

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WHITE LAKE**  
**Unapproved Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**June 22, 2021**

Supervisor Kowall called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. The meeting was held in person. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisor Kowall called the roll:

Present:       Rik Kowall, Supervisor  
                  Anthony L. Noble, Clerk  
                  Mike Roman, Treasurer  
                  Liz Smith, Trustee  
                  Andrea C. Voorheis, Trustee  
                  Michael Powell, Trustee

Absent:         Scott Ruggles, Trustee

Also Present:  Sean O'Neil, WLT Planning Director  
                  Howard Kohn, The Chesapeake Group  
                  John McGraw, River Caddis  
                  Kevin McGraw, River Caddis  
                  Hannah Micallef, Recording Secretary

Public Present:  2

**AGENDA**

**It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, SUPPORTED by Treasurer Roman to approve the agenda as presented. The motion PASSED by with a voice vote (6 yes votes).**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Supervisor Kowall opened up public comment at 6:09 P.M. Seeing none, he closed the public comment at 6:09 P.M.

**6. CIVIC CENTER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP**

Mr. John McGraw was present to speak on behalf of River Caddis, along with Mr. Kevin McGraw, to create a dialogue regarding expectations for the Civic Center. He said there will be different avenues explored throughout the process, and he wanted to be transparent during the process.

Phase One was the feasibility phase. At this point, the financial and legal team for River Caddis would be assembled. Mr. McGraw said River Caddis has a legal team right now, and is working to find a financial team. He has two different financial teams he is considering. This would lead the way to begin the financial framework. This process would be a deep dive into financials, and to create a budget for the project. From there, a recommendation will be made. This recommendation would hopefully establish the framework for the financial piece of the project.

Mr. McGraw said he hoped to get a list of RFIs, or requests to bring to the Township shortly. He would also like to workshop with staff to figure out needs. He said he believed he could have the recommendation as to what the project could afford regarding financials within 60 days.

Mr. Kevin McGraw said there needs to be a starting point somewhere, and to go through the wish list and see what is feasible to finance. He said the legal team would be involved in the financial process to an extent as well.

Mr. John McGraw said both financial teams he is working with are fantastic, and it would narrow down to which one would work best with the Township. Once a financial path is determined, another meeting will be held to go over the next steps.

Once Phase 1 is completed, Phase 2 will proceed by designing and going through the development process, as well as engaging and involving the public. During this phase, River Caddis will be working closely with the Township and updating on progress frequently.

Planning Director O'Neil stated that the Civic Center Development Committee would be involved throughout the process eventually. The CCDC is eager to engage in the process and to give their thoughts and ideas to the development of the project.

Mr. Kohn said engaging the CCDC once the financials were secured would be good.

Supervisor Kowall said a walkable downtown is important, and was looking forward to seeing what River Caddis could come up with in regards to it.

Planning Director O'Neil said putting together all pieces to create a successful civic center was interesting. He gave an example of bringing residential uses first would drive commercial uses.

Trustee Smith asked if the staff workshop included the Board. Mr. John McGraw said he wanted to present and share information with the day-to-day staff initially, and then once he had information to present the board, he would.

Trustee Smith asked if the DLZ needs and assessment report was given to River Caddis. John McGraw confirmed it had, along with other reports regarding the Civic Center. He added that the reports are being reviewed by his team.

Trustee Smith added that she felt there needed to be excitement to get the public interested, but public safety needed to come first, then Township Hall.

Clerk Noble said he felt that the residential aspect needed to come first, then public safety, and then the Township Hall. He said it was paramount for him that public safety gets updated facilities.

Mr. John McGraw said a national firm would do a deep dive into a housing analysis, to determine housing density, style, and amenities for the residential component of the Civic Center. He said an open approach would be taken regarding the housing study, to nail down exactly what residential features would work.

Trustee Smith added it would be important to keep momentum regarding the project going to keep residents excited.

Trustee Voorheis said the staff would be key in determining what amenities Township Hall needed as they are there day to day.

Trustee Powell said the needs of the public buildings may be contrary to the needs of the downtown area as a whole. He said it would be interesting to see the Township's uses and the commercial/residential uses pulled together. He also mentioned there is a potential retail development in talks at the southeast corner of Elizabeth Lake and M-59. The project could hypothetically generate interest in the Civic Center, and could set the tone for profitability outside of the Civic Center.

Trustee Smith said she hoped the surrounding properties would complement the Civic Center. She added that she liked the idea of being so unique, and the Township needed to become the destination that commercial uses like restaurants would want to come to White Lake.

Mr. Kohn said he urged the Board to begin working on an overlay district. The dynamics of the community would be changed if this project was to be successful. The housing analysis done two years ago showed there were no comps to this situation. The housing market had been changing rapidly, and a reassessment needs to be made. The restaurants White Lake would be looking at would not be chains, and short-term incentives might be needed to drive them here. A partnership with a potential restaurant could be considered to bring people.

Treasurer Roman said he was eager to begin, and added financially, for River Caddis to keep it simple. He said it would be important to have a firm to be able to explain to the Board in understandable language. He asked what development River Caddis has done that was most similar to White Lake.

Mr. John McGraw said River Caddis worked on a brownfield called Trowbridge in East Lansing that became a mixed use of residential and commercial. It was a problem site initially, but with additional residential and commercial uses, it became profitable.

Mr. Kohn stated the public facilities being an anchor shouldn't be looked at negatively. With proper programming, the public facilities could receive revenue and bring people into the Civic Center.

Trustee Smith said a community center would be huge, and added if there were commercial uses within the proposed Township Hall, that could bring people in as well.

Supervisor Kowall said commercial amenities in Township Hall would bring immediate presence and interest. Supervisor Kowall said it was important for all the aspects to be considered, and to find out the best place for Township Hall to be economically and physically.

Clerk Noble said campaigning the project would be critical to keep the public in the loop and engaged.

Mr. John McGraw said public engagement would be a huge part of the project, from visioning to transparency, since that would make the whole project run easier. However, public engagement would begin once the financial aspect was sorted out.

Trustee Smith asked Mr. Kohn his opinion on putting Township Hall in the front of the property. Mr. Kohn said it would depend on programming and uses.

Treasurer Roman stated that this project would be one of the greatest learning opportunities the Board would experience.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was MOVED by Trustee Smith, SUPPORTED Clerk Noble by to adjourn. The motion PASSED with a voice vote (6 yes votes).**

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

I, Anthony L. Noble, the duly elected and qualified Clerk of the Charter Township of White Lake, County of Oakland, State of Michigan, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the May 11, 2021 special board meeting minutes.

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Anthony L. Noble, Clerk  
White Lake Township  
Oakland County, Michigan