

Woodridge property stalemate continues

By Sarah Stone

Staff writer

Both Downers Grove Community High School District 99 officials and Woodridge residents remained relatively mum on the controversial land sale issue at the July 18 School Board meeting.

Reiterating a statement made in June, School Board members said they could not comment on the proposed sale of 45 acres of district-owned land in the heart of Woodridge while an eminent domain lawsuit is pending. And a handful of Woodridge residents had only few comments to make in the time allotted to them.

Phil Labak, a Woodridge resident and volunteer for the group Keep Green Spaces Green, which opposes the sale of the property to developers, was among the four Woodridge residents who spoke. Labak again called for the district to enter into mediated negotiations with the Woodridge Village Board and the Woodridge Park District, which filed the lawsuit seeking to gain control of the parcel this spring.

Other residents echoed Labak's comments, saying only the lawyers were profiting from the legal battle.

In regard to funding the district would receive from the land sale, board member Craig Greenwood suggested the district start up a new committee to examine the capital improvement needs.

"When you set up a committee like this, my interpretation would be that it would make a list of capital improvement projects and determine the costs of these improvements," he said.

He said community members chosen to sit on the committee would have experience within the district and construction projects. Bruce Beckman and Barbara Wheeler, who have both served on the School Board, have agreed to co-chair the committee, Greenwood said.

The board plans to discuss the new panel at its next meeting, set for 7:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 15. According to School Board President Julia Beckman, the August meeting will most likely be moved to the Downers Grove South High School auditorium.