

# Apartment Foes Protest Gu

By CAROL SCHLAGETER

**H**IGH-RISE APARTMENTS for Guilderland drew more fire than favor from 70 residents who squeezed into a Town Board hearing last night.

The hearing concerned a zoning change which would lower the minimum lot size for a dwelling unit, and make high-rise apartments feasible. The recommended change bears the Town Zoning Board's stamp of approval.

One of 15 persons who spoke against the proposed change pronounced it "quite premature when there is no place in the town with sufficient water available" for high-rise apartments.

Harry DuBrin, attorney to the Town Planning and Zoning Boards, replied that "in setting up an ordinance of this type a certain amount of consideration has to be given to the possibility that a facility will be available in the future."

To do otherwise, Mr. DuBrin added, "would indeed be shortsighted."

Spearheading the opposition were members of the McKownville Improvement Association.

Hugh Prytherch, president of the group, warned:

"In McKownville you can't take water for granted. It's what's known as a surface supply system . . . Abundant rainfall is the only way you can make the system work." With the numbers of restaurants, motels, automatic washing machines and dishwashers increasing, plus "a bountiful crop of new babies," he said, usage will about match the hamlet's water supply—without addition of high-rise apartments.

"We just aren't prepared at the moment to supply the large number of families such high-rise apartments would bring," he declared.

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ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS Guilderland supervisor Gordon Robinson said improvement association statistics differed with

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those he has compiled, and he invited association officials to meet with him and the Town Water Advisory Board.

Fred Abele, chairman of the McKownville Water Advisory Board, said the five-member board is "unanimously opposed" to the zoning change. He said the change would leave the Zoning Board to make engineering decisions and would encourage "spot zoning."

"This reservoir (McKownville) is no mystery," he continued. "It's a couple of small streams which run into our pond . . . And when you run out of water you can't strike a rock like Moses did and get water."

By changing the zoning regulations, he added, "you're saying to all comers that water can be supplied," and introducing "a monster" in the town. In addition, he noted that none of the fire commissioners was called for consultation by the Planning Board before it made its recommendation on the change.

Should the change be approved by the Town Board, he said it should exclude McKownville.

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**THUS THE IMPROVEMENT** association's threat to incorporate the Fire and Water Districts in the hamlet into a village was re-introduced at last night's meeting. By incorporation, the area could escape town zoning laws, including the one concerning high-rise apartments.

One McKownville fire commissioner said any tax advantages that would accrue to the rest of the town would bring only disadvantages—traffic jams, fire hazards, water hardships—to McKownville.

Leo Dugan, 6 Providence Street, McKownville, told the meeting that "tax studies have always shown residential developments do not pay for themselves." You need industrial development to satisfy increased demands for schools caused by high-rise apartments, he declared.

"Before this is even considered I think some way should be considered so we can invite and welcome industry into the town," he added.

William Conway of 9 Mercer Street, McKownville, contends that zoning "should be done in a selective fashion rather in a shotgun fashion such as this."

Most of the houses razed for Albany's South Mall, he said, were single-family dwellings later chopped into apartments—"and became slums."

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MR. CONWAY spoke again, asking whether the zoning law change might have to be rescinded once the town's master plan is completed.

Mr. Robinson reminded him that the master plan will

# Guilderland Zoning Change



THE SMOKE-FILLED ROOM—William A. Conway, 9 Mercer Street, McKownville, condemns "shotgun" zoning at a public hearing last night in Guilderland Town Hall. At right, with back to camera is Supervisor Gordon Robinson.

probably take two years, and that the town has to keep doing business until then.

"Let's not kid ourselves," advised George Hurley of McKownville. "This zoning change is aimed at McKownville."

Francis Roberts, a member of the Zoning Board, informed Mr. Hurley that the zoning board has "no intention to shoot at any particular area" but to "update our zoning regulations."

John DeGraff of Albany Country Club answered other contentions that McKownville is the only spot being eyed for construction of high-rise apartments. He said the club is considering garden apartments near its present location in the town, far from McKownville hamlet.

Among seven who spoke in favor of the proposed change was Phil Roberts, real estate broker who has proposed erection of a high-rise apartment in the McKownville area.

"Guilderland," he pointed out, "is in the path of progress." He said it "is in the best interest of the homeowners to develop tax-producing real estate to broaden the tax base."

"Albany is moving west," he continued. "It's spilling over into Guilderland at a fast rate," bringing residents who will likely be affiliated with the State University and State Campus.

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JAMES SCHWARTZ, manager of the Tom Sawyer Motel, pointed out that the university alone will bring in professors and older people whose families have moved away from home and who desire apartment housing.

Ralph DuPont of 8 Pauline Avenue pointed to a 125 per cent population increase in the last 10 years in Guilderland and said "we are at the brink of a good water supply."

But residents of the town will scream when they get the water bill, he said, and projects such as high-rise apartments would pay a good share of taxes.

"Honkeytonk streets with hotdog stands" contribute little

in terms of taxes compared to such apartment projects, he said.

Mr. Robinson pointed out that any specific apartment proposal would require a separate public hearing, even if the proposed zoning change is enacted.

At the start of the 90-minute meeting, Mr. DuBryn explained that the recommended change would require a minimum 2½ acre site for a multiple dwelling and would allow use of only 35 per cent of a plot of land for actual construction.

In areas of the town with both water and sewage, the lot size requirement would be decreased from 7,000 to 1,350 square feet per dwelling unit. In areas with water alone the lot size would be reduced from 7,000 to 2,350 square feet. And in areas with neither facility, lot size would remain at the 7,000 square foot minimum.

He said the Zoning and Planning Boards have concluded that construction of multiple dwellings under present conditions and land costs is a "practical impossibility."

In other action, the board sets rates at \$22.50 twice annually for both commercial users and single family users in the Fort Hunter Water District, and authorized the highway superintendent to spend a maximum of \$500 for tools and supplies.

## Rensselaer PTA To Meet Tomorrow

The monthly meeting of the Van Rensselaer Elementary Parent-Teacher Association has been changed from Friday to 8 p.m. tomorrow at the Rensselaer school.

Joseph V. Reilly, superintendent of schools, will speak to the group about the future of school system.

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