

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Before starting this meeting, I have a short statement I would like to read concerning my personal feelings about the possibility of a Community Center for Oxford. This is an extremely ambitious undertaking - perhaps overly so. I can easily understand the concern of the Commissioners of Oxford regarding any additional financial responsibility to the community when the income from property taxes, water and sewerage are hardly enough to pay for the services provided the residents. I feel that a project of this type, unless it is able to carry itself not only in the early stages but in time to come, should not be something for the people of Oxford to consider. Although there has been a considerable amount of work done on looking into the project from, I call the edges, to have a community become involved requires a detailed study by responsible citizens to include all phases of an operation of this type. It is with that thought in mind that this meeting was called knowing full well that there would be extremely divergent opinions on whether to go ahead or not. It is a well known fact that petitions asking for the reaction of people on a subject such as this usually receive fairly affirmative answers. People of all ages are usually in favor of something that will be of benefit to them as long as (1) they don't have to pay for it, and (2) they don't have to give their personal services. What the petition did show, however, was that there was a great many young people who indicated a positive interest and this is always a good sign. What the petition did indicate overwhelmingly was the people would like to have such a thing; but, of course, there was no indication in the petition as to what the cost would be or what was involved. The school house, which has been closed for more than three years, undoubtedly needs a great deal of work. We have estimates which we will talk about later but nothing that is hard and fast - the type of thing necessary before we can begin to lay concrete plans on just what



we need to do. Undoubtedly, a facility of this kind can be put in shape mostly by state, federal and possibly county funds. The question you then face is how do we maintain it and how do we keep it up; where do we get the income to pay people to maintain it; and how long can we project this income.

This is a picture which could be considered negative, if you wish, but it is better to approach something of this magnitude facing the negatives if you ever expect to get any positive action. The primary objective of this meeting this evening is to find out from you, the people of Oxford, whether you would like to pursue the investigation of this project. If we go ahead, it will require the appointment by this group of a task force which, in turn, would be prepared to spend the time and effort necessary to obtain the actual facts. These facts must be the kind any financial organization and the government would accept. This task force should be made up of community leaders as well as people with professional backgrounds in the areas in which you need expertise in such a project. I would estimate it will take at least six months to a year with many, many meetings to have a report ready to submit to the Commissioners of Oxford. Progress reports from time to time could be made in the form of news releases to the press if this would be desired. This would keep everybody informed as to what is going on. Please be assured that if this task force finds that there are insurmountable problems in connection with such a move, they would be the first people to recommend cancelling the idea. It is wishful thinking to try to do something that is impossible in the long run. The meeting is now open for discussion and the chair will try to keep individual presentations or conversations down to five minutes or less. The meeting will adjourn promptly at 10:00 P.M. and hopefully before. The people present from outside the Oxford area should refrain from voting aye or nay when voting is necessary.