

Letters To The Editor

WATER SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS ON MERGER

To the Editor:

As superintendent of the Town of Guilderland's Department of Water and Wastewater Management, I would like to take this opportunity to provide some comments on McKownville. On the "Front Line" article that appeared in the Aug. 15 Enterprise, regarding the consolidation of the water districts.

The McKownville Water District was created on Aug. 20, 1947, by the Guilderland Town Board. On May 5, 1948, the New York State Water Power and Control Commission (now New York State Department of Water Resources, a section of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation), authorized the Town Board to act on behalf of the McKownville Water District, and in acquiring an existing system and constructing certain improvements. It is our understanding the reservoir was owned previously by the Pitkin-Whitbeck Realty Co.

This department is directly responsible for the day to day operation of the McKownville Water District. The Town Board approves the budget, oversees this department's operations, and approves any expenditures over \$1,000 (unless it is an emergency).

In regard to removal of iron from the water, the department had made every attempt to lower the iron concentrations with the equipment that was originally designed into the plant. To reduce the iron concentrations lower would have required new equipment which would have resulted in increased taxes. As a point of information, iron occurs naturally in water and is not an indication of pollution.

In regard to the restoration of the Harrington Pond dam, we know of

no legal mechanism whereas the town could have forced the private property owner to rebuild the dam.

The article refers to the sewer district installing a sewer line to Stuyvesant Plaza. The sanitary sewer in question does not just service Stuyvesant Plaza, but also services the homes and businesses along the northern side of Western Ave. from the Westmere Fire Station to the New York State Thruway.

The water sale application to the State Department of Environmental Conservation wasn't filed until this spring. It was hoped that the first consolidation attempt would have been approved during May 1977. Shortly thereafter, the Crossgates controversy started, and the town felt we would be criticized for being devious to try to file a water sale application, thusly giving Crossgates an advantage.

As indicated, we did file an application this spring to EnCon to obtain their formal permission to sell water from one water district to another. As part of this application process, the public has been given an opportunity to comment on the water sale agreement. Ironically enough, some of the letters received by EnCon tie the water sale agreement back into the Crossgates project.

The article indicates that the reservoir is a prime piece of commercial real estate. We are puzzled with this statement, as the majority of the land is covered with water. Any developer would have to spend considerable sums of money to legally be permitted to fill it in for building, maintain the drainage of the Krumkill through the site, and the actual construction cost of draining and filling the reservoir with soil before actual building could begin.

We do agree with one point: The

reservoir does have recreational potential.

Changing of the reservoir status or classification requires a formal application to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. This application would be subject to public comments, and then a public hearing. Also, as a point of information: Any person can request reclassification of a water supply at any time. It must be demonstrated that the reclassification will benefit all parties involved. As of the writing of this letter, we know of no such application to reclassify the McKownville Reservoir nor does EnCon.

We are confused by the statement: "The reservoir and groundwater beneath it could together provide much of the district's needs." Previously, the writer of the column stated the capacity of the reservoir without Harrington's Pond as 100,000 gallons per day. With the water district's peak summer usage running around 300,000 gallons per day, we question if an additional 200,000 gallons per day can be found "beneath" the reservoir.

With the daily advancements being made in water treatment technology, someday, maybe, the water could be treated economically. The Town Board is aware of this fact, and this conceivably is one of the reasons why an application for reclassification was not begun in 1973 when the water plant ceased operations.

The last paragraph of the column indicates that other town residents may not be interested in the problems of McKownville.

Since we all live in the same town, we find it hard to imagine that residents from one area of the town would not be involved with an issue in another section of the town without first knowing the facts regarding the issue at hand.

As a point of information, as of June 24, 1977, the State Department of Health issued a new set of standards for drinking water supply (part of the New York State Sanitary Code, Sub-part 5-1 and 5-3). This resulted in more stringent requirements on drinking water quality. To meet this standard the McKownville water treatment facilities would have to be rehabilitated. We estimate that this cost, based on information available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to be in excess of \$600,000.

The Guilderland Town Board had approved the water districts' consolidation at their July 8 meeting. The referendum is being held because sufficient signatures were obtained on petitions protesting this action.

The following organizations have reviewed the consolidation and have endorse it:

—The McKownville Water Advisory Board;

—The Townwide Water Advisory Board;

—The McKownville Fire Department;

—The Board of Fire Commissioners of the McKownville Fire District; and

—Common Sense, a group of concerned McKownville residents.

In closing, I strongly recommend that the residents consider this matter carefully and ask questions when a statement is made. This matter is of extreme importance and the outcome of the referendum could have long lasting effects on the residents in the respective districts. Remember, this decision is being made totally by the residents of the water districts by virtue of being resolved by referendum.

We ask that if any resident would like to ask a question, call us at 456-6474.

Dennis L. Tyson, Superintendent
Department of Water and
Wastewater Management
Town of Guilderland

excerpt from article by L Childs in
Altamont Enterprise, July 11, 1980, p. 2

This past week saw the first public announcements of two loosely organized political action groups. The Guilderland Advancement Association is a town-wide group which favors the development of Crossgates; one of its spokesmen is Don Selee, who has represented the Guilderland Chamber of Commerce on Crossgates-related issues on several occasions in recent months.

The other group is called Common Sense, a McKownville group which distributed a leaflet door-to-door favoring consolidation of the McKownville and Westmere water districts. Common Sense calls itself "a non-political, rather loosely organized, group of McKownville residents interested in examining community concerns in a cool, objective manner. We have no dues, no by-laws, no officers, and no axes to grind." The contact persons are Shirley Seyboth, Preston Crans, Stanley Gecewicz, Karl Felsen, Julian LeVine and Frank Casatelli.