

Hidden in Plain Sight: 2022 Meeting Minutes Reveal Years of Undisclosed Planning for Controversial Ski Lake

Residents Demand Full Transparency After Discovering Project Discussions Date Back at Least Three Years

TOWN OF CEDARBURG, WI, UNITED STATES, November 25, 2025

/EINPresswire.com/ -- The 13-acre artificial ski lake that shocked

Cedarburg residents in November has a longer history than anyone at Town Hall wanted to discuss. Meeting

minutes from 2022 reveal that the [Gauthier](#) project was presented to the Town Plan Committee years ago, with public concerns formally recorded at the time.



SAVE CEDAR CREEK

Save Cedar Creek

“

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Kevin Cahill

At the November 5th, 2025 Town Board hearing, where over 100 residents gathered to oppose the project, the town planner told the crowd this was "the first time" the application had reached a public hearing before the Town Board.

Technically, that statement was true. It was also incomplete enough to be misleading.

The Machata family, who own property directly adjacent to the proposed lake site, attended a Town Plan Committee

meeting on November 16th, 2022, where the Gauthier project was discussed.

Public comments were recorded. Concerns were raised. The minutes are part of the public record. The committee heard loud and clear from the very town residents they are supposed to represent.

Yet when hundreds of residents filled Town Hall three years later, many hearing about the

project for the first time, they were left with the clear impression that no prior public discussion had ever occurred.

No one mentioned 2022. No one referenced the earlier concerns. No one explained why the project had been moving through administrative channels while the broader community remained unaware.



Image Credit: GMToday.com

"The room was so packed they needed a bigger venue for the next meeting," said Kevin Cahill, organizer with [Save Cedar Creek](#). "And we were told this was the first time anyone had heard about it. The minutes from 2022 tell a different story."

The Machata family confirmed they had participated in discussions about the project for years, believing their neighbors and town officials were working through the issues in good faith.

They were stunned to discover at the November hearing that the rest of the community had been kept in the dark.

"We thought this was being handled," one family member said. "We didn't realize no one else knew what was happening."

The framing at the November 5th hearing suggested the project was new, that this was the community's first opportunity to weigh in, and that the process was just beginning.

In reality, the proposal had been under consideration for at least three years. Zoning discussions had occurred. Engineers had been hired. Surveys had been completed. Legal strategies had been developed to structure the application in ways that would pass regulatory scrutiny.

By the time 40 residents stood up to testify, the project had already been approved by the Planning Committee.

Residents are now asking what else happened behind closed doors.

What other meetings took place?

What commitments were made?

What information was shared with the applicants but not with the public?

And why, when a project threatens the shared water supply for an entire community, were residents not informed until bulldozers were ready to move dirt?

"Transparency means the full picture, not a partial one," Cahill said. "When a project threatens our water supply for generations, we deserve to know what happened in 2022, 2023, and 2024."

Save Cedar Creek is demanding that the Town release complete documentation of all interactions with the Gauthiers dating back to the first inquiry. The group is requesting audio or video recordings of the 2022 meeting, arguing that minutes alone do not capture the substance or tone of what was discussed.

They want a full timeline showing when the applicants first approached the town, which officials were involved, what guidance was provided, and why earlier public concerns were never addressed or disclosed.

The lack of transparency has damaged trust in the process.

Many residents left the November 5th hearing believing the Town Board had limited authority to stop the project, that town engineers were working on behalf of the petitioners rather than the public, and that the hearing itself was a formality designed to check procedural boxes rather than genuinely consider community input.

"When you find out something's been happening for three years that you only learned about three weeks ago, you start asking what else you don't know," said one resident who testified at the hearing.

The revelation has intensified opposition to the project.

Save Cedar Creek's Facebook page, launched just days after the hearing, has now reached over 500,000 people. The group has connected with Senator Jodi Habush Sinykin's office, contacts in the Governor's office, and environmental advocates to how residents of Wisconsin can contact and share their concerns with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

So far, they have only received boiler plate responses.

The next Town Board meeting will be held in a larger venue to accommodate public attendance. The date has not been announced. But when it happens, residents plan to arrive with questions that go beyond the lake itself.

They want to know what their town government has been doing when no one was watching.

"This isn't just about water anymore," Cahill said. "It's about whether our local government

works for us or for whoever shows up with a lawyer and a survey map."

Citizens of Cedarburg

Save Cedar Creek LLC

+1 414-467-4626

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