

12-MAR-74  
PD

# McKownville a village? Residents to discuss incorporation Tuesday

By SHARON GAZIN  
Knickerbocker News Reporter

**GUILDERLAND** — If residents of the hamlet of McKownville decide they want to incorporate the area as a village, they will have to sign petitions, hold a hearing and referendum, and raise \$1,000 to cover expenses, a state official says.

Donald Reeb, president of the 100-member McKownville Improvement Association, said the group will explore the issue at a meeting at 8 p.m. Tuesday in the Tom Sawyer Motel.

Kevin Crawford, an attorney in the Legal Services Division of the state Department of State, said the group must first submit petitions signed by 20 percent of the voters in the hamlet to the town supervisor.

Then a legal notice of a hearing must be published in newspapers and posted in five places in the town. Before the hearing is held by the town supervisor, he must determine if the petition is legal, Crawford said.

Only after the petition and hearing process is completed can a referendum be held to determine whether voters in the hamlet want to incorporate as a village.

Crawford said the proposed village must have more than 500 residents, and the sum of \$1,000 must be deposited with the supervisor to pay for voting expenses.

Reeb said McKownville residents were considering the move because they felt it would give them more control over their home area.

"We would then be able to control zoning, and changes in property uses in the area," Reeb said.

He said the move might have some financial advantages because residents would only have to pay a portion of town taxes, and also might be eligible for state and federal aid.

"It may balance out in such a way that there will be a tax reduction," Reeb said.

John Eslar, a former president of the association, predicted residents would willingly raise \$1,000 for the project.

"It would be worth a lot more than \$1,000 to the hamlet of McKownville to have the right to determine the zoning changes that have happened here in the past," he said. "We have not previously had the right to say yes or no, except as individual citizens."

Reeb said the association is also considering a push to reactivate the McKownville Reservoir, which has not been used since the early '70s. Hamlet residents now buy their water from the Westmere Water District.

Such a step would be a significant move in the association's attempt to stop construction of the proposed \$85 million Crossgates Mall inasmuch the mall would be built in a wetland that was once part of the reservoir system.

Experts for the Pyramid Crossgates Co. have attempted to establish evidence at environmental hearings that the water from the reservoir is undrinkable, but opponents of the mall have disputed their testimony.

A letter from Richard W. Svenson of the Albany County Department of Health has been submitted as evidence at the hearings. It states:

"This department has been on record that the source should not be considered for drinking water purposes because of poor existing quality and because of the proximity to the transportation corridors."

But Svenson's letter adds, "Until McKownville Water District gives up this source, the restrictions on discharges to the watershed will apply."

Opponents of the mall have sought to prove that runoff water from the proposed mall would pollute the reservoir.