

## McKownville: News And Comment

By LINDSAY CHILDS

The McKownville Improvement Association is planning a repeat of last year's highly successful dinner meeting, on Feb. 16, at the Tom Sawyer Motor Inn.

The featured speaker of the evening is expected to be Assemblyman (and Enterprise columnist) Richard Conners. A year ago Mr. Conners became the representative from McKownville, replacing Mike Hoblock, because of a change in district boundaries.

A dinner meeting is a nice way for the community to make his acquaintance. As last year, the evening hopefully will include some musical entertainment and, of course, the Tom Sawyer's excellent fare.

That's Thursday, Feb. 16 at 7 p.m., preceded by a cash bar at 6. It should be a pleasant evening.

The McKownville Improvement Association board met last week to consider some of the new threats to the residential quality of the hamlet.

Several Association members turned out to the town Zoning Board meeting on Dec. 21, both to oppose the Crossgates cinema sign variance request (the cinema signs were turned down) and to oppose variances for a proposed tire store on the O'Hanlon's Mobil Station site on the corner of Western Ave. and Brookwood St. In connection with the tire store variance, the Association discovered that the zoning boundary between the commercially zoned property fronting Western Ave. and the residential district behind, places one residence on Brookwood St. and parts of two more, one on Brookwood, one on Westlyn Court, in the commercial district.

This is the kind of situation which last year caused a lot of problems with 50 Fuller Road. The Association plans to ask the Town Board to examine the situation.

The variances for the proposed tire store were denied, after the Zoning Board realized (with some citizen encouragement) that the tire store would be a B-2 use in a B-1 zone.

The Association, which urged in 1982 that that block of Western Ave. be rezoned to a more restrictive commercial zoning (such as R-NB), plans to ask the town to reconsider the zoning on that block again, so that the residential character of the block will be maintained and the attractiveness of the surrounding area for residential use will be enhanced.

### Proposed Civic Center

The Association board discussed the proposed Albany County Civic Center and the suggested location on the SUNY land between Mercer St. and Washington Ave. Extension. The feeling was that a facility seating 12,000 would be far too

large for the SUNY site and would lead to parking and traffic overflowing into McKownville. In addition, it would cut off any possibility of building the "SUNY loop," the proposed ramp to carry eastbound traffic on Washington Ave. Extension onto the Northway heading north. That loop is desired by the Town of Guilderland to help take through traffic off Western Ave. in Westmere.

Your correspondent dusted off the old Crossgates traffic studies to see what would happen to the intersection of Washington Ave. Extension and Fuller Road if a civic center were to attract a capacity crowd, arriving during the 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. hour. That hour happens to coincide with the peak exiting hour for traffic from the Crossgates Mall. I assumed that the civic center would draw 3,000 cars during that time — a conservative number for a 12,000 seat facility poorly served by public transportation — of whom around 800 would enter the Fuller Road/Washington Ave. intersection heading south on Fuller Road (for example, after coming off I-90 from the east), while 1,500 vehicles would come west on Washington Ave. (for example, after coming off the Thruway or Northway onto I-90 and getting off at Exit 2) and would turn left onto Fuller Road to enter the Civic Center site.

Adding this traffic to the projected Crossgates and ordinary traffic during that hour, gives a green-to-cycle ratio needed for the Fuller Road/Washington Ave. intersection, computed at level of service E, of 1.27, or far beyond capacity. The calculation assumed three through lanes eastbound on Washington Ave. (there are currently two), two through lanes southbound on Fuller Road (one is now currently used mostly for left turns), two left turn lanes westbound on Washington Ave. (there is currently one, with a small queue space), and one left turn lane for northbound Fuller Road traffic turning left.

In short, even with substantial widening of the Fuller Road/Washington Ave. Extension intersection, the intersection would be entirely inadequate to handle civic center traffic for any popular weekday evening event.

If civic center patrons were to find out that the Fuller Road/Washington Ave. intersection is a major bottleneck, their other choice of route from the interstate highway system to the Civic Center would be via Western Ave. and Fuller Road in McKownville.

That traffic would queue up for a single lane left turn at the Western Ave./Fuller Road intersection. The resulting traffic jam would more than rival the one at Washington Ave.

The McKownville Improvement

Association plans to voice these concerns, and concerns about the inadequate size of the SUNY site for parking for 12,000 patrons, soon. Readers of this column who are concerned about the impacts of a civic center nearby should not sit back and let the Association do it alone. Write your county legislator, or better yet, write your legislator and send copies of the letter to all the rest.

The decision will be near at hand on Jan. 23, when the SUNY proposal is due to be submitted. So now is the time to act.

The town seems to be a little slow this year getting the McKownville Reservoir skating started. With the weather appropriate for skating on many people's driveways, we went by the reservoir to see if the ice was safe, and found that the sign which announces whether or not the ice is safe was missing. Town Hall knew nothing about it, but did suggest we try Tawasentha Park. We did.

Tawasentha has a nice area of flat grass down by the pavilions which is flooded for a rink, and on the Friday before New Year's the ice was fairly good and far from crowded. But we would have preferred the reservoir. Especially after the town invested some money last year to make it attractive, only to have the weather not cooperate.

Hopefully by the time you read this the reservoir will be getting the town's attention. For ice skating, at least.

### Woodscape

We had a chance to visit Jim and Willa Lane's new home in Woodscape, McKownville's new housing development off McKown Road. The Lanes moved there two weeks ago from Providence Street. Mr. Lane, who is vice president of the McKownville Improvement Association, retired a couple of years ago, and as Mrs. Lane put it, all of a sudden the Providence St. house she loved became too small. Their Woodscape home has six rooms on one floor, has a very spacious feel to it, and certainly solves the problem.

The Woodscape development, under construction by Rosen-Michaels, keeps many of the natural features of the land, the trees, the slopes (which, however, are not so attractive when they ice up), and the homes have a natural wood siding which is quite attractive. If the Lanes' house is representative, it is easy to see why the development is successful — we're told that the homes are selling faster than they can be built — and even in subfreezing weather construction was proceeding at full pace.