

From: Rita Mattaini
Sent: Friday, June 15, 2012 3:17 PM
To: Henningson, Samantha (CI-StPaul); Wittig-Geske, Nicole (CI-StPaul)
Cc: Steve Mattaini
Subject: Fw: Student Rental Housing Ordinance

Dear Samantha and Nicole: Below please find letters in support of the Student Rental Housing Ordinance submitted by my husband and me to the St Paul Planning Commission. We are disappointed the Commission declined support of the Ordinance and urge the City Council to enact it despite the Commission's stance.

As stated very persuasively by Joel Clemmens, the Ordinance provides one very important tool to maintaining the balance of home ownership in our neighborhood. It neither prohibits student rentals in their entirety nor does it provide a solution to all the problems associated with student rentals. We will have to continue to work to solve this problem with many tools. If this Ordinance is not included in the suite of solutions, however, no other efforts or approaches (short of St Thomas building sufficient on-campus housing and requiring on-campus residence for its students) will have a chance of success.

Student rentals threaten the value of the residential real estate in our neighborhood and thus the tax base so important to St Paul.

They threaten the sense of community and investment in our homes that keep the neighborhoods vital.

They erode the peace and tranquility of our homes.

They lead to unsightly properties that are not mowed or weeded in the summer, are not shoveled out in the winter, are not maintained or upgraded.

In all, allowing St Thomas to foist its housing problem upon the neighborhood will lead to the further degradation of the community. Please provide the resident homeowners with one piece of the solution that the City Council can contribute. Pass the Student Rental Housing Ordinance.

Rita McConnell Mattaini
2097 Goodrich
St Paul, MN

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Rita Mattaini <>
To: "ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us" <ward4@ci.stpaul.mn.us>
Cc: Steve Mattaini <>
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2012 7:07 PM
Subject: Fw: Student Rental Housing Ordinance

Dear Mr. Stark and Ms. Henningson,

Below please find messages my husband and I sent to Josh Williams supporting Student Rental Housing Ordinance. We know we speak for a wide group of our neighbors, many of whom are elderly, who are deeply concerned about the impact of student housing on our neighborhood. We need significant action for the reasons set forth below. Please support the Ordinance and forward our comments to any of your fellow Councilmembers who have concerns or questions. We would be happy to have further discussions as needed.

Rita McConnell Mattaini
2097 Goodrich
Saint Paul, MN 55105

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Steve Mattaini <
To: josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us; Rita Mattaini <>
Sent: Thursday, April 26, 2012 5:05 PM
Subject: Re: Student Rental Housing Ordinance
Dear Mr. Williams:

I just had a few additional comments to add to Rita's as always well reasoned letter. First, understand that I graduated from St. Thomas, and appreciate and value the school. I understand the school's concern that it is being "singled out" for special treatment. I would respectfully suggest, however, that the number of police calls and neighbor complaints suggests that St. Thomas has earned this "special treatment."

To understand the impact of student housing on the neighborhood, let me briefly tell you of our experience with the student house on our block. To be awakened on a weekday night, as we often have been, right after bar closing time, even if only once or twice a month, affects the residents every night, since they never know whether tonight will be "party night." For those of us who work, and/or have small children, it makes the neighborhood much less livable. And regardless of landlords' statements, during the process of attempting to expand the availability of such housing, that they are responsible and responsive, we have found them much less so once the housing is in place. If anyone doubts this, I invite them to stroll the neighborhood. It will be immediately crystal clear which houses are student housing.

Further, as a taxpayer and voter, I want to remind those making the decisions that, given that our property taxes have essentially doubled over the last four or five years, the city has a substantial interest in maintaining the property values in the surrounding neighborhoods. Every new student dwelling on the block accomplishes two things: it indisputably lowers the value of every house on the block, and it provides yet more incentive for long term residents to consider leaving. A rapid decline in the tax base will soon reach a tipping point, and once it begins it will be irreversible. Once student housing is established, it will remain so, even if wiser heads belatedly realize the erosion of the tax base of a city which can scarcely afford that to happen.

Our block, as Rita notes, contains many families that have lived here, and invested in the City, for decades. But I can assure you that every time a house is listed for sale on the block, each resident is concerned it will become more student housing. It is the subject of substantial conversation, and leads to a feeling the neighborhood is under siege.

Finally, I have recently heard the argument that buying a house near St. Thomas is like buying a house near an airport, that one "knows what your are getting into." When we bought our house, the enrollment was a little under 6,000. It is now over 10,000. For the first twenty years we lived here, there was no issue with problem student housing encroaching on the neighborhood. When my daughter and I went on a campus tour a few years ago, the University hosts stressed the fact that one of St. Thomas' attractions was the "lovely residential neighborhood" in which it was set. The situation has changed, and it is not the residents who have made the change.

Frankly, St. Thomas really has no "dog in this fight." Its mission is to educate students. If St. Thomas has chosen not to provide enough housing for its students, St. Thomas should solve the problem, either by limiting enrollment or providing more. As the parent of two recent college graduates, and one child still in college, I know the clear trend nationally is to provide more and better on campus housing. If St. Thomas chooses not to expend its resources to provide adequate housing, it must accept the consequences. It should not be allowed to shift the problem onto others. The importance of this issue to this area of St. Paul cannot be overstated.

--- On **Thu, 4/26/12, Rita Mattaini** < > wrote:

From: Rita Mattaini < >
Subject: Student Rental Housing Ordinance
To: josh.williams@ci.stpaul.mn.us
Cc: "Steve Mattaini" < >
Date: Thursday, April 26, 2012, 4:23 PM

Dear Mr. Williams:

I am writing on behalf of myself and my husband to register our strong support for the Student Housing Ordinance being considered by the Planning Commission for the neighborhoods adjacent to the University of St Thomas.

My husband and I have deep roots in the neighborhood. We have lived in our home (just blocks from St Thomas) for over 28 years, moving in when St Thomas was just a small college. We raised our children in the neighborhood, sent them to neighborhood schools, support the local merchants, and made a very significant investment in our home over the years. These efforts, like those of our neighbors who are permanent residents, have significantly contributed to the sense of community, the strength of the neighborhood, and the high property tax basis for the properties.

The proposal to limit rental housing in our neighborhood is critical to maintaining the

community. Frankly, I view it as a minimal measure. In our experience, having just one student rental property on the block can mean a significant decline in the quality of life for the neighbors. It means properties that are not improved, sidewalks that are not shoveled, yards that are weedy messes, blocks that are parked up with student cars, and late-night noises from the comings and goings (let alone parties and disturbances). Our block has one such property and it has meant changes for the permanent residents who have spent, in some cases, 40 or 50 years bringing strength, pride, cohesion, safety and value to the area.

St Paul prides itself as a city of neighborhoods. That is its distinguishing feature. To preserve the strength of the neighborhoods, we must have an appropriate mix of homeowners who will continue to contribute to that source of pride.

Filling the neighborhoods with a transient student population - and in the process, creating St Paul's own Dinkytown - is inconsistent with the city's interests. It is inconsistent with the permanent resident's interests. Those are the interests that must be paramount in this debate. The city should not protect the "rights" of absentee landlords who wish to take properties on our block to advance their business interests. It should not protect St Thomas's supposed "right" to shift the burden of meeting its students' housing needs to the neighborhood. But the city must protect the vested interests of those citizens who live, shop, and invest in the residences surrounding the university. It is those citizens who have much at stake in this debate.

Please take all appropriate and possible steps to protect these interests through the Ordinance.