June 14, 2012

Saint Paul City Council
310 City Hall
15 Kellogg Boulevard West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Dear Council President Lantry and Councilmembers,

The Board of Directors of the Union Park District Council reviewed the proposed Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District at its meeting on May 2, 2012. Three motions were passed in support of the Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District as follows:

> In the interest of creating and maintaining a livable neighborhood for all -- students, renters, homeowners, and college/university personnel - the Union Park District Council supports the Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District as proposed in a March 26, 2012 letter to the Neighborhood Committee ofthe City of Saint Paul Planning Commission.

> The Union Park District Council requests that the boundaries for the Student Housing Neighborhood Impact Overlay District be extended to include the Desnoyer Park neighborhood, as defined by the boundaries of Marshall Avenue on the south, Interstate 94 on the north, Cretin Avenue on the east, and the Mississippi River and St. Paul city limits on the west.

> The Union Park District Council encourages further exploration of the restorative justice program, approaches by campus security and City police toward improving student behavior, development of standards for landlords, and a study of whether increasing the supply of rental housing units within Union Park might alleviate the pressure on conversion of single-family homes into rental units. Additionally, Union Park District Council supports further exploration of the concepts listed on page 9 of the staff report, which include:

City Imposed Requirement for Universities:
- City-imposed campus housing requirements might also be a solution. Staff research did not turn up any examples of this approach elsewhere. However, Saint Paul already regulates aspects of college/university development and operation through conditional use permits; subject to legal review by the City of PED Staff recommendations:
  - Attorney's Office, the City could potentially require a college or university to provide a prescribed amount of housing on campus as a reasonable condition of a conditional use permit.

o Require/provide more on-campus housing, special programs to encourage ownership, buyback programs.

Schools-Based Approach:
- Educating students regarding acceptable behavior and the impacts of poor behavior should be part of any solution. Parents, student organizations, and neighbors can also play a role.
- Impose penalties for poor behavior. UST in particular has such a mechanism in place, but its effectiveness has been questioned by some.
- Require first and second year students to live on-campus, provide alternative (to dormitories) choices for on-campus housing, or simply provide more on-campus housing relative to student population.
- "Turn back" houses and duplexes that have been converted to student rentals.
- As part of the 2004 conditional use permit which authorized the expansion of the University of St. Thomas (UST) campus, UST was required to buy, rehab, and sell with deed restrictions requiring owner-occupancy 30 student rental houses; approximately 18 houses have been turned back to date. An alternative approach would be for a school to provide financial incentives to faculty and staff (or others) to purchase and occupy homes in the neighborhoods adjacent to the campus.

Landlord Based Approach:
- Require better tenant behavior. Lease terms which allow eviction of problem tenants are one potential tool. Use of such a tool can be encouraged by schools (through promotion or endorsement of landlords meeting certain standards), neighborhood organizations, or even student groups. This would be an alternative to a City-imposed approach.

Parents of students, neighbors, and student groups:
- Encourage and model better behavior and community engagement. Examples of potential strategies include educational programs, informal outreach between neighbors and students, and student service projects (for example, a UST student-group recently led a neighborhood trash pickup). These strategies would generally be pursued in cooperation with schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kidwell
Executive Director