

By Jeanne Millsap

Developers propose stimulus package for buyers of new homes

Briscoe asks Channahon to join developers by rebating \$5,000

CHANNAHON – Monday evening’s Channahon Village Board meeting began with a discussion of a local economic stimulus package some developers are asking the village board to consider.

Developer Gene Briscoe told trustees he represented developers, builders, and tradesmen in the community who want to put workers back to work and boost Channahon’s economy by making financial considerations more attractive to new home buyers.

The group was asking the village to consider rebating \$5,000 to each new home buyer, with developers matching the rebate. The stimulus plan could have a limit, he said, of perhaps 300 homes or until it would expire in December 2010.

Briscoe said all the local taxing bodies, such as schools, the fire district, and the library, should be asked to participate in the stimulus program, giving up impact fees normally received when a new building permit is issued.

Briscoe suggested establishing an advertising fund, too, to spread the word about what a nice community Channahon is.

“We certainly don’t have the magic bullet,” he said of the stimulus package, “but we can’t wait for the feds to help us out . . . We have to start it at the grassroots level.”

When Briscoe told the board he thought the stimulus package would also benefit the school districts, trustee Judie Nash said she didn’t buy that argument.

After doing some calculations, Nash said that, if the stimulus package were put into place for the maximum 300 houses, it would cost the village more than \$1.5 million.

Trustee Scott McMillin asked if the village could guarantee the rebate money would stay in Channahon to directly benefit Channahon’s economy.

That could not be guaranteed, Village Administrator Jamie Bowden replied.

Trustee Scott Slocum asked Briscoe why developers couldn’t build a house that would sell for less than \$400,000 to spur more buyers, and Briscoe said that, with all the costs put in to a housing development, that would be difficult.

McMillin and Trustee Sam Greco said they needed much more information before they would consider the proposal.

Village President Joe Cook said that, perhaps, the automatic impact fee escalator that raises the amount of fees each year could be adjusted during these difficult times. Cook also said staff would organize a committee of trustees, school superintendents, businessmen, and others in the community to discuss the possibility of whether implementing such an economic stimulus plan for residential home builders would benefit the community.

The Channahon Village Board Monday also gave oaths of office to those who were recently elected or re-elected to office. Village Clerk Janet “Missy” Schumacher took the first oath, then administered the next three herself.

Trustees Greco and Nash were sworn in, as was new board member Jerry Papesh. After the meeting, Papesh said he decided to run for a position on the board to give something back to the community.

A semi-retired developer, Papesh has a long history in Channahon. He said his firm engineered the first

village water tower and developed The Highlands.

Papesh took the seat of resigning trustee Gary Davidson, who ran successfully for the Channahon Township Board in April. Davidson said his goodbyes to the board and staff and was thanked for his four years of service and wished well by Cook, who gave him a plaque of appreciation on behalf of the board. The board this week also:

- Authorized the sale at auction of two police vehicles and one vehicle used by the Public Works Department.
- Awarded a three-year contract for sewage sludge removal to Synagro for .064 cents per gallon.
- Reminded members that the next village board meeting has been changed to Wednesday, May 13, at 6 p. m.

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