

To: Guilderland Town Supervisor Ken Runion
From: Don Reeb, president, McKownville Improvement Association
Subject: Flashing Signs
Date: July 30, 2012

This a request for more information concerning flashing signs and to delay the discussion on the proposed Stuyvesant sign until such information becomes available.

McKownville is much concerned about commercial development in the neighborhood.

Recently, there has been a proposal to change the Stuyvesant Plaza sign on Western Avenue to one that is a flashing sign—sometimes referred to as a CEVMS---Commercial Electronic Variable Message Sign.

Many residents of McKownville argue that they are dangerous—lead to distracted drivers and vehicular accidents. See [HTTP://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/cevms.htm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/realestate/cevms.htm)

While there is overwhelming evidence for that conclusion, there is the question of “best or common zoning practice” in other communities. How should “flashing signs” be regulated?

That is, what does the planning literature and zoning laws in other states say about CEVMS? Are there benefits from CEVMS that could counter-balance their negative effect on motorist safety?

Does the literature draw a distinction between high rise signs—those at the top of 40 or 50 foot poles—that are viewable from a considerable distance and CEVMS that are of vehicular height? What about very large signs (more than 600 square feet) as opposed to smaller ones? And signs close to highways as opposed to those set further back from the highway.

What is known about state zoning and model legislation concerning CEVMS, in California, Texas, Florida, and other major states? What about in “progressive” cities, such as Toronto, Vancouver and Singapore?

Surely, someone has asked questions about the regulation of CEVMS for congested highway corridors as opposed to rural areas. What differences are found in the regulations and zoning practices for each? Do communities have separable recommendations?

Before the Town of Guilderland considers the Stuyvesant Plaza flashing sign proposal yet once again, it would be helpful to know what the “best practices” are for such signs from the planning literature as well as from planning legislation and regulations.

Guilderland is justifiably proud of its Master Plan and surely wants to include in its zoning regulations the very best practices that have been instituted nationally.

In all probability, this request for a flashing sign by Stuyvesant Plaza will not be the last request by a commercial property owner in Guilderland—Crossgates (Congel), Wolanin, Lia and other business owners may step forward and ask for flashing signs---as well as numerous other commercial property owners.

Finally, how do the requested changes for the flashing signs at Stuyvesant Plaza comport with the master plan, the Guilderland zoning regulations generally, and the McKownville Corridor Study as well as the much discussed “hamlet” designation?

Before the community enters into the new arena of CEVMS, the McKownville neighborhood would like to know what the planning literature recommends concerning CEVMS and what state and local zoning legislation has done about regulating CEVMS in other communities.

This is a request to ask the Town Planner, who is in the very best place to make this information available to the people of Guilderland, gather and provide to the Town Board and the community information available about the regulation of CEVMS in other communities.

I am sure that this information would find good and intense use in future discussions.

Thank you.