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Flossmoor sinks motion to allow change for above-ground pools

BY BILL JONES

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Flossmoor will not be proceeding with a proposal from some residents to change an existing ordinance that prohibits above-ground pools.

Trustee Gary Daggett made a motion Monday, May 2, to move forward an amendment that would have allowed for above-ground pools, but it died on the floor with no second from another member of the Flossmoor Village Board. The motion came after roughly two months of public comment on the proposal at village board meetings, prompted by a petition that had grown to 212 signatures in favor of above-ground pools.

“It is my opinion that this request being made now and two times before is a reasonable request and has been brought to us in a proper and respectful manner,” Daggett said. “We owe it to those who desire this change to reasonably resolve for the issues that above-ground pools bring for other residents, which primarily are aesthetics — and are very valid points. I am not sure we can come up with an ordinance that does address adequately the concerns of those opposed to the ordinance of allowing above-ground pools, and if we cannot, I would not support it. But I do think we should try.”

Residents were given time to comment before the vote. Danielle Such said she moved to Flossmoor two-and-a-half years ago, aware of the restriction but hopeful that it might change with time. Such said she thinks the existing policy may be restrictive to new families moving to Flossmoor.

“Our family would at least like to have the option to enjoy this in the summertime,” Such said.

Margaret Hagerman, of Flossmoor, also voiced support for above ground pools. She said she understands aesthetic concerns but cannot see most people's backyards from the street when out walking in the community. She added that the pools would have to be fenced and did not think the village should “micromanage” the small piece of land where their neighbors live.

Jenny Curtis, the Flossmoor resident who started this push by presenting the

original petition to the village board, reiterated that she thinks families should be able to enjoy their homes to the fullest extent, especially as travel prices skyrocket and COVID-19 numbers rise.

Scott Bugner, the village's building and zoning administrator, presented the board with a draft of possible regulations, based on those of several local municipalities, should trustees have an interest in moving forward with the amendment.

But during a final round of discussion May 2, most board members said they — and many residents with whom they spoke — were opposed to the idea.

Mayor Michelle Nelson kicked off the board discussion by noting there are some established norms in any community. In the case of Flossmoor, some of those norms help to retain a charm, aesthetics and uniqueness, as well as safety.

“Beauty includes the openness of the village, and fewer fences and structures,” Nelson said. “Our beauty is what makes Flossmoor the gem of the South Suburbs.”

Trustee James Mitros said he thought above-ground pools would encroach upon the enjoyment of neighbors, and the area has a park district that has a pool available for those interested in that. He said people who shared their opinions with him were 10-1 opposed to the idea. He also had concerns about how above-ground pools would be managed by the village.

“The first rule of governance is you don't make rules you can't enforce,” Mitros said. “We can't enforce and maintain these.”

Trustee Brian Driscoll said he received roughly the same ratio of responses against above-ground pools. And Trustee Rosalind Henderson Mustafa noted she supports the openness of the community that residents “overwhelmingly” expressed their desire to maintain when talking to her.

Trustee George Lofton noted a closer-to-even ratio of people for and against above-ground pools when he spoke to residents. Trustee Joni Bradley-Scott said she does not want to restrict any family's enjoyment of their home, but it would be tough on village resources to manage pool requests. She ultimately said she could not support the change.

Food drive June 11 at St. Joe's

BY CHRONICLE STAFF

Volunteers are gearing up for the June 11 quarterly food drive from 9 to 11 a.m. at St. Joseph's parish parking

lot, 17851 Dixie Highway in Homewood. Donations of nonperishable foods and cash will benefit the South Suburbs Catholic Charities site in Park Forest.