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# E. Aurora moving on plans for new firehouse

By **Karen Robinson**

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East Aurora village officials took the first steps this week to begin planning for a new firehouse.

The preferred site is on Whaley Avenue, just off Main Street, in the same vicinity that had been considered for a joint government facility before that project fizzled two weeks ago.

The village and the Fire Department have not locked in a location, but are in negotiations for the 3.4-acre site, part of which is owned by DeTora LLC, whose president is Paul J. Bandrowski. Two homeowners also own some of the land.

While the parameters of the site are not identical to the one considered for the joint facility, there are close parallels. If a firehouse were to be built on that section of Whaley, it would be partly on a brownfield site and include the area of the former Jackson Bowling Lanes and an old Agway operation.

Village officials insist that even with a new 40,000-square-foot firehouse there, it could still allow for a library expansion to occur in the future if Whaley and Paine streets were realigned and the library were able to expand just to the east of its existing building.

Mayor Allan A. Kasprzak also championed the overall concept because it could lead to senior citizens housing in the current fire station on Oakwood Avenue that could be dovetailed with the Senior Citizens Center that's adjacent to it.

After town leaders killed the joint facility plan Sept. 13 by refusing to let it go to a referendum, village and fire officials did not waste time in pursuing the site for a new firehouse.

"A lot of people have said we're moving rapidly, but this fire hall project has been languishing for almost eight years," Kasprzak said Monday when the Village Board formally announced the project and allocated \$400,000 to create a reserve fund to jump-start plans for a new fire station.

"When the town didn't allow for the shared municipal services referendum, that freed up the land at Main Street and Whaley," Kasprzak said.

"It takes it out of 'park' and puts it in 'drive,'" Trustee Ernest F. Scheer said of Monday's actions. "This is really the best site. These guys have been waiting for eight years, and we need to move it along. I don't want it to get stalled and get caught in an eddy, and it goes nowhere."

The village also hired Bergmann Associates for \$67,420 to design a new seven-bay fire station that would replace the current 1954 building that fire officials say is deteriorating and is no longer adequate to store to-day's firefighting equipment.

"We think it would be a real asset to this community," said Craig L. Thrasher, the Fire Department's information officer.

Not every official is sold on the proposal, however.

"I am not convinced that the corner of Main and Whaley is

The Pumpkin Patch Six-Acre Corn Maze Di's Pies & Bake Shoppe Corn Cannon the best location," Trustee Randy West said, suggesting Olean Road instead.

According to firefighters, that area of Olean Road is prone to flooding and would be problematic.

Fire Chief Roger LeBlanc, who said he is pleased with Monday's action, said, "The question I've found is that everyone wants a new fire hall, but not in their backyard."

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