

Star Line  
2012

## TALKING POINTS

**QUESTION:** Why should the residents of McKownville develop a drainage district that is supported by a district tax of approximately 26¢ per thousand of assessed valuation?

Drainage—ground water and storm water--has been a problem in McKownville for many years. While homeowners have put in sump pumps and made other improvements, there is also a neighborhood problem that can only be dealt with by Guilderland Town Government and its Highway Department. It has the expertise and equipment.

Some of the pipes and catch basins are on public property. Others are on private property. Paying a small tax and transferring all of the pipes and catch basins to the Town provides money to maintain the system and establishes clear responsibility with elected public officials.

To be proactive and not just reactive McKownville needs to have an organization that clearly has the responsibility to maintain the drainage system, just as the Guilderland Town Water Department maintains the drinking water system.

**QUESTION:** Why not do this as a Town wide project?

Some areas of the Town—such as Woodscape--maintain their own drainage systems and pay a “neighborhood” fee for this service. Other areas have no drainage problems and still others have severe drainage problems and it is not obvious that joining with them would benefit McKownville.

**Question:** Which streets will be included?

Most of the streets within the McKownville Fire District are included. Some streets have not been included because they maintain their own storm water system.

**Question:** Why have drainage problems increased in the McKownville area over time?

There seem to be many reasons for this:

- \* Some of the drainage infrastructure is undersized or broken
- \* There has been little maintenance of many of the drainage pipes, especially those on private property
- \* Much commercial development has occurred, such as Crossgates
- \* Natural wetlands such as ponds have been lost
- \* Major highways were built or expanded, such as the Thruway
- \* Streets have become mounded and direct water onto sidewalks and lawns
- \* NanoTech and University construction has occurred
- \* Weather patterns have changed.

**Question:** What are the reasons to support the formation of the McKownville Drainage District?

The number one reason is that the drainage problem can be solved only by group action. The McKownville Improvement Association does not have the legal power, the expertise or the labor. There really is no one other than the Town that could do it. Additionally:

- \* Many properties have basement and garden area flooding
- \* Properties that are affected by water problems suffer a loss in value
- \* Standing water on a neighbor's property diminishes your home value
- \* McKownville homes have lost basement walls from flooding
- \* Homes need to dispose of sump pump water lawfully
- \* The lack of a drainage problem today does not preclude a problem tomorrow
- \* The neighborhood has ignored the storm water problem for too many years
- \* A drainage problem is not an asset when you try to sell your home
- \* A small tax is worth the dividends it will provide by beginning to address our storm water problems.

**Question:** How would the collected revenue be used?

Taxes would be based on assessed valuation: a home assessed at \$100,000 would pay \$26.00 yearly, while a home assessed at \$200,000 would pay a \$52.00 yearly.

All tax revenue collected from the Drainage District would be kept in a fund separate from all other Town of Guilderland's monies and could only be used for drainage problems in McKownville.

The total revenue--about \$50,000 to \$60,000 yearly---added to the funds now being spent by the Town on McKownville drainage, will permit the present system to be made somewhat better while the Town hunts for the \$6.5 million Delaware Engineering estimated that would be needed to pay for the rebuilding of the McKownville drainage system.

A significant portion of the \$50,000 to \$60,000 is not expected to be needed for yearly inspections or maintenance each year. That money would then be available for larger repairs and improvements that the Highway Department uncovers and or that Delaware Engineering suggested.

**Question:** What other benefits would occur from the establishment of a McKownville Drainage District?

New York State Senator Neil Breslin helped the Town secure a \$500,000 grant for the McKownville area drainage improvements. The ability to secure further grants toward the needed \$6.5 million costs will be enhanced by the formation of the District since it would demonstrate that there is significant local effort and concern to find a solution.