

SCW autonomous car pilot hits dead end

Board votes 6-1 against

By Jennifer Jimenez
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The potential of a autonomous vehicle pilot program in Sun City West has come to a screeching halt.

The pilot program was presented to the governing board Dec. 4 with a presentation from Chris Barker of CBS Transportation and was requested to be brought to a yay or nay vote during the Dec. 17 meeting.

Recreation Centers of Sun

City West governing board director Sharon Hettick made a motion for the governing board to approve a six-month Sun City West autonomous vehicle pilot study, including the construction of a solar electric station. She explained the project is subject to other contingencies, including if it is not completely paid for, it will not happen. Adding there will be no expenditures by the rec center officials to cover the \$800,000, which is why the project has a projected total cost between \$1.3 and

\$1.5 million.

Board director Jim Young said he is uncomfortable with the program's structure taking up what he referred to as the last space for anything and said he had more questions than answers.

Board director Sue Fitzsimons admitted it is a little scary to step into a program such as this, but it is a way for association officials to move ahead.

Recreation Center of Sun City West General Manager Bill Schwind gave an in-

» See Vehicle on page 11

The Independent, pg 3

1/13/21 del let no 4

Vehicle

» From page 4

depth review of the potential costs and liabilities of the solar electric car plan and shared the results of the 2013 Sun City West Transit Study insights. He explained for the past 1.5 years, the association staff have been attending meetings and taking part in the process. But a

big question remains and according to governing board President George Kuchtyak it is not something he thinks is best for the association.

"We are a private association and when we accept public money does that then allow public access to anything and everything we have? I don't know," he explained. "The second question is would this situation succumb future boards to

an expense. We can't do that as it is against our bylaws. I don't have a vote and can only express my opinion and that is to look out for the best interest of the association."

Additionally, Ms. Hettick expressed her displeasure with the results of the 2020 transit study not being brought forward. Mr. Schwind said staff was notified of this item with limited time to put something

together. Additionally, Mr. Kuchtyak said there was a place for the topic in the mid-year meeting Wednesday, Jan. 13, but it was brought to him to add to the Dec. 17 agenda.

Ms. Hettick left the meeting prior to the vote, but the vote fell 6-1 with only Roberta Davidson voting in favor.

The next governing board meeting is scheduled 9 a.m., Thursday, Jan. 21.