

Support Ordinance

From: **Winston Kaehler** <
Date: Sat, Jun 23, 2012 at 6:30 PM
Subject: student housing amendment
To: ward6@ci.stpaul.mn.us

Please vote in favor of the amendment to control the proliferation of conversion of owner-occupied family housing to student rental units in proposed areas of St. Paul. I feel the ordinance should be effective citywide, but the proposed area is a good first step. As the City becomes more dependent on residential property tax revenue, homeowners and homebuyers need to have a clear message that the City is willing to protect their equity and interest in living in the city to raise their families. The school system will also benefit from retaining this resident population.

The amendment is basically a zoning refinement that will not cost the City anything, but will return great benefits. If the City takes a laissez-faire attitude toward its main resource--strong concerned middle-class neighborhoods--more and more families will lose faith and abandon the city for suburban living. We will become another Detroit or Cleveland, with rich, poor, and a few urban pioneers, but little middle class. Absentee landlords should not be allowed to profit from housing shortages at the expense of people who are willing make a strong longterm commitment to St. Paul by living within its boundaries and contributing to the ongoing vitality and strength of the city. This amendment is LONG overdue. Please pass it.

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Dear Council Members Stark and Tolbert,

We wish to communicate our support for approval of the student-rental restrictions near UST. As seven-year residents of Mac-Groveland, we have grown to accept the tradeoffs inherit in living close to a university. We are part of a wonderful community with great neighbors and older housing that has been nicely maintained. There are quite a few rental homes and duplexes on our street. Most are inhabited by St. Thomas students. A few present continual problems (noise, litter, vandalism, etc). We wish that wasn't the case, but understand that it comes with the territory and work with neighbors, UST and the police (when necessary) to improve conditions for all.

What concerns us is the drift we've seen toward more and more student occupied housing. With each owner-occupied conversion to student rental the chances of our neighborhood maintaining a balance between families, single professionals and students

diminishes. Buyers are wary of moving into our neighborhood for fear that it will become a "Party Block." Current residents are anxious to leave for exactly the same reason. Unfortunately these responses produce exactly the result we fear--more rentals, lower property values, more noisy parties, more vandalism and more properties falling into disrepair. To those who claim that this is not a student-rental problem, but more broadly a rental problem, we beg to differ. Student rentals turn over faster. Residents are less likely to treat the rental with respect if they don't plan to stay there past a year or two. And, let's be honest, college students don't typically show the same respect to their neighbors that older and more mature renters do. In reasonable numbers, student rentals are part of a balanced neighborhood, but when they dot streets in large numbers, the balance is lost. What might be a single loud party becomes streams of drunken students wandering from house to house several nights a week. We are teetering on that edge today. Two families have decided just this week (in the wake of the council decision on the Grand-Finn dorm complex) to sell. If those homes become rentals, student-occupied homes will total 40% of homes on our block.

We have heard that the problems related to student rentals are issues for UST and the police. Believe us, we use those resources and the problems remain.

We have heard that limiting rentals near UST will only "push the problem to other neighborhoods." This argument makes no sense. Unless UST expands its student numbers, there is no need for new rentals. What we are seeing is a transition from a broad geographic distribution of rentals serving students to a much denser packing of student rentals around the campus. Limiting rentals near UST won't force students out, it will only reduce the numbers moving in.

We have heard that an ordinance limiting student rentals is unenforceable and potential unconstitutional. I'm not a lawyer and don't know the details, but it seems to me that limiting rentals is no different than any other zoning restriction. Identifying the renters as students is on par with limiting the number of unrelated residents in any other rental.

Lastly we have heard that limiting homeowner options (homestead or rent) will depress home values. Maybe it will, but we value the balance of our neighborhood more than the resale price of our home.

Please help us maintain balance in one of St Paul's great neighborhoods. Please vote yes to restrict new student rentals and lobby your fellow Council members to do the same.

We end this letter with a bit of irony. Each year or two when a new crop of students moves into the rental next to our house we have the opportunity to briefly chat with their parents. Almost to a one they have commented on what a nice neighborhood their child is moving into. They're right, but without Council help it won't stay that way.

Sincerely Yours,

Justin, Kelly, Emma (age 9) and Silas (age 6)

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Dear Russ,

Please vote yes on this ordinance. I believe it will preserve neighborhood stability and balance while providing good rental opportunities for students and rental property owners.

Ann Garvey
2006 Fairmount Avenue

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Dear Russ,

I understand the Student Rental Housing Ordinance is up for a final reading this week. I will not be able to join you for this council meeting, but I wanted to let you know I support the ordinance and hope City Council will pass it. While it is far from a perfect solution, I think it is a reasonable and realistic approach to the situation being created by the University of Saint Thomas.

The University has taken to asking "why us" over the past few weeks. I think that is a very good question: they should be concerned that they are being singled out by this ordinance. I think it is appropriate and correct to single UST out because it has been woefully neglectful of its students, both in their housing and in their education. I live in an area where we interact with Macalester, St. Kates, and UST students. We can all-too-often identify the UST students by their disrespect for neighbors and property. UST seems to want to grow larger in every way but housing its students, claiming that bonds for dorms are hard to come by. Yet they seem quite capable of raising money for other facilities that are filling up their campus. Saint Thomas has brought this added scrutiny

and regulation on itself. This ordinance will help the neighborhood preserve a delicate balance.

Thank you,
...Eric

Eric Celeste

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Dear Councilmember Stark:

I am writing to ask for your support of the student rental ordinance. As a homeowner in Merriam Park for the past eleven years, I've learned from bitter experience that the University of St. Thomas lacks either the capacity or the will to address the problem of unruly student behavior in our neighborhood (i.e., loud parties, under-age drinking, belligerent behavior, vandalism). The police are generally response to neighborhood calls but this is insufficient in addressing the underlying problem of too many young, unsupervised students. We love our neighborhood, but the increase student rentals threatens to destroy the balance of homeowners and transient renters. My wife and I have two daughters to raise. Why are we being asked to monitor the behavior of hundreds of young adults?

Please, support this ordinance on students rentals in our neighborhood and help us maintain a healthy balance as we work to preserve a strong, close community for our families.

Sincerely,

Jerry Smith
1906 Laurel Avenue

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I am writing to let you know that I live on Laurel and Prior. I support the student housing ordinance. In order to preserve home values and our neighborhood's quality of life, there must be a limit on student housing.

Carrie Daklin

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Dear Representatives Stark and Tolbert, I live in Merriam Park and urge you to vote for the student housing ordinance to help preserve neighborhood balance.

Sincerely,
David Caccamo
2108 Carroll Avenue

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Dear Council Member Stark,

As thirty-seven year residents of Lincoln Avenue in St. Paul, we have witnessed

the negative impact resulting from the increased number of student rental houses in the neighborhood. We urge you to vote yes in support of the Student Housing Ordinance. Please help to preserve our neighborhood balance!

Thanks

Jim and Loretta Nuessle
2081 Lincoln Avenue
Homeowners at this address since 1975

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I attended the Council meeting last Wednesday and was encouraged to see the large number of people in attendance who support the the Student Ordinance as I do. I am sure you also heard the startling testimony from many residents on the harmful effects that too many students in too close a space can produce.

At the center of this problem are school officials who create policies and programs that bring in too many students for an urban school in a residential neighborhood. The UST must be monitored by the city on the number of students they bring into the school. The officials at the school have ignored the problems they create time after time. They are arrogant in their attitude toward neighborhood concerns. Please vote to retain the ordinance.

Beverly Ferguson
2122 Carroll Ave.
St. Paul. 55104

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Dear Mr. Russ Stark and Mr. Chris Tolbert,

My family is in support of the student housing ordinance.

Sincerely, Carolyn, Cris, Maggie, Frank, Martha, and George Enestvedt
1883 Ashland Ave

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Dear Representative Stark,

I live in Merriam Park and I urge you to vote for the student housing ordinance to help preserve neighborhood balance.

Sincerely,
Daniel Sturm
2072 Carroll Ave.
St.Paul, MN 55104

Hello,

I am a victim of St Thomas student housing issues in my neighborhood.
We have had years of bad behavior from St Thomas students living in the rental property next door on the 192x block of Dayton Ave.

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Robin Roberts
1927 Dayton Ave
St. Paul, MN 55104

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DeeDee Roberts