

To: The State University at Albany, President John Ryan (interim)
From: McKownville Improvement Association (contact Don Reeb, president, 489-3909)
Subject: Shabbos House
Date: September 21, 2004

The McKownville community objects strongly to the proposed construction of a 10,000+5,000 square foot Shabbos building in McKownville at 320 Fuller Road

The new Shabbos House is too large. It is not a residence but it is in a residential block. It is a University student related building. It is for University students. Just like the Chapel House is for University students the Shabbos House would be for University students. While each of these host religious services, they also serve as sites for other University student activities. Presumably that might include parties. A 15,000 square foot building filled with noisy University students in a residential neighborhood is a terrible burden.

The University helped the Chapel House find a building site away from McKownville residences. The University by promising University parking spaces to the Shabbos House has made its construction more likely but unlike the Chapel House the proposed very large new Shabbos House is in the middle of a residential block.

The neighborhood presented a petition to the Town Zoning Board indicating its opposition. Many neighbors also spoke out against the Shabbos House construction at the Zoning Board meeting. The Town was clearly informed that no one in the neighborhood wants to live near a 10,000+5,000 square foot University student related facility. This is to inform the University of the community's opposition and since your actions have aided its construction you are obligated to aid the Shabbos House to find a site that is less burdensome to its neighbors.

We wish to make it quite clear that the McKownville neighborhood does not want to become a student ghetto and that it is in the interest of the University to help prevent it from happening. Promoting a very large Shabbos House in a residential neighborhood is not the way to prevent the development of a student ghetto.