

FIRE

**BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS**  
**McKownville Fire District**  
**Town of Guilderland**  
**Albany County**  
**N. Y.**

May 5, 1965

NEWSLETTER

TO RESIDENTS AND TAXPAYERS OF MCKOWNVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

During the many years which have elapsed since the McKownville Fire District was established in 1918, the duly elected members of its Board of Fire Commissioners have attempted to provide the best fire protection for residents and merchants of the district through the purchase, within the limits of your tax money, the most modern and efficient equipment for use by McKownville Fire Department, Inc. which furnishes the manpower on a completely volunteer basis.

From the early makeshift equipment first used, the District graduated to a Brockway fire truck in 1931 and in 1935 the present building was erected to house it. In 1951 a Dodge 500 gpm truck was added. In 1957 the old Brockway was replaced with a modern 750 gpm American LaFrance pumper. Additional modern equipment has been constantly purchased from year to year to further equip these trucks.

In 1957 when the new pumper was installed it was obvious that a new firehouse would be required eventually. At that time it would not have been possible to build one as the District could not have carried the additional bonded indebtedness. However, in 1961 it became apparent that a new building would have to be built soon because:

1. The present building is badly in need of a complete renovation. Overloading the floor system has seriously weakened it. The heating system is antiquated by today's standards and inefficient and in need of replacement. Flooding in the basement occurs periodically.

2. A frame structure such as the present one is a fire hazard in itself and expensive equipment would be lost should it burn not to mention the loss of fire protection to District Taxpayers.

3. The present building is overcrowded and already occupies the entire parcel of property so no expansion is possible.

4. Parking is non-existent except for the generosity of Mr. Fiato and would be gone should the corner lot be occupied by a building.

5. The present location is poor. The narrow side street makes maneuvering difficult for even present equipment without considering future needs which may even include a ladder truck.

6. During 1964 the New York State Fire Insurance Rating Organization made a survey of the fire defenses of the District and among their criticisms was the location and inadequacy of the present fire house.

In 1962 the Board of Fire Commissioners began the survey of possible sites for relocation. Fifteen (15) sites were investigated. Studies were made of strategic locations for fire protection, traffic patterns and problems, future needs, cost to the taxpayers, the impact of these sites on assessed valuation. Consideration was given to expanding the present site and altering the present building.

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Offers were made on four of the properties. The other parcels were either not suitable or owners refused to consider selling.

One of the parcels explored was the property at 1248-1250 Western Avenue, corner Brookwood. These lots contained two frame houses, now vacant. The owners, the Potters Club Alumni Association were approached in February 1964 but did not wish to dispose of the property. In January 1965 they were again approached and expressed a willingness to dispose of the property. An offer was made based on fair market value and a reasonable profit to the owners. After two months of negotiation it was clear that no agreement as to price would be reached.

Thus it became apparent after three years of fruitless search and negotiation and many hours spent by members of the Board that the only recourse to procure a site was by the power of condemnation provided for in Town Law, subject, of course, to a referendum by the people.

In February the Board authorized an attorney to proceed with condemnation of the property at 1248-1250 Western Avenue. It was felt that this site was very desirable for a firehouse and that it would produce the least hardship to both owners and the taxpayers of the District.

The owners subsequently negotiated with a local realtor for sale to a Syracuse firm at a price based on rezoning the property. At a hearing held on rezoning the property, the rezoning was vigorously opposed by residents of McKownville. After temporarily deferring action the Town Board with a complete disregard for the impact on the condemnation and the cost of this site to the taxpayers of McKownville rezoned the property over the protests of local residents and the request by Fire District officers that they await the outcome of condemnation proceedings. This action by the Town Board has jeopardized the condemnation and the support of voters and taxpayers of the District will be needed.

On Wednesday, May 12, 1965 at 8 P.M. at the firehouse the Board of Fire Commissioners will hold an open meeting to give residents of McKownville a chance to inspect the present facilities, the preliminary plans for the proposed new firehouse which were prepared by August Lux, architect and to discuss the plans for relocating which will be shortly placed before the taxpayers of the District in a referendum.

The continued operation of the existing frame building is a hazard to the costly equipment housed therein and owned by you, the taxpayers. It is imperative that relocation be accomplished with the least possible delay.

On May 14th the Town Board will hold a hearing at Town Hall to grant a permit for construction at 1248-1250 Western Avenue by the Syracuse Firm. Therefore, we urge all taxpayers of the District to attend this hearing as well as the open meeting on May 12th. Please give your support.

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS  
MCKOWNVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

By *Fred B. Abele*  
Fire District Secretary