

October 1, 2026

Dear Community,

There is a lot of reviewing, sorting and filtering that happens in this position. When the community - individuals or groups - come forward with a subject at hand, I am trying to understand what it is, what the history or context is, and if it is best directed to staff, Council or both to review. I am still learning about those differentiations. If it's for Council, sometimes a different council member is better equipped to review. Some explorations are internally fueled: I read something or talk to someone, and I wonder, "Does that apply to Yellow Springs? Can that help address affordability for our residents? How would that look for us?" If it seems potentially relevant, I read, research, ask stakeholders, and try to understand more.

In this process of constantly reviewing concepts, ideas, and opinions, this is a clear trend: there is no shortage of ideas in YS. I have yet to hear of something truly novel and extraordinary, because almost every effort that is new to me has already been attempted 2, 5, 10 or 40 years ago. I say this with my inherent optimism and hope: there are thoughtful and committed people in the community who are bringing forward thoughtful ideas all the time. But they often get stuck somewhere, and more often than not I am chasing down what happened. What was the last memo about it, or when was it last discussed at a public meeting? Who was last responsible for it, did it change hands?

When I first moved here and started to engage in civic life, several people told me that YS is a place where perfect is the enemy of good. There are no perfect ideas or solutions, but there are so many good ones that have come and gone, often without reaching the end goal. Here are some that I have been learning more about, and please do share if you have more context or history that would shed insight.

1. In conversations about how to address affordability issues with rising costs of utilities, I have been learning more about the history of our **broadband internet pilot**. In meeting with the leaders of the pilot that is currently running with 100 families, I am understanding that it is effective in maintaining set, affordable rates for these households, as the Village is not interested in profit as the utility provider, unlike the massive internet corporations doing so. Additionally, it brings in revenue for the Village that can cover its own costs of operation and potentially offset other costs (i.e. other utilities that are rising). My understanding is that the pilot was never fully summarized or presented to Council, and hence the project has continued to serve a little over 100 subscribers but has not been authorized to bring online a significant number of Village homes and businesses using the fiber infrastructure built in 2021. This group is organizing updated information about the project so we can re-engage in a productive way to consider the potential benefit of municipal broadband to residents and the community at large.
2. Similarly, in learning about the **municipal solar projects** in Athens, I was able to meet with key staff from Athens who have driven the solar developments there, which result in

electric savings for households and for the municipality at large. There have been some exciting ideas about additional projects in YS that would advance both our environmental impact goals as well as cost savings for residents. I will continue to expand my learning, especially with/from community members and Village staff with expertise in the field.

There continue to be regional, state and federal resources that we can leverage to explore possibilities that have proven to be effective in other communities our size.

3. I intend to present the draft of the next **housing retreat** in the next Council meeting or the one after, and along with that to receive Council and community feedback while scheduling when it will take place. We have 2-3 budget meetings ahead of us, so I understand this time of year is difficult but hopefully we can make time and space for it.
 - a. There were previously seven goals identified in relation to housing. We will have time to review the goals and update progress and prioritization on what we said we wanted to do - and make adjustments to those goals as needed.
 - b. This retreat will include forms of public participation/feedback/engagement. I am happy to hear from the community thoughts on this format before proposing a final version to bring to Council for approval. Here is one potential structure. Once the agenda is finalized and the public at large knows the topics that will be discussed, we will receive any written letters/commentary to be included in the packet. There will also be a listening session to allow space for discussion and open consideration of different viewpoints. This can inform staff/Council as we enter into the retreat. At the end of the retreat, a section of time will allow for public comments and responses to what was discussed. From there, next steps will be identified, which may include one-on-one meetings or smaller groups to follow-up.
 - c. It will also be a clear goal of the retreat to identify the best format of working on housing issues into the future. We have repeatedly talked about the best format to continue this work, and in Retreat 1 and 2 we discussed the merits and difficulties with a commission versus a committee versus an alternative, like what we are doing with retreats (the first was in January, the second in June). My personal belief is we also need a commitment to timing, so these meetings are scheduled in advance, include more of the public, and ensure consistency to how often we meet and work collectively on housing.
 - d. I'd like to reiterate, as has been raised in several meetings with me recently, that working on affordable housing includes work on the state of rental housing in Yellow Springs, which Stephanie has led. For those not updated on the background and effort here, Stephanie has prepared several thorough memos previously about this topic.
4. Yellow Springs is well represented at the **2026 Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Planning Conference in Dayton**. On Wed 9/30 I joined several Planning Commission and BZA members at "Mastering the Essentials of Local Government," including a session by our solicitor Amy Blankenship. Tomorrow, I intend to participate in sessions regarding shrinking college and university campuses and impacts on community planning; modern manufactured and modular homes and quality, cost and efficiency

benefits; and the nexus of housing and affordability and planning policies like zoning reform, inclusionary housing, density bonuses, and subsidy tools.

I am behind on my daily Tao meditations, but this one has stayed with me: "We cannot communicate directly from mind to mind, and so misinterpretation is a perennial problem. Motions, signs, talking and the written word are all encumbered by miscommunication."

In short: miscommunication is bound to happen, yet we have to keep trying to communicate. I appreciate your engagement, whether it be reading, writing, or speaking. If you have thoughts to share on any of the above, I look forward to hearing it and working together.

Sincerely,
Angie
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