

Guilderland hears McKownville drainage plans

Study outlines stormwater problems

By ARIANA COHN
news@spotlightnews.com

Representatives from Delaware Engineering, P.C. presented a McKownville drainage analysis at the Tuesday, Sept. 21, Guilderland Town Board meeting that recommends nearly \$7 million be spent to correct drainage issues in that part of town.

Supervisor Ken Runion said solutions to the drainage issues, which affects between 60 and 70 homes, could begin as soon as next fall.

"We have some serious problems down there," he said. "To get some relief

in that area, I think, is something that would be prudent."

The study, which was commissioned last November, examined five separate areas in McKownville, ranking them from most severe to least. The area experiencing the most severe problems is between Western Avenue and the University at Albany campus, according to Runion.

Runion said residents there see frequent flooding of their yards and basements after heavy storms and snow melt.

After hearing frequent complaints about the issue, the town hired Delaware Engineering to conduct a drainage study. The draft was completed in July and distributed to the board in August.

According to Fred Grober, an engineer with Delaware Engineering, 125 acres in McKownville were examined, including more than 500 properties. McKownville's population represents about 20 percent of the town.

Grober said in order to correct the drainage issues, engineers would have to install new, bigger pipes at the property line, which would drain out to a central retention system. Individual property owners would then be able to pump the water out to the stormwater retention system instead of onto their lawns and basements.

"The property owner would be responsible for connecting to the lateral at their property line," said Grober, adding that such a connection would cost about \$2,500 and be optional for the property owner.

The study also examined possible stormwater management systems and potential locations for a retention site.

"Retention without some sort of water management system in place could have an impact on utilities downstream," said Grober.

Grober said that the town needs to come up with a long-term system

rather than simply picking a new spot to retain the stormwater.

After the meeting, Runion said that the town currently has a stormwater retention site, but that site is nearly full. The town would need to choose another site before making repairs to the drainage system as outlined in the study.

"I think one of the issues that this board is grappling with is funding," said Runion.

Grober told the board that Delaware Engineering has already applied for many assistance programs that would help ease the burden of the nearly \$7 million project. Runion said the town has received a commitment of \$500,000 from Sen. Neil Breslin, D-Delmar, through New York State multi-modal funds that are to be used for the town's stormwater management system.

"Primarily, this will probably be used for design," said Runion. "The rest will probably be used in [the most severe areas]."

Grober said the northern section of McKownville has not seen the same type of drainage issues as the western section.

Grober said he hopes that if the town can receive some assistance, they would be able to parlay the funding into receiving additional funding to complete the project without the town having to foot the bulk of the bill.

Councilman Warren Redlich asked Grober if it would be cost-effective for the town to look into acquiring some of the properties through eminent domain, but Grober said he did not think this would be beneficial for the town as it would not save the town a significant amount of money.

"Nobody likes to take other people's property, and if you are going to take someone's property, you better have a good reason," said Grober.

Runion said that generally, the board would not approve imminent

domain in a situation like this.

After the board was finished asking questions, Don Reeb, a resident of McKownville who has been an outspoken critic of the drainage issues, passed out copies of legislation on the matter that was rejected by the Guilderland Town Board in 1950.

"This Town Board has been so much more interested and supportive of addressing stormwater issues in 2010," said Reeb, expressing his appreciation to the Town Board.

Runion asked Grober to prepare an outline prioritizing the repairs for the board, in addition to providing a recommendation for how the town can "get the biggest bang for the buck" out of the \$500,000 in state funding on the project. The supervisor said the Town Board expects to have more information on the state funding commitment at the next regular Town Board meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 5.

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