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School, community facility eyed at White Lake, interest being shown

An artist rendition of proposed White Lake High School addition.

May 26, 2011

A grass roots campaign to construct a new gymnasium and community recreation center is quietly growing in the White Lake school district.

At a special meeting this week, the board heard from representatives of a community committee seeking to construct major improvements to the school that remains the village hub.

The plan, prepared with assistance from engineer Doc Smith of EDS Builders, Inc, carries an overall price tag of \$3.58 million.

According to District Administrator Bill Fisher, the plan was developed by the community, based on an overall school board goal of evaluating building needs and developing a plan by the end of the 2010-11 school year.

"The board set the goal but the solution came from the community," Fisher stressed.

The committee began meeting last fall and, after a few walk-throughs, "it didn't take long to focus on the gymnasium, bathroom and locker room areas," Fisher said, noting the "glaring deficiencies" in those areas.

At the same time, the group also wanted to increase facilities available to the general public, a difficult endeavor with the present, limited gymnasium.

"They felt it was important to have something for the community and not just White Lake students," Fisher said. "They are hoping that this will be something that will be used by the entire community."

The plan breakdown includes a new gymnasium and locker rooms, \$1.78 million, the new recreation center, \$1.471 million, remodeling existing locker room spaces, \$146,000; and parking, playground and sidewalk improvements, \$180,000.

It would include a central recreational center, similar to a commons, the exercise room that could be used as a community space, men's and women's locker rooms and restrooms, team locker rooms and an expansive new gymnasium with seating for 250.

There would also be a concession area and remodeling to the existing shop areas and locker rooms.

Fisher said the venerable existing gymnasium, considered a quaint landmark by many, would remain for use by elementary classes and as a community area for dances and other activities.

The board took no action on the recommendations and will spend the next month refining the idea and working the project into an overall five-year fiscal plan.

"By the end of June, we're hoping to develop a time line and game plan to develop the recommendations," Fisher said.