

Hearing Set For Town Zoning Change Jan. 11

The Guilderland Town Board Tuesday night set Jan. 11 as the tentative date for a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the town's zoning ordinance which would lessen restrictions on the building of multiple dwelling units and high-rise apartments.

Supervisor Gordon Robinson indicated that he and the councilmen will solicit "all views, pro and con" on the proposed amendment at the hearing.

But it was clear at Tuesday's session that there has already been a great deal of talk — most of it "con" — on the proposed change in the hamlet of McKownville at the east end of the town.

A newspaper report Tuesday afternoon stated the McKownville Improvement association has scheduled a meeting for Jan. 12 to discuss incorporation of the area into a village in a move to circumvent the amendment to the ordinance should it be approved.

The basis of the association's concern appears to be rumors of plans to construct three 14-story apartment buildings in the Stuyvesant Plaza and the effect such construction might have on the hamlet's water supply.

Mr. Robinson and the councilmen stressed repeatedly that no formal plans for such a project have been presented to any town official. And Councilman Harold Hughes further said such a project has "not even been discussed informally."

Discussion of the matter was prompted by a query from John D. Halvern of McKownville, one of the two residents who attended the town board meeting.

Recalling alleged damage to the McKownville Reservoir at the time of the construction of the New York State Thruway, he said the town had been "grossly negligent" in not seeking compensation from the Thruway Authority.

And he urged that town officials consider carefully any effects the building of apartments could have on the reservoir in the future.

A second resident suggested the town make a statement relative to the proposed amendment since "so many people already have definite opinions and misconceptions about this."

To this, Mr. Hughes replied, "We hold public hearings to get the facts. We can't give out the facts until we get them."

The amendment was recommended by the Town Planning Board. The present ordinance requires a minimum of 7,000 square feet of land area per family unit.

The amendment would lessen this to 2,500 feet in an area without municipal water and sewage services and to 1,250 feet in an area with the services.

Ward Wells, planning board chairman, said the amendment is designed to benefit the entire population of the town and "certainly is not directed against one small area."

He said there is a need in the town for apartment buildings, and that the planning board feels the town ordinance presently makes multiple - dwelling construction "economically unfeasible."

Village Status Eyed For McKownville

The McKownville Improvement association, fearful that high-rise apartment will invade the hamlet to snatch a lion's share of water and cause a fire protection problem, is considering a village incorporation plan for the McKownville Water and Fire Districts.

Discussion of the proposal will be conducted at 8 p. m. Jan. 12 in McKownville fire hall.

Creation of a McKownville village is the association's answer to a Guilderland Planning Board recommendation that lot dimensions for a family dwelling be reduced from 7,000 to 1,250 square feet.

A lot size reduction could permit erection of proposed high-rise apartment dwellings. And the association says such apartments would create "a serious water shortage," making it "necessary to ban outdoor use of water by homeowners, such as sprinkling lawns and washing cars."

The association has appointed a four-man committee to report on steps for approval of incorporation into a village. Members are: George B. Hurley, 14 Norwood St.; Robert W. Quackenbush, 44 Highland Dr.; William F. Peer, 5 Ayre Dr., and Martin Barry, 24 Parkwood St.

Should the association seek village incorporation, first step would be circulation of petitions. McKownville, with more than 500 families, contains the required 500 population to qualify for incorporation.

Next step would be a Town Board hearing to determine if petitions conform to legal requirements.

Then, a popular referendum of property owners would determine whether the area would become incorporated.

If the proposal was approved by the voters, appropriate maps and descriptions of a new village would be filed with the state, and the town clerk would appoint a temporary village clerk and election inspectors to conduct the first election of village officers.