

Why doesn't Stuyvesant Plaza pay rent for the town land that it uses?

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Act at
Enterprise

To the Editor:

Stuyvesant Plaza is a large well-maintained and attractive shopping plaza located on the corner of Western and Fuller. Many say it is the most attractive shopping center in the Capital District. It has about 60 retail stores and numerous offices it rents in buildings near the Plaza.

However, it also has about 150 parking spaces on government land that does not earn any rental income for the town. This is absurd.

How this came about is not well known, but it must stop.

Colonie Center does not get free land from the town of Colonie, as far as I know. Nor does Latham Farms. Nor does Hamilton Square nor other shopping centers.

How Stuyvesant got to be the "most favored son" goes back many decades.

Land near Stuyvesant Plaza was given to McKownville for a reservoir (and pumping and filtering plant) by Emma Van-Loan in 1949. The nine acres, including the reservoir, became a reservoir-park for the neigh-

borhood.

In the 1950s, Stuyvesant Plaza was built next to the reservoir-park. A little later, a governing board for the reservoir was appointed; it included the owner of Stuyvesant Plaza. Stuyvesant was granted its first piece of rent-

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free land in 1958. Other transfers to Stuyvesant followed.

Land for two lanes of traffic to enter Stuyvesant Plaza from Western are on reservoir-park land (0.25 acres, price \$5,500 in 1958). One piece is west of the reservoir-park, another north-west (2.1 acres, price \$1.00, 1968), and another north of the reservoir-park (acres, date and price not known).

Now Stuyvesant Plaza is asking permission to construct

a 0.51-acre parking lot north of the reservoir-park, again on reservoir-park land.

Rent is not paid by Stuyvesant for the use of any of this publicly owned land.

How much rent should Stuyvesant pay — for more than 50 years of using public land rent-free? Thousands of dollars every year — maybe more.

A commercial building site of less than a half-acre in the Western Avenue-Fuller Road area would probably be sold for more than a half-million dollars. The government land that Stuyvesant is using is far more than a half-acre.

While most of the easements on Town land were granted to Stuyvesant by town governments many many years ago, one responsibility of those living today is to correct the errors of the past.

Taxpayers need to be compensated by Stuyvesant Plaza for 50 years of rent-free land use. Justice requires it.

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Editor's note: Don Reeb is president of the McKownville Improvement Association.