

McKownville Improvement Association
Thursday, January 12, 2006, 7-9pm
Holiday Inn Express, 1442 Western Avenue

Happy New Year. Western Avenue commercial property use will be the major discussion topic at the McKownville Improvement Association meeting in January.

Beginning in 2000 the Town and the Improvement Association worked together to create a plan for public improvements on Western Avenue—sidewalks, curbs, gutters, storm water drainage, lighting, bus patron shelters and so forth. This was long overdue and we will soon see these plans being put into action. Now the Western Avenue highway improvements need be coupled with a restudy of commercial property zoning along Western, especially the south side of Western.

Taco Pronto is for sale/lease as is Denny's as is the vacant lot next to the Christ Lutheran Church as is the house next to Sutters as is 1434 Western (Capital Winnair—the Tusang building). Then 1208/1210 Western is looking to be redeveloped, the Capitol Lodge may be replaced, and Across the Street Pub is looking to expand. As these and other commercial properties along Western are reused, it is important that their redevelopment make the neighborhood a nicer place to live. We are named the McKownville Improvement Association.

To promote this, a Zoning Study Committee was created by Mr. Runion and the Town Board. Its members are Steve Haraus, Mark Macomber, Alice Torda, Laura Whalen and me. We will have had two meetings by the time the Improvement Association meets on the 12th.

More often than not, Western Avenue commercially zoned lots in McKownville are too small to have sufficient parking for the number of customers the businesses now need. Also, the sites commonly have access difficulties because of Western Avenue traffic (the Christ Lutheran empty lot is a great example). The result is that businesses require oversized variances for parking and green space which in turn create problems of parking, traffic, noise and smells for neighbors. The zoning needs to be restudied.

Other news. CESTM&Nanotech expansion plans. The Shabbos. Starbucks. The City land fill. The reuse of the Harriman campus (State office building campus). The Renaissance Hotel at Crossgates. The McKown Road sidewalk. The Flyover. And the Across the Street Pub. The Pub was discussed at the December Zoning Board meeting.

To build the proposed deck on the Pub—it would be in its Arcadia parking lot and next to the older McKownville Fire department building—a 50 percent parking variance would be necessary. This is far in excess of what is usually granted. The Zoning Board chair made the motion to deny the variance. The surprise was that the motion was defeated, with the majority of the Board ignoring the problem of insufficient parking for this use. Neighbors on Arcadia are quite upset. The Association supports the neighbors. The case is still pending and a Zoning Board decision will likely be made in January/February.

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Comments about this announcement should be made to Don Reeb at 489-3909 or sent to dreeb@albany.edu