



COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION AGENDA:

February 20, 2026

Innovation College@Elm 3rd Floor 20 South Elm Street Oxford, Ohio 45056

12:00 PM

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

1. Minutes of the June 6, 2025, meeting.

Old Business

New Business

1. New members to the CIC
 - a. Oxford Township Representative Tom Cooke
Oxford City Council Representative William Snavelly
Oxford Planning Commission Representative Jeffrey Kruth
2. Election of Officials for 2026
 - a.
 1. Nomination for President:
 2. Nomination for Treasurer:
 3. Nomination for Secretary:
3. Economic Activation Program
 - a. Review and comment
4. Economic Development Strategic Plan and Research Projects Updates
 - a.
 - POL Capstone project Spring 2026
 - Drive site readiness projects
5. Oxford Entrepreneurship Night
 - a. Tuesday 2/17/26 6 -9 PM at C@E

6. OXD Airport Updates
 - a. Airport status and annexation
7. Knightsbridge AM Hub
8. Talawanda Partnership Updates
 - a.
 - CNA pilot program has 19 students
 - AI and Cybersecurity certificates program scholarships
9. Local Business Updates
10. Placemaking Efforts
 - a.
 - Bee Festival
 - Uptown restroom

Open Floor Discussion

Adjournment



MINUTES
OXFORD COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION
INNOVATION COLLEGE@ELM 3RD FLOOR 20 SOUTH ELM STREET
OXFORD, OHIO 45056
FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2025 AT 12:00 PM

Call to Order

Date: Friday, June 6, 2025

Location: Innovation College@Elm 3rd Floor | 20 S. Elm St. Oxford, OH 45056

Time of Meeting: 12:00 PM

Members Present: Nate Chaney, Jim Clawson, Alex French, Jeffrey Kruth, Kevin McKeehan, Norma Pennock, Heidi Ridenour, J.C. Rupel, Mike Smith, Shaunna Tafelski, Kelly Umbstead

Members Absent: Ted Pickerill, Randi Thomas

Staff Liaison: Seth Copenbaker

Call to Order

Time: 12 PM by J.C. Rupel

Approval of Agenda

Motion: Kevin McKeehan

2nd: Shaunna Tafelski

Vote: Passed Unanimously

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Alex French

2nd: Kelly Umbstead

Vote: Passed Unanimously

1. Minutes from the last meeting, held Friday, August 16, 2024

Selection of Officers

1. Nomination for President:

Nomination for President: J.C. Rupel nominated for CIC President by Jim Clawson

2nd: Kelly Umbstead

Vote: Passed Unanimously

2. Nomination for Treasurer:

Nomination for Treasurer: Heidi Ridenour nominated for CIC Treasurer by Alex French

2nd: Shaunna Tafelski

Vote: Passed Unanimously

3. Nomination for Secretary:

Nomination for Secretary: Seth Cropsenbaker nominated for Secretary by Kevin McKeehan

2nd: Kelly Umbstead

Vote: Passed Unanimously

Old Business

New Business

1. Economic Development Strategic Plan Presentation

- Research and Findings
- Public Comment Feedback
- Recommendation to Council

Economic Development Strategic Plan as presented

Motion to Recommend: Shaunna Tafelski

2nd: Heidi Ridenour

Vote: Passed Unanimously

2. 2026 Research Recommendations to Council

- Review of Staff and Council initiated goal areas
- Recommendation to Council

Recommended Economic Development projects to pursue

- Empower and develop resources for the CIC
- Develop Economic Development Toolkit

- Drive site readiness projects

Motion to Recommend to Oxford Council the “recommended projects to pursue”

- Motion to Recommend: J.C. Rupel
- 2nd: Kevin McKeehan

Vote: Passed Unanimously

3. Placemaking Efforts

- Red Brick Fridays - June 7, July 18, August 1, August 2
- Oxtoberfest September 13 - Uptown Event

Oxford Bee Festival 4/12/25

- 5k/10k Race
- Uptown Event

Public Safety Efforts

4. Local Business Updates

Open Floor Discussion

Adjournment

Motion: Kelly Umbstead

2nd: Kevin McKeehan

Vote: Passed Unanimously

Economic Activation in Oxford

Vibrant streetscapes, well maintained properties, and active business corridors are markers of healthy communities and economies. When a city is marred by poorly maintained, or inactive properties an impression of decline is hard to escape. In Oxford, these problem properties are a growing concern. The state of disrepair of single-family homes, rental properties, and commercial buildings leads to a negative impression of the City and reduction in quality of life for all of Oxford's citizens. The available remedies to these problems in our community are limited, with the key solutions being Code enforcement, civil fines, and economic incentives.

In order to address and reduce the number of problem properties in our community, the Economic Development Department recommends a “carrot before the stick” approach. This approach is encapsulated in the **Economic Activation Program**.

The goals of the Economic Activation Program include:

- Improve physical conditions throughout the city, reduce blight and ~~inactivity~~inactivity.
- Identify problem properties and assist property owners in identifying code violations.
- Encourage the correction of identified code ~~violations~~by violations by establishing an amnesty period to address issues without penalty.
- Incentivize the timely completion of development projects by promoting financial incentives to qualifying projects.
- Robust code enforcement and fine collection following the amnesty period.

What is the Economic Activation Program?

- **The Economic Activation Program** is a 16-month program (May 1, 2026 – August 31, 2027) designed to promote capital improvements and code compliance throughout the City of Oxford.
- The program creates a period of fee amnesty by suspending all penalties related to violations of local regulations in an effort to spark capital investment and economic vitality in Oxford.
 - Note: Code violations that are egregious or pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the Oxford community are not eligible for amnesty under this program.
- The Economic Activation Program hinges upon four core pillars.
 - **Identify** and record all known poorly maintained, underutilized or inactive properties in the Mile Square and commercial zones. Trash/litter/garbage code violations, on their own, are not a target of this program.
 - **Inform** property ~~owners~~and owners and provide support for improvement.

- **Incentivize** swift completion of associated projects by providing both a period of fee amnesty, as well as potential for financial assistance.
- **Enforce** any outstanding Code infractions following the amnesty period.

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Economic Activation Program Timeline

- Promotion of the program will begin March 1, 2026
 - Broad promotion of the program through City outlets.
 - City E-news, website, social media, Council and Committee meeting announcements, etc.
 - Broad promotion of the program through City partner outlets.
 - Oxford Chamber, Enjoy Oxford, etc.
 - Direct outreach to owners of identified properties.
- Promotional and informational meeting hosted on April 13, 2026, 6 – 7:30 PM
 - Program rules, amnesty, potential incentives, etc. will be presented.
- Program officially opens on May 1, 2026
 - Certified mailers of all identified ~~properties will~~ properties will be sent to property owners on Friday May 1, 2026.
 - Property owners may contact City staff for property inspections to determine potential eligibility
- Any property with Code violations that are fully addressed during the Economic Activation Program will have any fees or penalties waived.
- Property owners that remain with Code violations will be given a ~~90~~ 90-day notice via Certified Mail on June 2, 2027.
- Amnesty period ends August 31, 2027.
- Property owners will be given final notice of violations and assessment of associated penalties via Certified Mail on September 30, 2027.

Identification of ~~Eligible Properties~~Eligible Properties in Oxford

The first step in the process is a robust effort by City staff to identify and record existing poorly maintained, underutilized or inactive properties in the Mile Square and commercial ~~areas.~~areas. Furthermore, the program will include all property types, commercial, residential, mixed-use, etc.

To successfully complete this step.

- Community Development staff will complete inspections ~~at~~of properties with suspected violations.
 - Trash, rubbish, litter, outdoor storage, code violations are not targeted with this program and therefore will not cause properties to be eligible for fee amnesty or financial incentive.
- Economic Development staff will identify underutilized or inactive properties.
- Community Development staff will complete property inspections at properties where property owners request an inspection to help identify potential violations.
- Community Development staff will complete citations and outline penalties as part of this identification period.
- Records of violations and associated penalties will be maintained and tracked.
- If this step proves to be overly burdensome to Community Development Staff, funding may be sought to hire temporary Code Enforcement staff to assist.
- The City will create and publish virtual outlets for public participation to help identify potential violations.

Informing Property Owners of Their Property Eligibility

The second step will be to inform property owners ~~of their~~of their property eligibility. Communication to property owners will outline the reason for the eligibility, such as but not limited to: maintenance conditions, inactivity, code violations, associated fines, and information regarding the amnesty period provided through the Economic Activation Program.

To successfully complete this step.

- Owners will be notified by mail of their eligibility and Code violations at their property.
- Can we also publish a final list on our website?
- Mailers will be ~~sent to~~sent regarding known violations on May 1, 2026, additional mailers will be generated and sent as new violations are identified
 - Mailers will include language specific to the Code violation, explain the Economic aActivation ~~p~~Program, ~~including and supports~~ available support, - as

~~well as~~ outline penalties for ~~these~~ violations ~~should they~~should remain unaddressed.

- All Code violations (both new and outstanding) are eligible for suspension of fines during the Economic Activation Program.
- City Manager Department staff will assist the Community Development staff to inform property owners during this step.
- City staff will coordinate with NIC to provide local access to qualified Building Officials and building plan reviews as part of the **Inform** process.
 - Dates and times for these consultations will be determined at a later date.

Incentivizing Property Owners in the Timely Completion of Improvements at Their Property

The third step will be to provide financial incentives for the timely completion of projects. Property owners may have their fees suspended during the Economic Activation Program and upon successful correction of Code violations those fines may be waived. Additional financial incentives may be available depending on factors including the violation, project scope, etc.

Potential financial incentives include

- Revolving Loan Fund “Improvement and Retention Loans”
 - Through this existing program we will offer loans up to \$10,000, at 1% interest and 60-month repayment term to help fund capital projects.
 - Property and business owners may coordinate to apply for these loans if a business is operating in a building owned by another party.
 - Applications are reviewed by the CIC and recommended to Council for funding.
- Capital Improvement Grants
 - Oxford has an existing “Façade and Sustainability” reimbursement grant.
 - This program provides grants for capital projects that include either an environmental sustainability element or façade improvement.
 - These grants can provide up to 50% of project costs, to a \$5,000 total cap while funds last.
 - Property and business owners may coordinate to apply for grants if a business is operating in a building owned by another party.
 - Applications are reviewed by the CIC and recommended to Council for funding.
 - For larger projects that include aspects such as significant capital investment, site development, etc. ~~additional grant~~additional grant sources may be sought.

- The Butler County Land Bank, Butler County Finance Authority, and Ohio Department of Development have a variety of grant programs available.
- Depending on the project, Economic Development staff may assist in the completion of applications to outside funding sources.
- Potential fee waivers for permit applications, utility tapping, etc.
 - Projects may also qualify waiver of various fees, as approved by the Community Development department.
 - Fee waivers will be taken underinto consideration on a case-by-case basis.
- Financial incentives may be “stacked” to create more financial support for projects.
 - City grants may not be used to provide funds for loan repayment
 - Loans may not be used to create matching funds as part of grant requirements.

To successfully complete this step.

- Property owners will be notified of the various financial incentive programs by Economic Development staff.
 - Notices of available incentives will be included in the Certified Mailers, as described in the **Inform** phase of the Economic Activation Program.
- Property owners will be provided with appropriate application materials.
 - Application materials will be provided electronically via email and linked on the City of Oxford website.
- Economic Development staff will monitor and promote any appropriate outside financial incentive programs that property owners may be eligible to apply.

Enforce Code Violations on all Properties Within the City of Oxford

The fourth and final step will be rigorous enforcement of Code violations within the City of Oxford following the amnesty period provided by the Economic Activation program. After diligent efforts to **Identify**, **Inform**, and **Incentivize** Code compliance, the City will take a strong position of enforcement for any outstanding or emerging Code violations. When necessary, the City will seek to take legal action or assess the property taxes of sites that remain in violation.

Community Development and Economic Development staff will work together to maintain a database of all Code violations identified during the Economic Activation Program, including Code violation and project status.

To successfully complete this step.

- City staff will maintain records of all properties with Code violations as discovered during and prior to the **Identify** step.

- City staff will record completed projects and inform property owners of compliance.
- City staff will notify property owners ~~that~~that they remain in violation, first by 90-day notice on June 2, 2027, then again of failure to comply September 30, 2027.
- Any Code violation not successfully addressed, or any project not fully completed, by August 31, 2027, runs the risk of not qualifying for amnesty from fines and fees assessed due to Code violations.

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Project Scenarios and Funding Examples

1. Scenario #1: Small project to repaint the exterior at an Uptown Business location.
 - a. Local business owner/contractor works with City of Oxford to permit the project.
 - i. Community Development Department to identify appropriate paint colors in historic district
 - ii. City Manager staff assist with Public Right-of-Way permit for sidewalk closure.
 - b. Total project costs \$4,500
 - i. Business owner applies for Façade and Sustainability Grant through CIC.
 - ii. Application is approved and provides \$2,250 in funding, reimbursed when business owners provide documentation of paid invoice following
2. Scenario #2: ~~The~~ The use of the property is prohibited by the Zoning ~~Code~~Code, and the building or site has been altered without permission from the City.
 - a. Local business owner/contractor works with the City to restore the property or building to proper use/condition. This could include exterior condition building repair, such as but not limited to the replacement of boarded up windows with actual windows.
 - b. If there is a Zoning Code violation for the use, the City works with the owner to seek Zoning approval. If the Zoning approval is not approved within the program time, the owner agrees to return the use to a permitted use. The City assists with the fees and staff time in seeking ~~the approval~~approval that may ultimately be denied. The owner agrees to restore the site to the previous condition. The owner agrees to fund at least a portion of the restoration. This could include but not limited to the removal of unauthorized stored materials, unauthorized paving or gravel.
3. Scenario #3: Business needs to demolish and rebuild an outdoor patio dining area.
 - a. Local business owner/contractor works with City of Oxford to permit the project.
 - i. Community Development Department on permitting, engineering, etc.
 - b. Total project costs \$25,000
 - i. Business owner applies for a Revolving Loan Fund loan
 1. Application is approved and provides a \$10,000, 60-month loan at 1% interest (\$168.34/month payments).
 - ii. Business owner applies for Façade and Sustainability Grant through CIC.
 1. Application is approved and provides \$5,000 in funding.
 - iii. Project was able to qualify for funding under both programs due to total project costs and outcomes aligning with program rules.
 1. \$25,000 total project costs, with \$10,000 in costs covered by RLF.

2. \$15,000 remaining project costs supported by Facade and Sustainability grant program with a grant award at the \$5,000 cap.
 3. Business ~~owner covers~~owners cover \$10,000 immediate out-of-pocket funding.
 - iv. Successful project completion.
 4. Scenario #4: ~~Property: Property~~ is identified as a public safety hazard, due to a voluntary, involuntary or natural hazard such as but not limited to: collapsed building, an open and unsecure building, a fire-damaged building.
 - a. No amnesty is provided.
 5. Scenario #5: ~~Property: Property~~ is underutilized.
 - a. In a Historic District and has potential for re-investment or adaptive re-use and may be eligible for historic tax credits. In need of historic architecture consultation.
 - b. Outside a Historic District and has potential for adaptive re-use. In need of architectural, building code or engineering consultation to determine the feasibility of improvements.
 - c. Regardless of Historic District status, the property is in a key location for redevelopment but contains potential “brownfield” characteristics, and/or contains remnants of prior uses or buildings that are costly to remove and prepare for future development. Requires urban planning/design consultation in order to determine feasibility for redevelopment.
 6. Scenario #6: Business needs to resurface a 12,000 square-foot parking lot.
 - a. Local business owner/contractor works with City of Oxford to permit the project.
 - i. Community Development Department on permitting, engineering, etc.
 - b. Total project costs \$70,000
 - i. Business owner applies for a Revolving Loan Fund loan
 1. Application is approved and provides a \$10,000, 60-month loan at 1% interest (\$168.34/month payments).
 - ii. Business owner applies for Façade and Sustainability Grant through CIC.
 1. Application is denied as not aligning with program rules/values