

One vote could topple sound wall

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WOODRIDGE, IL -

About 50 home owners who live north of Interstate 55 between Lemont Road and Woodward Avenue now hold the key to getting a sound wall installed, following the village of Woodridge's decision to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois Toll Highway Authority.

The resolution, approved by a vote of 6-0 during an Aug. 16 board meeting, clears the way to fund the \$2.4 million project with a cost-sharing program split among 46 homeowners in an proposed special service area, the village, a residential developer, the Tollway Authority and federal authorities.

The cost to each of the 46 homeowners is expected to be about \$6,800, or about \$340 per year for 20 years.

However, to proceed residents in the special service area must first sign off on a pair of documents: one authorizing the establishment of the SSA, and one a "legal release" relieving the village of liability, according to Chris Bethel, director of public works.

A majority of the 46 homeowners must sign the document establishing the SSA, but 100 percent must sign the release in order for the deal to move forward.

All documents were sent to residents Aug. 13, and the deadline to return the signed documents is Monday, Sept. 10, Bethel said.

According to the agreement with the Tollway Authority, the Authority will provide \$910,000 for the approximately 17-foot-high sound wall.

Other contributions would be \$316,000 from the village, \$316,000 from homeowners in the SSA, \$400,000 from a federal grant and \$467,000 from Farmingdale Development Co.

In the event entities other than the Tollway Authority default on their contributions, the village would be responsible for making up their shares.

The Tollway Authority would be responsible for any costs over the projected \$2.4 million cost of the project.

Once the village procures the required documentation from the residents in the SSA, it will submit them to the Tollway Authority, which then would begin the design and bid process with its own contractors.

Following an Aug. 2 workshop to discuss the proposal, resident Geri Dominic said obtaining a majority of homeowners willing to subsidize the plan and create a special service area would likely occur, but getting 100 percent signatures on a release could be difficult.

"I have ongoing litigation with the developer, so I cannot guarantee I can sign anything like that without my legal counsel's approval, although I am for the plan. I am not sure if they will get 46 of 46 signatures. All it takes is one to say no and the plan is dead," Dominic said.

During the workshop village officials said all 46 must sign the release or else the sound wall project is defunct.

"The plan we have before us is the (only) one we have before us. ... There is no other plan," said Mayor William Murphy, in response to residents asking if alterations could be made to it.

The village would issue bonds to pay for the construction of the wall, and residents in the SSA would pay off their share of the bonds over 20 years.

Some residents have voiced support for the plan, but questioned the plan's breakdown of contributions.