

11/04/08 06:51 AM

Hearing planned on downsizing

By Karen Robinson NEWS STAFF REPORTER

East Aurora is tip-toeing into the hot political arena of whether to downsize its seven-member Village Board to five trustees.

With a close eye on what's playing out in West Seneca's battle over whether to shrink from a five-member board to three elected representatives, East Aurora thinks the time may be ripe to officially ask for its own community input on downsizing.

When regionalism advocate Kevin P. Gaughan first pitched government downsizing to local municipalities several months ago, some East Aurora trustees were adamantly opposed to the idea, while others reserved judgment. At best, it received a lukewarm reception.

Nothing transpired on that front until Monday night, when Mayor Clark W. Crook raised the issue during a board work session and said it's time to gauge the community's pulse on the matter and consider holding a referendum on it.

"In lieu of this being a West Seneca circus, let's make this a referendum item in our village," Crook said. "Let the village decide. Is there an appetite to let the community decide?"

There was a noticeable pause with little comment among the board, until Trustee Peter Mercurio — who has resisted Gaughan's suggestions in the past — instead suggested that board members agree to lower their village salaries to \$3,000, from \$5,000, to save money, yet retain all the trustees the village now has.

Trustee Kevin Biggs echoed his comments.

Mercurio referenced West Seneca's dilemma and the plan by some to scale that Town Board to three representatives.

"Three is ridiculous. What if someone is sick?" Mercurio said. "Why not go down to one, and make it the king of West Seneca?"

"I think it's an issue of the number of candidates," Crook said, still pushing for a public hearing.

Buffalo.com:

Social Networking 101

Nov. 13th @ 6:30pm

The Buffalo News building



Click here for more info!

Others noted that controversies, such as mixed opinion on the new outdoor ice rink and other projects in East Aurora, often drive more people to run for office.

The Village Board agreed to hold a hearing on the issue but was mum about selecting a date.

Last week, the Appellate Division of State Supreme Court overturned an earlier ruling about the petition for a referendum that would have shrunk West Seneca's Town Board from five members to three.

krobinson@buffnews.com

Find this article at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/southernsuburbs/story/483587.html>



[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.