

# Village Status Eyed for McKownville

By CAROL SCHLAGETER

THE MCKOWNVILLE Improvement Association, fearful that high-rise apartments will invade the hamlet to a lion's share of water and cause a fire protection problem, is considering a village incorporation plan for the McKownville Water and Fire Districts.

Discussion of the proposal will be conducted at 8 p.m. Jan. 12 in McKownville Fire Hall.

Creation of a McKownville Village is the association's answer to a Guilderland Planning Board recommendation that lot dimensions for a family dwelling be reduced from 7,000 to 1,250 square feet.

Guilderland Town Board will consider the lot change recommendation at 8 p.m. today in Town Hall, and may set a public hearing date on the proposal.

Meanwhile, Town Supervisor Gordon Robinson has expressed alarm at the McKownville stand.

"Evidently they have made a statement without even knowing the facts," he said. "Of course this hasn't come before the Town Board (at public hearing) yet." At public hearing, the questions of fire protection, possible construction of apartments, and water use implications would be scrutinized.

★ ★ ★

A LOT SIZE REDUCTION could permit erection of proposed high-rise apartment dwellings. And the association says such apartments would create "a serious water shortage," making it "necessary to ban outdoor use of water by homeowners, such as sprinkling lawns and washing cars."

One man said a 20-story apartment building such as proposed by Louis Swyer, builder of Stuyvesant Plaza, and real estate man Philip E. Roberts, would use between 5 and 10 per cent of the increased water capacity resulting from improvements to the McKownville Reservoir.

Capacity of the reservoir is expected to increase six-fold, from 800,000 gallons to about 5 million gallons, by a February completion date.

But improvement association officials don't trust the statistics circulating.

Hugh Prytherch, president of the association, says the McKownville area is "short of water now, and the real estate promoters will come in and in one project take all your expansion."

★ ★ ★

vide city-type services to built-up areas—especially water, sewers, garbage collection.

With change in Town Law, he said, these services now may be provided to highly populated areas, and few villages have been created in the last 30 years.

While a village may provide zoning advantages, or special police protection, or other specific advantages, there are also disadvantages, he said.

The county pays delinquent taxes to a town, he said, and county officials are saddled with the chore of collecting. In the case of a village, however, village officials must collect taxes themselves.

With newly-incorporated villages, a "part town" fight often erupts. Village residents ask to be freed from paying town taxes for services they do not receive, and towns don't wish to lose the village revenues.

## Castleton Moves for Vote on

By JACK FISHER

CASTLETON MAYOR Chris Peter Jr. is pushing ahead with plans to hold a referendum in March on a \$100,000 water program despite state pressure on the village to solve its sewage abatement problem.

The mayor at last night's Village Board meeting directed that Morris J. Zweig, village attorney, prepare the referendum proposal for the village

March election. It would authorize a \$100,000 expenditure to finance an improved and enlarged village water supply.

"... I think we could do it without an increase in taxes if the state will leave us alone," Mr. Peter declared.

The mayor said the State Health Department has been threatening to move against the village unless it takes steps to build a treatment plant and

stop polluting the Hudson River with its raw sewage.

A SEWAGE disposal plant would cost the village at least \$500,000, the mayor asserted, criticizing Governor Rockefeller's proposed anti-pollution program. He said the Rockefeller proposal still places too heavy a financial burden on the municipality.

Other board members, who have concurred with the mayor's water proposal, pointed

out that Capital District municipalities are dumping raw sewage into the river. "We're not alone," one remarked.

"We're a community of 2,000 population. We couldn't even afford to operate a treatment plant if it was completed without a big increase in taxes," Mr. Peter said.

The mayor, replying this week to a Rensselaer County Health Department query as to what the village has done to





**THE ASSOCIATION** also contends that high-rise apartments cannot be protected with the present fire equipment and manpower available in the McKownville Fire District.

One town official admitted that existing equipment would be hardpressed to extinguish fire raging throughout such a structure, but pointed out that the building would probably be made of poured concrete—which would lessen the possibility of fire except in individual apartments.

But although many people talking about the proposed apartment buildings, the two men involved say little.

Mr. Roberts said no apartment building plans are on file with the town at present, and although “plans are under consideration” they are “months away from completion and cannot be discussed further at this time.”

A release prepared by the improvement association says “A real estate corporation wishes to erect on Fuller Road three apartment buildings of 14 stories, to house 300 families . . . A serious water shortage will develop with the expected one-third increase in the number of families.”

The association has appointed a four-man committee to report on steps for approval of incorporation into a village. Members are George B. Hurley, 14 Norwood Street; Robert W. Quackenbush, 44 Highland Drive; William F. Peer, 5 Ayre Drive; and Martin Barry, 24 Parkwood Street.



**MR. PRYTHERCH** said the association has notified Mr. Robinson and the town planning board of their opposition to the proposed planning change. He said McKownville is “the only place in town that has water, and the only place they (real estate groups) would want to build.”

Should the association seek village incorporation, first step would be circulation of petitions. McKownville, with more than 500 families, contains the required 500 population to qualify for incorporation.

Next step would be a Town Board hearing to determine whether petitions conform to legal requirements.

Then, a popular referendum of property owners would determine whether the area would become incorporated.

If the proposal was approved by the voters, appropriate maps and descriptions of a new village would be filed with the state, and the town clerk would appoint a temporary village clerk and election inspectors to conduct the first election of village officers.



**THE QUESTION** in this case, said a representative of the State Office of Local Government, is whether McKownville residents are willing to pay overhead costs of village government to escape Guilderland zoning restrictions.

He pointed out that before 1934 the majority of villages were created because town governments were unable to pro-

News of

*Suburban*

**Cities and Towns**