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WILLIAMSVILLE

Trustees mull downsizing board by 2 members

Several have expressed reservations about plan

By Sandra Tan NEWS STAFF REPORTER

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Williamsville trustees are looking into a resolution that would downsize the Village Board by two members.

Trustee Jeffrey Kingsley sponsored the resolution, which was discussed by the board at its last meeting. It would allow residents to vote on a proposition to reduce the number of Village Board seats by two.

Mayor Mary Lowther said some trustees expressed reservations about the proposal and wondered whether it was legal for the board to place any proposition on the ballot. Items for referendum are usually sparked by citizen petitions in Williamsville, she said.

Kingsley sponsored the resolution after the board heard from regionalism advocate Kevin Gaughan, who spoke to trustees at a January work session.

Gaughan is now roughly halfway through his campaign tour to get each of Erie County's 45 local governments to downsize their boards by two members.

Since he began making his public presentations in November, he has met with a mix of reactions from elected officials, ranging from polite to hostile.

While several municipalities have subsequently had board members introduce resolutions to downsize their numbers, so far, only the seven-member Lancaster Village Board is actively moving forward with plans to cut its elected board seats.

Kingsley's resolution would ask voters to decide no later than the July 2009 village election whether the board should reduce its numbers from five to three.

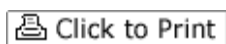
The resolution was tabled last Monday to give the village attorney time to research whether the resolution could legally be put forth by the board for referendum, Lowther said. The resolution will be discussed further at the board's next meeting next Monday.

If the resolution were ultimately adopted by the board and passed by the public, Williamsville would become the only village in Erie County with a governing board of just three members.

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