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Responding to protests, trustees approve returning power to two streetlights

Responding to complaints of dangerously dark streets since 32 streetlights were removed last spring as a cost-saving measure, the Belgium Village Board decided to turn two lights on again — one on West Lane and the other on Lindale Street.

If the board follows its Public Safety Committee recommendation, four more lights will also brighten the village.

Last week, the committee recommended having We Energies re-install streetlights on Michael Street, Park Street, East Lane and Antoine Drive.

The board is expected to make a decision Monday, Feb. 14.

Replacing those lights has been controversial because it will be expensive. New poles must be installed for those four lights.

The cost will range from $1,500 to $2,500 per streetlight, depending on whether underground wiring is required, Public Works Director Dan Birenbaum said.

It will cost $300 each to replace streetlights on West Lane and Lindale Street because the poles were left standing. Only the lamp fixtures have to be reinstalled by the utility.

In addition to paying to have the lights reinstalled, the village will pay $20 to $25 in monthly rental fees per streetlight, depending on the wattage, Birenbaum said.

Three streetlights were previously turned back on, leaving 23 lights still dark.

No one has requested those lights be reinstalled, Birenbaum said.

“This should take care of everyone who requested the lights be reinstalled,” he said.

Residents who attended the meeting were pleased with the committee’s recommendation.

In September, 23 residents submitted a petition requesting lights be reinstalled in front of their properties for safety reasons and crime prevention.

The streetlights could be replaced with village-owned decorative lights like those on the west end of Park Street, Birenbaum said. They wouldn’t match the lights at the corners, but there wouldn’t be monthly rental fees.

When the 32 streetlights were removed, lights were kept at intersections, but those in the middle of blocks were removed. Two on Main Street and one on Elm Street were placed in May.

But the area in the 400 block of Park Street, where Stepping Stones Children's Center is located, remains dark.