

McKownville to see stormwater fix

Almost \$600,000 to help cover project to alleviate flooding

By DAN SABBATINO
sabbatinod@spotlightnews.com

McKownville residents can rest easier knowing \$600,000 in grant funding is coming to help alleviate flooding issues that have plagued the neighborhood for decades.

The announcement came during a Tuesday, June 16, Town Board meeting where a 5-0 motion was approved to open the bidding process for a construction company to begin work and help resolve some of the issues.

"We would like to have everything done by the end of this building season," said Town Supervisor Ken Runion. "We just don't want to see our businesses suffer."

The \$600,000 is coming from a number of sources, including Stuyvesant Plaza shopping center, which often sees a drop in shoppers during bad flooding, Runion said.

The New York State Parks and Recreation Department is putting up \$100,000 and will change the designation of the McKownville Reservoir to a "park," making it eligible for the funding. The reservoir is not used as a water source.

The New York State Department of Transportation is throwing \$200,000 into the pot, while Assemblyman Jack McEneny, D-Albany, has secured \$150,000 for the project. An additional \$50,000 in capital improvement funding came through McEneny's office as well, and the \$100,000 from Stuyvesant Plaza rounds out the \$600,000 needed to resolve the flooding issues.

Runion said he is hopeful the town will be able to secure

He said two priorities will be replacing a 24-inch pipe that constricts water flow, and allowing the reservoir to hold more water. The hope is to put five to 10 years between floods, Runion added.

"We've got all of the approvals we need, so we're all set," Runion said.

Don Reeb, president of the McKownville Improvement Association, said he is glad to see progress on the stormwater issue that has plagued McKownville for so long.

"I think it's wonderful," he said. "The people of McKownville think it's wonderful. It's been a long time coming."

He also said he wanted to thank McEneny and Runion for working to secure the funding.

Town Councilman Warren Redlich voiced concerns that he was not provided with literature pertaining to the contracts prior to the meeting, and expressed a desire to have more information about the plans. He did, however, vote to approve the motion to open up bidding.

"I understand the reasons for rushing," Redlich said. "It's a good project, and it's good for the town."

Town Councilman Mark Grimm also raised questions about alleviating basement flooding in McKownville.

"There's two flooding problems in that area. Stuyvesant Plaza is low-lying," he said of the first issue.

The money to help alleviate that problem, Grimm said, is a step in the right direction, but the basement flooding issue also needs to be addressed, and another \$5.75 million project could help keep basements dry. He said it is important to be aggressive in seeking funds for the home-flooding issue, if any money is to be secured.

Runion said he is hopeful the town will be able to secure good deals on contractors, since many companies are anxious for work. The board is planning to make decisions on the bids by the Tuesday, July 7, meeting, with advice from the Delaware Engineering, the town's designated firm. Runion said a contract is likely to be signed three days after that to allow time to prepare the paperwork.

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Runion said he hopes to have a plan in place by budget season to begin work on what he described as a 5-to-7-year project.

Reeb said he remains hopeful that basement flooding can eventually be addressed, but he acknowledged that the funding may not available right now.

"Nothing is shaking loose at this time," he said.

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