

LA GRANGE, COUNTRYSIDE

Fatal accident spurs community meeting

By Joe Sinopoli
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State investigators still are gathering evidence to determine what led to the death of Countryside resident Cari Cook after she was struck by a car as she crossed four lanes of 47th Street in La Grange with her two young children May 19.

The Illinois State Police Accident Reconstruction Team and the Cook County state's attorney's office are assisting with the investigation. No charges have been filed to date.

A public meeting was held Tuesday at Seventh Avenue School in La Grange to discuss safety issues regarding 47th Street, which is under state jurisdiction. La Grange officials were expected to discuss what the village has done to further regulate traffic on 47th Street and announce plans for additional improvements.

Residents were asked to contact state representatives to call for reducing the speed limit on 47th Street through La Grange, have the jurisdiction transferred from the state to the village and to secure funds to improve pedestrian access and safety on 47th Street.

The meeting took place after press time.

According to a La Grange police news release, Cook, 31, was struck by a sport-utility vehicle driven by a La Grange woman traveling east on 47th Street as she was crossing the street at Eighth Avenue at about 11:40 a.m. with her two children, a 4-month-old son and 2-year-old daughter. The infant boy was in a carrier worn by Cook while the daughter was in a stroller.

The infant suffered a fractured leg. Cook and her two children were taken to Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital.

According to witnesses, the SUV, which was in the eastbound curb lane, apparently swerved into the inner lane to avoid hitting Cook as she attempted to lift the stroller over the curb at Eighth Street. The SUV then struck a van driving along side of the SUV after hitting Cook. The driver of the van, 27-year-old Johnny Borizov of Willow Springs, jumped out of the van and grabbed the infant boy, who had been thrown from the carrier on his mother and was lying in the street after Cook was hit by the SUV, said Borizov's attorney, Grant Dixon.

Dixon said his client has been trauma-

tized by the accident.

"From Johnny's perspective, this is a tragic accident that could have been prevented simply by a driver paying attention to what she was doing," Dixon said.

Dixon added he and his client were "waiting patiently for some kind of report to be released by the La Grange Police Department," and that a report from the Illinois State Police traditionally takes up to one to two months.

Kathy Wolf, who lives on 47th Street and led the effort to have a public meeting, said she came out of her house moments after the accident occurred.

Wolf said a crosswalk established at Ninth Avenue about a year has not been very effective or convenient in terms of pedestrian traffic.

"People at all times of day are crossing that street, kids on bikes, older people, there's a lot of pedestrian traffic back and forth," Wolf said.

Wolf said residents would like to see the speed limit lowered on 47th Street or maybe a light-actuated pedestrian crosswalk installed.

"I think there's a lot of things that can be done," Wolf said.