

# Woodridge subdivision residents seek sound wall

By Don Grigas

Staff writer

Tollway authority says  
it won't fund barrier

Officials with the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority said if a sound wall is ever constructed on the north side of Interstate 55 east of the North-South Tollway interchange near Vicente Homes, it will not be funded with toll authority dollars.

"We'll work with anyone and any community, and we want to be part of the solution. But the toll authority has no intention of funding any portion of a noise barrier or sound wall there," Joelle McGinnis, press secretary for the authority, said this week.

More than 40 residents from the Vicente Homes area attended the June 29 Woodridge Village Board meeting, during which several residents asked village officials to participate in a renewed effort to get a sound wall constructed just south of the subdivision on the north side of I-55.

One resident, Gerry Dominic, 9131 Somerset Lane, said a June 12 meeting at toll authority headquarters in Downers Grove resulted in a pledge from Rocco Zuccherro, deputy director for the authority, to re-examine the issue.

"During the (June 12) meeting, everyone agreed our area was eligible for a sound abatement wall. But Rocco did say the toll authority wouldn't be at the table alone and we needed to get others involved," Dominic said.

Attending the June 12 meeting were Zuccherro, Dominic, Woodridge Public Works Director Phil Modaff and Woodridge Trustee Robert Brandt.

Dominic called for the other parties to participate in funding a sound wall, including Gallagher & Henry home builders -- developers of Vicente Homes -- the Illinois Department of Transportation and the village.

Over the last two years the village has met with toll authority officials to discuss the possibility of building a sound wall there.

"The subdivision in question was platted after April 1999 and is not eligible for a sound wall," McGinnis said.

Dominic confirmed that most of the 79 homes in the Vicente Homes subdivision were platted after April 1999, when toll authority officials made plans public that the authority intended to extend I-355 south to New Lenox and Interstate 80.

But, McGinnis said, some of the homes meet the toll authority requirement.

Dominic also said during the June 12 meeting that Zuccherro said the authority would spend \$50,000 on a new study to determine the location of a proposed sound wall.

McGinnis said that figure was inflated, and added "the authority will provide an assessment of the best possible location, should a wall be constructed."

If a wall is built on the toll authority's right of way, it would require approval by the toll authority. If a wall is built on private property, it does not require authority approval, although the authority would provide recommendations on engineering and materials of walls, McGinnis said.

"We encourage developers who are building along the tollway to speak with us to develop standards for walls," McGinnis said.

One resident, Patrick Murray, 1185 Hillcrest Lane, said the village should re-enter the fray.

"We haven't pushed the toll authority hard enough. ... We don't want this project to drop off the radar," Murray said.

"It has been the village's position in the past not to fund (a sound wall)," Modaff said. "We told them (residents) their area does not meet the toll authority's requirements, and residents there would have to share the cost if one was to be built."

Murray said perhaps a new sound wall could be built for less than \$1 million.

Dominic said residents in Vicente Homes "could consider some kind of collective action" against Gallagher & Henry to force the builder to contribute to a new sound wall.

Gallagher & Henry could not be reached for comment.

Another meeting between toll authority representatives, Woodridge officials and residents could take place in October, McGinnis and Dominic said.