

McKownville Improvement Association Founded 1924

The McKownville Improvement Association is asking you for your letter of support for McKownville residents.

The residents of McKownville overwhelmingly oppose the purchase by the University at Albany of a 9-acre residential property in McKownville. Presently Suzie Holt-Harris owns it and it is referred to as the Holt -Harris parcel.

The support letter will be included in a portfolio and sent to Mark Streb in Governor Cuomo's office.

At a meeting in Guilderland Town Hall Wednesday August 3, 2011, Guilderland Town Supervisor Ken Runion and representatives from the McKownville Improvement Association met with Mark Streb and Ben Kern. We asked for their help in getting our message to the Governor.

Mark suggested that the Association put together a portfolio of letters of support from our elected officials (Senator Breslin, Assemblyman McEneny, Supervisor Runion, County Legislators Commisso and Bartololotto Connolly) together with supplemental information and a brief position paper and forward all of it to him.

Thus the reason for this request to you.

Additional pieces of background information are attached that might help you in writing your letter.

A copy of the letter that was sent to Governor Cuomo asking him to support McKownville residents in their opposition to the University purchasing the residential property.

A map showing the location of the property.

A Google photo of the property

A news article from 1963 which contains the promise made by an assistant to the University president at a McKownville Improvement Association meeting that the University would not purchase more McKownville property.

A news article from 1966 telling of the historic house on the 9 acre property

A speech made to the Albany Common Council on August 1, 2011 asking that the McKownville property not be purchased by the University and the suggestion that if Harriman campus property was made available to the University for its expansion the University would no longer be interested in purchasing the 9 acre parcel..

The position of McKownville residents is as follows.

For more than fifty years the University “ring road” has served as a boundary line to separate the University from McKownville residential parcels. Breaching of that boundary line spells great anxiety for McKownville residents.

McKownville has enormous storm water problems. Paving of the 9 acre parcel—which has standing water in one smaller section—would make storm water problems in McKownville worse.

The 9 acre parcel has served to protect McKownville residents from the noise and confusion occurring on the campus. The heavily wooded parcel has hills on two of its sides. Leveling of the hills and removal of the trees would reduce the residential peace of the neighborhood.

While residents of McKownville benefit from the University, the University benefits from McKownville. Many Universities spend significant sums to protect the campus from the neighborhood surrounding the University. The University at Albany has been given a fine neighborhood in its environs.

The 9 acre parcel might well be developed and include 8 or so fine homes. McKownville residents would accept such. They are also looking for a buyer that might want a “country home in the city” where the land and homes are occupied with the wood lot left undeveloped. That has been the use of the parcel and some would like that to continue.

Fourteen homes about the 9 acre parcel. The impact from the noise etc from University development would be horrible. There is no other way to say it—horrible.

All of us hope to reduce fear and uncertainty for ourselves and our neighbors. Breaking the “ring road” line will add to the fear and anxiety of McKownville residents who have already been made more frightened of the future by NanoTech’s rapid development along Fuller Road.

Finally, a 9 acre parcel for the University is inconsequential in comparison to its present size or its needs for space for expansion. McKownville’s 1,000 homes, ringed by the Thruway, the Northway, the University and the City, places great value on having neighbors who live across the street or down the street, not on crossing a University parking lot or some other University use to visit a friend. University development isolates neighbors—just like a highway separates neighbors.