

SHERIDAN: Library requests development fee increase

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Sheridan's Robert W. Rowe Public Library District wants 75 percent more income from residential development fees. The district has a developmental agreement with the village. Whenever a new residential development is built, the library receives \$100 per residential unit. But after looking at its budget, the board now is requesting additional financial help that will enable future capital improvements.

Library Board President Brenda Brown appeared before the Village Board Monday to ask members to "consider a resolution that would increase the library's revenue amount from \$100 to \$175."

Records show that in 1994, Sheridan had a population of about 2,000. The estimated 10-year population change then was minimal because the rural population was declining. That estimate has been proven wrong.

In 13 years, population has risen to 2,476 -- almost a 24 percent increase. In a referendum, Milton Pope, the community unit school district in Miller Township, was voted into the library system and some residents living in Millington and Newark also use the library.

"Depending on where residents live, anyone not in the district pays a nonresident fee," Brown told the board. "It's the same procedure other libraries use for nonresidents."

In 1994, the library was designed for 1.85 square feet of space per person. Currently, the library is using 1.5 square feet of space per person. When contemporary libraries are built, the standard is 3.8 square feet per person, Brown said.

"We are not saying we want to add on to our building," Library Board Trustee John Maurer told the board. "We're just thinking ahead to some capital improvements we need to make that right now don't have the money for."

In 1994, the library depended on donations to cover the cost of capital improvements while property taxes covered normal operating costs.

Today, library statistics show donations are insufficient for any capital improvements and library property tax rates have not increased. Growth in the district's increased equalized assessed valuation coming from the residential sector has forced the library to use any increased property tax revenues for operating expenses.

The district now provides library services to residents of new homes before receiving property tax revenues from those lots.

"Such unrealized property tax revenue equals an approximate amount of \$175 per residence," the resolution states.

states.

The resolution notes the library is operating at capacity level and does not have the financial ability to make needed capital improvements; there is no capital improvement fund that would allow the library to increase its capacity.

The library district has compared other nearby library districts to its financial situation. Somonauk serves 9,328 residents at a cost of \$536.02 per person. Yorkville, with a library service area population of 11,204, has a cost of \$714.03 per person. Plano's library population of 7,716 per person cost is \$660.96.

Development fees from other library districts range from 200 to 400 percent more than the current \$100 per new residential lot Sheridan's library currently receives.

"We think we are being reserved with our request of \$175 per new resident," Brown said.

Village President George Niles asked that the library board give the village time to consider all the information "and give you an answer at our next board meeting."

The public is invited to attend the next village board meeting at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10.

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Posted by **Reader** at 12:22PM on Tuesday, 11/13/07

What part of that population are the 'residents' at the correctional center? Is this then an accurate figure of space per person of who has access?

The library is very nice.

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