

Rec'd 4/17/77

TOWN OF GUILDERLAND
Department of Water and Sanitation

To: Residents of the McKownville Water District

The Town Board at its regular meeting on March 8, 1977, held a public hearing on the proposed consolidation of the McKownville Water District with the Westmere Water District, and passed a resolution to perform the consolidation subject to a 30 day permissive referendum. This action was taken as a result of unanimous recommendation for six proposals by your McKownville Water Advisory Board. The consolidation procedure was the first item of the six recommendations. The Town Board also passed a resolution of the intent to follow through with the other five recommendations, if the consolidation takes place. One of these recommendations, and one of apparent major interest, would be the preservation of the McKownville Reservoir, and its inclusion in the Town's Park System for possible recreation use.

The water source that fills the McKownville Reservoir has greatly dropped in quality as a result of road construction of the Northway, Thruway, and Washington Avenue Extension, and increased the difficulty of treatment. The filter plant is obsolete by today's standards, and would cost at least \$10,000 to put it back in temporary operation, with some \$40,000 additional to go back to permanent status. We have been advised by Environmental Conservation people, that we should effectuate a consolidation, or reopen the McKownville plant. We consider the reopening unadvisable. The new Safe Water Drinking Act of 1974, is effective June 24, 1977, and has greater requirements for processing and testing than in the past. Consolidation with Westmere would eliminate the new requirements in McKownville, and thus a cost savings.

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There also is a question of the McKownville supply being capable of furnishing enough water to satisfy the needs of the McKownville residents. The church pond is no longer available as a backup. In fact, in a public hearing a short time ago, the Town was advised that they were not authorized to utilize it as a part of the McKownville system.

All of the water for Westmere does not come from the Watervliet Reservoir. Approximately a third comes from its wells. We are on notice, however, by the Health Department to look for additional sources by the year 1980. Purchase of water from Watervliet Reservoir water for McKownville will not necessarily continue, regardless of whether the consolidation takes place. A directive from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to utilize the supply authorized, the McKownville Reservoir, could come at any time.

In comparing the 1977 budgets, had Westmere and McKownville been consolidated now, your water tax rate on your January tax bill would have been \$.86 per thousand of assessed valuation more, or \$2.58 for the year on a base of \$3000 assessment. The tax rate for the coming year might be reduced under consolidation, as a result of the \$956,000 federal grant. This project will add \$2,000,000 to the tax base of Westmere. Without consolidation, McKownville will get no benefit from this federal grant.

The question has been raised about the Westmere charge to McKownville of \$.80 per thousand gallons of water used. It is a standard practice to charge double the rate for water sold outside a district's boundaries. In 1975, it cost Westmere \$.43 per thousand for operational and maintenance only, or a total of \$.99 per thousand including debt costs. In 1976 the cost was \$.40 per thousand for operational and maintenance expense or a total of \$1.07 per thousand including debt costs.

Consolidation also would make available a much greater tax base in the event of a major repair or improvement.

We are always available to answer any questions that you might still have in your mind on the consolidation question. Should an election be held, we hope everyone will vote and give us a true feeling of the hamlet of McKownville.

Very truly yours,

Durward C. Brewer, Supt.
Dept. of Water & Sanitation