

Village says sidewalk grinding doesn't need assessments

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For about a half dozen years, the Village of Saukville has contracted with a company to grind down lifted sidewalk blocks that pose tripping hazards rather than replacing them.

The simple process saves the village money, and the Public Works Committee agreed last week that those savings should be shared with taxpayers.

Although the village makes special assessments to property owners when sidewalks are replaced, the committee agreed with staff that the cutting of slabs be treated differently.

"It is really not a replacement, it is a maintenance issue," Public Works Director Roy Wilhelm said.

"For some of these properties, we will be coming back in a year or two and replacing the slab, especially in cases where the slab is being lifted by tree roots, but it does buy us some time. We are not eliminating the problem, just the hazard."

Wilhelm said the grinding process allows as many as 40 sidewalk slabs to be adjusted for the village's \$1,500 sidewalk maintenance budget.

Dropping the grinding work from the special assessment policy allows the village to avoid going through the significant expense to collect \$50 or \$60 from a property owner, he said.

Trustees on the committee said the decision not to issue assessments for sidewalk grinding was more of a clarification of the village's procedures and requires no specific policy action.