

From: Anne Gillett

Sent: Wednesday, June 20, 2012 12:16 AM

To: #CI-StPaul_Ward4

Subject: Opposition to Student Housing Neighborhood Impact District, Ordinance 12-34, Legislative Code Chapter 67

To Councilmember Russ Stark,

I would like to express my opposition to the proposed City of St Paul Amendment to Legislative Code Chapter 67, the Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District Ordinance.

I appreciate the time and effort the St Paul City Council members and Planning Commission have taken to try to understand and address the problems/concerns associated with having several universities within the city limits. However, the proposed ordinance would have many negative impacts for homeowners, landlords, and students. As an owner of a owner-occupied duplex who has been renting to students for almost 20 years and whose duplex is within the expanded overlay district, I will be directly, and negatively, impacted by this ordinance.

There are potentially several negative impacts of the ordinance. Negating an owner's right to rent could force some families into foreclosure as housing needs change. Illness, unemployment, military deployment and any number of reasons can put financial strain on families. Homeowners could find themselves with no choice but to rent their home in lieu of foreclosure or short sale. If they are restricted to renting only to another family, renting may not be an option. Homeowners may not be able to afford maintenance and improvements to the properties they can't rent, which can lead to an increase in foreclosures along with the increased difficulty of selling the properties. If their house becomes vacant or goes into foreclosure, the home could fall into disrepair. This would negatively impact the look of the area.

The ordinance would also restrict the number of prospective buyers to only ones that are planning to occupy the properties. Very few investors or parents of students would be interested in purchasing a property that they couldn't rent and/or sell easily later. It makes buying a house or duplex in our area less desirable to people who have the financial backing to be able to maintain the properties and keep them out of foreclosure. The tax base would also be negatively impacted as more properties become vacant.

I also understand the thought behind having 150 feet between student properties but isn't that discriminating against students by assuming all students will be guilty of creating disturbances and ruining property?

I think a better way to deal with preventing problems in the neighborhoods would be to treat the students like adults and make them accountable for their actions as the problems occur. The "schools-based approach", the "landlord based

approach" and the "parents of students, neighbors, and student groups" approach suggested in the St Paul Planning Commission: Student Housing Zoning Study (Mar. 2012) draft are very good ideas and should be implemented by everyone to increase the communication and respect of each group for each other.

Respectfully submitted,
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