



Gurnee schools reach compromise on fees

Developer will pay about \$100,000 less than Gurnee-area districts wanted

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Two Gurnee-area school districts and a residential developer have reached an agreement regarding impact fees.

For several weeks, Woodland Elementary District 50 and Warren Township High School District 121 have been at odds with developers of Wanish Park, a proposed condominium and townhouse project for residents 50 and older.

The school districts wanted the developer to pay impact fees -- money often paid to schools and park districts to help offset the cost of services new residents will need.

However, Wanish Park officials said because the homes are designed for older people, they won't be a burden on the schools.

Both sides met Friday and reportedly agreed on a \$55,000 impact fee to be split between the two districts.

The amount is about \$100,000 less than the districts originally wanted, but both sides say they are happy with the settlement.

"We are actually very pleased with the outcome of the agreement," said District 50 Superintendent Joy Swoboda. "With the \$55,000 split, both districts will receive more than what they would have under county regulations."

Wanish Park's Bob Taylor said while his group didn't want to look like "big bad developers who didn't want to help children," they also didn't feel the fees were fair.

"In our eyes, this is a win/win for both the school districts and the development," Taylor said. "They get the security they are looking for and we get a break off the fees, which we were looking for."

Under terms of the agreement, if children are generated from the development, Taylor will pay a full impact fee in addition to the \$55,000. District officials estimate the cost to educate a child at \$9,647 to \$10,000.

Another change is the \$55,000 will be paid to the school districts in full as soon as construction begins. Typically, payments are made in installments and not completed until after occupancy.

Taylor said the agreement is a no-lose deal for Woodland and Warren.

"This is designed to be an active adult community," he said. "That is one of the attractive things about moving in."

The Wanish Park development is planned for southwest of Gages Lake and Hunt Club roads in unincorporated Lake County.

The development would cover almost 22 acres within the boundaries of districts 50 and 121.

The proposal still needs Lake County Board approval.

If built, Wanish Park will have 97 two-bedroom homes that must be owned by people 50 years old or older who don't have children under the age of 18 living with them.