

McKownville rejects special zoning for doctors

McKOWNVILLE—Voters faced with a choice of whether Guilderland's zoning law should be enforced or changed to accommodate four existing medical practices have voted for enforcement and dumped a two-year controversy back in the lap of the town board.

By a 377 to 97 margin, residents of the McKownville Fire District voted against a proposed amendment to the zoning law that would permit physicians to practice in R-10 (residential with 10,000 square feet minimum lot size) zones, providing they obtain special use permits from the town.

The special referendum was called by the town board last month after some two years of study failed to come up with a

solution.

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Many residents, including McKownville Improvement Association members, objected to zoning code violations, citing parking problems on residential streets as one of the main difficulties. The physicians, who are in violation of a zoning stipulation that they must reside in the buildings where they practice, serve many patients in the McKownville area.

The town board, in calling Wednesday's special vote, noted it would not be bound by the outcome of the referendum, but would consider it as advice from the community.

There were indications the town board might take up the

problem at its June 11 meeting.

John Esler, president of the improvement association, called the outcome of the vote "one of the best things that has happened in McKownville in many years" because "people got out and voted rather than let someone else decide for them."

Esler noted the advisory role of the referendum, but commented: "I don't see how they can avoid the significance of it."

Nearly half of the community's more than 1,000 voters cast ballots in what was termed by one observer as a good turnout for a special election.