New Lenox trustees, builders debate impact fees

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NEW LENOX -- School, park and library districts will benefit, but developers are balking.

Village officials want to collect impact fees from developers when a building permit is issued rather than upfront when the plan is approved. This could have some builders paying more because fees increase at least 5 percent annually.

One of the first developments subject to this proposal is Ashton Estates, which the board discussed recently.

Andrew Dystrup, attorney for the developer, said this "opens up a developer's pocketbook.

"We don't know what our expenses will be. Today, developments are not going like they used to," he said.

Trustee Ray Tuminello later said he was "frustrated" that developments would get approved but not get built out for several years.

"If you're building in 2007, you should pay 2007 fees," he said. "Every year it costs more to educate kids. No taxing body should be shortchanged."

Since building standards and home styles also change over the years, expiration dates will be included in annexation agreements to ensure timely completion of projects, he said.

The dates for Ashton Estates have yet to be determined.

Other issues such as road improvements and utility extensions, also have to be addressed. The 90-acre site has 158 single family lots on Spencer Road, between Laraway and Delaney Roads, with an average lot size of 13,000 square feet.

A landscaped berm and bike trail are proposed to buffer homes from Spencer Road.

Trustees also discussed plans for a small commercial development on Lincoln Highway between Tonell and Walona Avenues.

Dystrup, who also represented this developer, said they do not yet know how much right-of-way will be needed for Lincoln Highway. If they lose 10 feet of land, it could reduce the commercial building space from 10,000 to 7,000 square feet.

Trustee Annette Bowden questioned why the developer was proceeding if he didn't have all the answers.