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Grand Island Board of Education Audit results discussed

by Kathleen Duff

Monday evening, administrators and members of the Grand Island Board of Education heard results of the external audit of the district's fiscal health. Auditor Mary Young of the accounting firm Lumsden and McCormick reported that Grand Island schools received \$2 million less in state aid this year and can expect a continued drop over the next couple of years.

Expenses increased by \$2 million with "instructional expenses" in the form of salaries, benefits and health insurance being the most expensive lines in the school budget. Trustee Glenn Bobeck remarked that, "Overall, I think we are well-positioned, but we have been prudent." Board member and chair of the district's audit committee David Goris added, "We need to continue to be diligent."

In other news, Superintendent Robert Christmann expressed concern over lack of classroom space for the high school's ever-expanding and in-demand pre-engineering (technology) program. The program, which in its inaugural year had 50 students, now has 400 students in grades 7-12 in a space too small and ill-fitted for hands-on learning.

"We have no more space," Christmann stated. "We do not want to restrict those students. We are doing what we can but the needs have not gone away."

Christmann referred to the proposed \$47 million capital project, which was voted down by Grand Island residents this past spring. The project, Christmann said, would have, among other things, addressed the needs of the science and technology programs at the high school. He went on to say that portable classrooms continue to be an option, albeit not a good one.

Christmann told trustees that the building conditions survey results would be available at the Nov. 8 meeting of the board and that his facility committee would soon present an update. The technology classroom needs are expected to be a topic of discussion.

SEE DISCIPLINE, continued on Page 2

Grand Island Town Board

Board hears plans for Whitehaven Road sports complex

Two Island natives hoping to build an Island sports complex have asked the Grand Island Town Board Monday for a rezoning of the project's proposed site.

Gene Kozek, president and owner of Meng-Ko Development LLC, requested the rezoning of a parcel at 2356 Whitehaven Road from residential (R1A) to commercial recreation (CR) to allow for creation of the Island Sports Complex, which would include in its first phase of development an ice hockey rink, a studio ice rink (for mini hockey and figure skating), and an indoor soccer facility with a 40-foot by 80-foot turf field.

Kozek said he has spent eight years traveling in Canada and the northeast developing a proposal. The project is in the vicinity of Alvin Road near the I-190 exit at Whitehaven Road.

Sale of the property from Bob Kaiser Jr. and Don Loder Jr. to Meng-Ko is contingent on the rezoning,



Gene Kozek discusses a sports complex before the Grand Island Town Board Monday.

Kozek said. The project is estimated between \$4.5 and \$6 million for the first phase, Kozek said.

Supporter Rom Figler, on behalf of the Grand Island Soccer Club, said the "the availability of an indoor facility on Grand Island will allow the our travel teams to stay on Grand Island" for training and "allow us to

expand our current house program from a brief six to seven weeks to a year-round program and provide more soccer opportunities to the kids on Grand Island."

Kaiser, property owner, said the proposal included "a strong and well-detailed business plan, and above all this complex will serve the youth of Grand Island in providing them with a place to build upon their sports interests."

Opponents included neighborhood residents Andrea Mondich and Barbara Johnson. Mondich said her neighborhood has been "inundated" with construction, making her feel as if she lives on Niagara Falls Boulevard. She suggested the developers find another place for the project. Johnson said the country setting of Whitehaven Road is unable to handle the volume of traffic such a proposal would create.

The board will consider the project after a State Environmental Quality Review.

Families come together at old carriage house



Friends and neighbors of the Shipman family on the corner of Baseline and Fix roads built fellowship as they built an 1800s carriage house.

by Larry Austin

Bryce Shipman of Grand Island likens the construction of a carriage house on his property to an old-fashioned barn raising.

Ongoing reassembly of the carriage house, first built in 1800, mirrors its original construction, from driving pegs with wooden mallets, to building fellowship with neigh-



bor helping neighbor.

Shipman is thanking his friends and neighbors for their help in helping him construct a 26 feet by 18 feet, two-story carriage house on the back of his lot at the corner of Fix and Baseline roads. It's not just any carriage house, however, but one with 200-year-old hand-hewn chestnut timbers that he

found online a little more than a year ago. Shelly Sheehan of Dickersonville Road in the Town of Porter needed help with the house's removal from her property.

"It was covered with green masonite siding, and she wanted the siding off of it. Other than that, she said she wanted someone to take it

SEE NEIGHBORS, continued on Page 2

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