

By LINDSAY CHILDS

We had planned to take a paternity leave from this column for a while, to allow us more time to enjoy the arrival of Justin David Childs (9 lbs., 6 oz., 22 inches) on April 15. But there are a few events of timely community interest coming up which should be mentioned. So we are taking advantage of one of Justin's naps to write them down.

First, a correction. The SUNY University-Community Orchestra and Chorale, and the Capitol Hill Choral Society will present only one performance of the Berlioz Requiem, not two, as reported in this column two weeks ago. The performance will be at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on May 8.

Of more specifically local interest to McKownvillians (McKown-

villites? McKownvillagers?) are two items related to the planned new town park off Schoolhouse Road. Both will be considered by the Guilderland Town Board at its meeting on May 8.

One is a proposed rezoning of the 14-acre parcel between Oak Drive and the Thruway, from R-15 to R-B. The proposed park would be located on about half of this parcel. Kenneth Reynolds, the applicant for the rezoning, proposes to develop the other half in some manner which has not yet been made public, and has asked for the rezoning to R-B to permit the development he has in mind.

R-B, Residential-Business, is a very flexible and permissive zoning classification which has added to the town's zoning law following a review in 1980 of the master plan by a committee appointed by then-Supervisor Carl Walters.

Permitted in an R-B zone are single-family detached dwellings on 3,500 square foot lots, or townhouses at an average density of 12 to the acre; apartments and condominiums; buildings combining residential and professional office uses; general office buildings; banks, mail order sales, printing shops, personal service businesses, laundromats, and all kinds of retail stores. R-B permits the highest density residential development of any zoning classification in the town, and is also the only zoning classification except PUD (Planned Unit Development) which permits a mix of residential, retail and general office uses.

R-B is not the kind of zoning the town should be comfortable placing on a parcel of land in a sensitive location involving an unknown development by an unknown developer.

This proposed rezoning came before the Town Planning Board early this month, and that board recommended against the rezoning by a 4-3 vote, with all four McKownville residents on the board voting against. The board was given no information at all about what Mr. Reynolds had in mind for a development on the parcel.

The Town Board was to have held a public hearing on the rezoning application on April 10, but Mr. Reynolds did not appear, perhaps because the architect who is preparing the development proposal was not available. So the Town Board continued the rezoning proposal to May 8.

A major factor in the rezoning consideration is that Mr. Reynolds has been agreeable about the idea of selling half of the parcel to the town for a park at an acceptable price. If the town could be confident that his proposal for the other half of the parcel was reasonable, then his willingness to cooperate on the park proposal is a powerful inducement. But without knowing what he has in mind, the Planning Board was reluctant to go along.

Hopefully the Town Board will be better informed before it acts.

Also on May 8, the Town Board will consider an action to take by eminent domain two easements on the Campione property, located between McKown Road and the eastern boundary of the Reynolds property and the ends of Shady Lane and Country Road. Dr. Campione, whose parcel includes 25 wooded acres, has been less cooperative with the town than Mr. Reynolds. The town is seeking easements for both a sewer line and walkway through that property. The walkway is to provide access by foot and bicycle between McKown Road and the proposed park.

The two actions by the Town Board on May 8 should give a good indication of how the McKownville park proposal is coming along.

The following week, Tuesday, May 15, the McKownville Improvement Association will hold its annual meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Tom Sawyer Motor Inn. All residents of McKownville are invited.

Aside from the election of

officers, the meeting will feature two guest speakers, both Enterprise writers, on historical themes.

Fred Abele, McKownville correspondent for the Enterprise and assistant town historian, will give a discussion and slide presentation on the history of McKownville. Mr. Abele needs no further introduction, either to residents of McKownville or to Enterprise readers. This writer is particularly pleased that Mr. Abele has accepted the association's invitation.

This year is the centenary of the Enterprise, and Bryce Butler, contributing writer for the Enterprise, will talk about 100 years of the history recorded in it. Mr. Butler's recent writings have included an unforgettable review of the Albany-Rensselaer Metropolitan Telephone Directory which appeared in this newspaper a couple of months ago. We're looking forward to hearing him.

On the weekend of May 19 and 20, the McKownville Improvement Association will hold its spring paper drive at 1450 Western Ave. A good date to plan your spring cleaning around.

Finally, looking ahead a bit more, the Town Board has contracted with Manuel S. Emanuel Associates of Nyack to do a comprehensive study of development along Western Ave. in McKownville and Westmere. This study is proposed to be completed by the end of the summer. In connection with the study, Emanuel Associates plans to hold at least two public meetings to get input from residents and businessmen. These public meetings are expected to be held in June.

Readers who have been concerned about Western Ave. and development along it, and have any ideas about its future, should look for announcements about these meetings. Trying to do effective planning along Western Ave. at this point in time, after many years of haphazard development and in a community which has traditionally been antipathetic to planning, is a major challenge, and Emanuel Associates will need all the help it can get.