

Zoning Measure Meets Opposition At Hearing

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The Guilderland Town Board has reserved decision on a proposed amendment to the town zoning ordinance which would ease lot-size requirements in the construction of multiple-dwelling units and high-rise apartment buildings.

The board's action followed a public hearing Monday night, at which opponents and expression of opposition to the change predominated by a 3 to 1 ratio.

About 75 residents crowded into the Town Hall meeting room, but an unofficial tally showed only 20 people who spoke directly against or in favor of the proposed amendment.

The largest contingent at the hearing was from McKownville, one of four areas in the town currently having a public water supply. First to speak in opposition was Hugh Prytherch, president of the McKownville Improvement association. Those opposed to the proposed zone amendment stressed three factors: the limited capacity of the McKownville reservoir which currently entails summer restrictions on the part of users and would be hard pressed to supply tenants of a prospective high-rise apartment building; the limited facilities of the McKownville Fire district; and the breadth of the wording of the proposed zone amendment.

Proponents of the amendment said, in their view, that additional housing, particularly apartments, are sorely needed in the town; tax-producing enterprises are also needed in the town and a high-rise apartment would fill this need; the town's zoning ordinance needs updating to keep pace with progress in and around the town and the suggested change is such an updating.

Several speakers said the proposed amendment was offered without due consideration of ramifications and that its drafting showed "vast underplanning." A McKownville fire commissioner said passing of the amendment would constitute "an irresponsible act for the McKownville area and would jeopardize the hamlet to the small benefit of other areas of the town."

One speaker suggested the Planning Board, which drafted the proposed change, should hold a meeting and delineate fully its reasoning behind the change.

Several McKownville residents said they were convinced that a large, high-rise apartment is planned for the area behind Stuyvesant Plaza, and said this was the key reason for their concern. But Supervisor Gordon Robinson declared that no such plans have been formally presented to the town.

Many other speakers urged more restrictive wording in the ordinance following more study of the proposed change.