



Cass County County Administrator

YOU ARE INVITED!

**RE: CASS COUNTY 1899 HISTORIC COURTHOUSE:
RE-IMAGINED!**

Dear Friend,

*District 1
Commissioner
Robert Wagel*

*District 2
Commissioner
Annie Fie*

*District 3
Commissioner
Dwight Dyes*

*District 4
Commissioner
Roseann Marchetti*

*District 5
Commissioner
Robert Ziliak*

*District 6
Commissioner
Bernie Williamson*

*District 7
Commissioner
E. Clark Cobb*

*County Administrator
Karen L. Folks*

Approximately three years ago, three Cass County Commissioners decided it was time to begin engaging the community around re-imagining the 1899 historic courthouse, whose iconic structure in downtown Cassopolis has served as the signature landmark for this Cass County seat of government. The plan for this complex project involving a government owned building was to first determine, through a variety of engagement activities, whether the Cass County community had a desire to save the structure with a repurposed use or demolish it. Almost 90% of the citizens and stakeholders, that wished to be heard, asked that the structure remain.

The second step in the plan required exercising the Board of Commissioners duties pursuant to MCL 46.7 to undertake certain necessary repairs of the historic courthouse to ensure that it remain a viable structure until the final use outcome in this courthouse project is appropriately identified and actualized pursuant to using a fiscally sound and responsible funding mechanism that will best serve the County.

While much has been accomplished, it is time to take the critical next step, which is determining funding sources and mechanisms that will allow for the realistic highest and best use for the space, preservation of certain iconic elements of the structure, all within a fiscal framework that does not have a negative financial burden on the County's general fund or the taxpayers of Cass County. So, what does that look like? Over the course of the next 6 to 10 months, we will take the time and invest the effort to learn about the various funding mechanisms, experts and other financial resources available to Cass County to assist with this very special economic development project.

[OVER]

As we launch this educational exploration into funding mechanisms we invite you to come to two Town Hall meetings that have already been scheduled for this purpose. Each of these Town Halls will be held at the Road Commission, beginning at 4pm. Please mark your calendar as follows:

October 25, 2016	Mr. Corey Leon with NDC
December 6, 2016	Mr. Joseph Whitsett with TWG
January 24, 2017	Mr. Mike Kirk, Preservation Architect Ms. Amanda Reintjes with Michigan Historic Preservation Network
February 28, 2017	INSITE Capital, a Consulting Company experienced in Preservation projects
March & April {TBD} , 2017	** Anticipate one or more additional Presentations by appropriate experts

The structure of these Town Halls will be an educational presentation provided by professionals with expertise in the field, followed by a question and answer segment. The presentations will generally include what the company or organization does, examples of successful projects, identification of the funding mechanism(s) used, how the funding mechanism works, average timelines, highest and best use, and to what extent the County's "must-haves" list can be incorporated into final outcomes.

Join us for these educational Town Halls on available funding mechanisms to assist in moving this Historic Courthouse: Re-imagined Project closer to our collective goals.

Very Truly Yours,

Karen L. Folks
Cass County Administrator