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Sidewalk plan has opponents

By Melissa Gagliardi

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A plan for a network of sidewalks in Pewee Valley has some residents crying "not in my front yard."

A committee has spent months planning for sidewalks that would create a walking loop through part of the town, saying it would contribute to public health and safety, and help provide a sense of community.

However, not everyone is sold on the idea.

"I don't want it -- it's just that simple," Central Avenue resident Ronald Hanson said.

He attended a recent meeting of the city's sidewalk committee and said the proposed sidewalk that would cut through his front yard would be better off across the street.

Hanson said there is a drop-off near his yard that's so steep "it would need a hand rail." Also, he said a water main is located on that side, and it would be "poor judgment" to put a sidewalk there.

Committee members said the sidewalks are planned on that side of the road because that is where the right of way is.

The sidewalk committee has been going door-to-door, asking residents to sign consent forms if they want the sidewalks. The city may put sidewalks on Central, Ash and Dogwood avenues and along Ky. 146 (La Grange Road).

City Councilman Stan Fitch said a survey was done a few years ago to gauge interest in the project. "The city wants these sidewalks," Fitch said.

The holdup, however, has been getting consent from residents and approval from the state Highway Department for sidewalks along Ky. 146. While the city has right of way, they still want property owners' permission. Also, the city expects to hear from the Highway Department in the next couple of months regarding grants to pay for the project.

For homeowners whose privacy might be compromised by a sidewalk, the city might offer shrubbery to buffer views into homes. Also, stop signs may be added at some intersections.

It's time for the project and what it could do for public health and safety, said Beach Craigmyle, head of the sidewalk committee.

"I for one don't want to be living in this town when somebody gets killed" on Central Avenue, he said.

Mayor Bob Rogers said the state is not interested in dealing with property rights, and the city is trying

to obtain permission from property owners, do the work and then ask the state for reimbursement.

He acknowledged that sidewalks can end up being a divisive topic.

"Sidewalks can bring a community together, but they can also tear a community apart," Rogers said.

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