan does not specifically describe how \$172,000 will be spent. Mr. Merriman said there are a lot of details that he couldn't explain in one presentation. In regard to marketing, there is an advantage to getting a person onboard who is a professional in the marketing area to help put together those specifications. The next step after filling the marketing position will be to take what they have derived from GAIN's work and getting that person familiar with the information. The marketing person will have to coordinate those efforts in conjunction with the Development Department because they will be instrumental in carrying out those marketing functions. They need to get to the next level, to understand how best to focus marketing efforts, and how best to position the City from a brand perspective. There is an additional external role that a contractor can play in the process that needs to be led by the new position in conjunction with the City Manager's Office and the Development Department.

President Engle said he believes the first quarter's major activity will be to fill the marketing position that he believes Council consensus has endorsed. The second quarter's activity would include familiarization, development, and strategy with the new marketing employee to bring back to Council a slate of activities that should be contracted by the mid-point or end of the second quarter. Mr. Merriman concurred. He added the ultimate goal is to provide a planning document to Council for utilization. A lot of work has gone into all of this and a lot of work

moving forward, but he wants to be realistic about the timeframe. President Engle said he has his full support in that perspective.

In regard to a comment made earlier about robotics, Vice President Long said Xenia is almost a non-player in the region for manufacturing. He would like the City to get more involved with Ohio Robotics to help students learn STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and to help get their name out there on the banners and signs. There are some leading small businesses and manufacturing companies in the area participating who could look at Xenia for other things. CSU is in the City's backyard, and a partnership could be an option for engineering or robotics. Mr. Brodsky noted there were two public sector sponsors of the Ohio Robotics Extreme Bots Competition; one was Montgomery County and the other was the City of Xenia.

Councilman Caupp asked if there was a local company that recently got a big hit relating to drones. Mr. Brodsky said Woolpert, an engineering company in Beavercreek, was one of four companies approved nationally to fly drones commercially. He noted Woolpert was one of the companies that came to OVCH to talk about the potential of using that property for UAVs. Councilman Caupp said they talked about UAVs and the CSU Land Grant and asked if they have had any additional discussions with CSU about possibly expanding their programs with drones for agricultural use. Mr. Merriman said yes and there are funds available at the federal level that can be tapped into to help encourage that expansion.

Councilman Louderback said as noted earlier, not every kid is college material, but there are companies in this area looking for CNC operators and specialized welders, so they need to connect the dots from the jobs to the labor force. Mayor Bayless said that is why she was glad to hear the tie-in with the GCCC, Clark State, and other institutions. Mr. Merriman said staff wants to be comprehensive and three-dimensional with looking at the big picture instead of focusing on very narrow items. Councilman Caupp said the GCCC has adult education programs but they do not have a CNC program. Mr. Brodsky said they closed their CNC program a few years ago because they couldn't get enough students to warrant keeping it open, and their welding is being done in partnership with Clark State. Vice President Long noted they have closed most of their medical billing assistance and LPN programs, but they have kept their Law Enforcement program. Mr. Brodsky said like a lot of public entities, they are under some financial strain and can only keep open some of their revenue-producing programs. Vice President Long said an interesting fact is that all of the GCCC Adult Education programs operated in the red their entire existence except the Law Enforcement program.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Motion by Vice President Long, seconded by Mayor Bayless, to adjourn the Special Session at 7:49 p.m. No discussion followed. The Roll on this was the following:

Ayes: Long, Caupp, Louderback, Bayless, and Engle

Nays: None                      motion carried.

Michelle D. Johnson  
City Clerk

Michael D. Engle, President  
Xenia City Council