

McKownville Improvement Association
Founded, 1924

To: Assemblyman John J. McEneny
From: McKownville Improvement Association (contact Don Reeb, 489 3909)
Subject: Storm Drainage District for McKownville
Date: August 30, 2012

This is a request.

The New York Comptrollers Office will be asked shortly to approve a request of the Town of Guilderland to form a special district, the McKownville Drainage District. The Town Board hearing on the proposal is scheduled for October 2, 2012.

That you might contact the Comptroller and ask that his Office approve the Town's application—that is the request.

McKownville is petitioning the Town of Guilderland to form a McKownville Drainage District. Supervisor Runion and the Board of the McKownville Improvement Association developed the proposal.

The Drainage District encompasses nearly all of the area of the McKownville Fire Department district.

With an annual tax of \$0.26 per thousand of assessed value, it would raise about \$60,000 annually—not a large tax and not a large amount of revenue—but significant in these difficult times. (This will be added to the money now being spent by the Town to maintain and repair the public part of the storm water system in McKownville).

The Association has collected 404 signatures in support of the petition. There are 559 owner-occupied homes in the Drainage District---more than 72 % of all Drainage District households signed the petition and over 90% of those we were able to contact in July and August.

McKownville homes, some of which were built prior to WWI, have storm water pipes on private land without Town easements, some with Town easements and some are beneath local streets.

The new Drainage District would unify ownership of all the storm water pipes in McKownville and, with the new tax revenue, give to the Town Highway Department the responsibility of maintaining the pipes (snaking and vacuuming out accumulated sand, for example) and repairing broken pipes, most of which are obvious and are in about a dozen locations. (The pipes are usually vitreous clay---not terribly difficult or expensive to replace).

This work will take several years and involve small improvements each year---but a small improvement each year is much better than doing nothing and watching the pipe system become more and more clogged and non-functioning.

The formation of a District may give the Town better access to grants when and if they become available. However, these actions are not meant to foreclose the need for sizable grants—about \$6 million—to build a new and modern storm water system. Until that happens the Town will now have the authority to maintain and repair the storm water pipes, some additional money and the on-going legal access to do so.

The pipes now used for storm water collection were once used for both storm water and sanitary water collection.

With the building of the sanitary sewers in the 1970's, the older system became exclusively for storm water but, not being entirely owned by the Town, it was not entirely maintained.

With much of the older system on private land and buried, most homeowners did not know that it was there or that it was the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and repair it.

The Town commissioned Delaware Engineering to outline the elements of a new storm water collecting system and estimated its construction costs. The approximate \$6 million bond issue would require tax revenue of some \$200 per year from each household—not reasonable—and therefore McKownville is seeking to form a District that will make our older system incrementally better.

This is terribly important.

More and more McKownville homes are suffering from not only wet basements but also long-standing puddles in their garden areas and crumbling garage and basement walls. (With banks more carefully examining homes prior to granting a mortgage, standing water in a basement will likely foreclose the possibility of getting a mortgage—and selling a home).

The water table has risen several feet in the McKownville area in recent years, according to the U.S Geologic gauge on the University at Albany campus.

You know far better than we do that the lack of approval by the Comptrollers Office will spell defeat not only for this year but also for many years to come.

In the 1940's New York State refused a request by McKownville to form a sewer district. See the included memo.

We hope that that mistake will not be repeated.

Once again, thank you for being a friend to McKownville.