

# Residents to weigh McKownville future at March 18 parley

*12 Mar 80*

Should McKownville incorporate as a village? Should it work with Westmere to establish a park district separate from Guilderland's? Should it reactivate the McKownville Water District?

Those are the major questions that leaders of the McKownville Improvement Association hope to debate at an 8 p.m. meeting March 18 at the Tom Sawyer Motor Inn on Western Avenue.

One of those leaders, Donald Reeb, association president, said Tuesday that McKownville has "lingered too long" over these questions.

Reeb attributes the recent revival of the questions, which he said aren't new, to the "raised consciousness" because of the association's fight against development on Western Avenue. The McKownville Improvement Association is one of the most vocal opponents of the proposed \$85 million Crossgates Mall.

"I think we need more control of our affairs," Reeb said, citing the independence exhibited by Altamont, a western Guilderland village.

In the past 20 years, the hamlet of McKownville has had poor representation on the Guilderland Town Board and once, in the early 1960s, residents considered annexation to the city of Albany. At present, Republican John Smircich is the only McKownville resident on the five-member town board.

Reeb said incorporation, as well as establishing a park district and reactivating the water district, would involve support of those suggestions in a referendum. And, in the case of incorporation, the hamlet would have to gain state approval.

The water district has been inactive since the early 1970s when a break in the dam of one of two district-owned reservoirs forced it to buy water from the Westmere District, Reeb said.

He added the park district has been discussed in the last few years because town officials have failed to establish a park for residents in the eastern section of town.