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End of Village of Hamburg urged

By Elmer Ploetz NEWS STAFF REPORTER

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Kevin Gaughan changed his message Monday.

Gaughan, who has been trying to stop at a public meeting in every one of Erie County's 45 municipalities, has gotten a lot of mileage out of his tour calling for boards to reduce their numbers of members.

But Monday night in Hamburg, he didn't just ask the Village Board to reduce its numbers, he called for its members to consider dissolving their village as well as considering reducing the board from five members to three.

The change in tactics comes in the wake of support for doing just that in North Collins, where leaders are inclined to dissolve the village into the town of the same name.

"In my mind, the fact that one village now has said yes to this change, that sort of changes the equation here," Gaughan said. "The question is no longer 'should we reform?' It's 'what reform should we choose?'"

In fact, Gaughan brought along sample resolutions for both options for the board. He asked for the village to allow referendums on them.

"Let the citizens decide," he said.

Gaughan, who said he has now visited 32 municipalities, received a neutral welcome. Trustee Michael Cerrone said dissolution is something that could be discussed in the coming months, but he dismissed reducing board size as a meaningless gesture.

He said board members are paid \$5,000 a year and receive no health insurance or retirement, so the financial savings would be minimal while costing the board a diversity of backgrounds and opinions.

Dissolution, Cerrone said, could have benefits but would come at a cost. He said the village has pursued a "smart growth" zoning code, walkable communities and rebuilding the Route 62 corridors into "a national model for how to do a Main Street."



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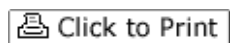
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