

**From:** [HARRY & HEIDI BALLEY JR](#)  
**To:** [\\*CI-StPaul>Contact-Council](#); [#CI-StPaul.Ward4](#)  
**Cc:** [Privratsky, Matt \(CI-StPaul\)](#)  
**Subject:** Definition of Family in the St. Paul Zoning Code  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 3, 2021 10:18:17 AM

---

Members of the St. Paul City Council:

My name is Harry Balley, and I have lived at 2062 Iglehart Avenue for 25 years with my wife and daughters. We have called this home as a residence and community. We enjoy our location in the city which includes the proximity with regards to St. Thomas. There are some benefits and well as challenges. Years ago, my weekend routine included walking along my property to pick up beer cans and bottles the were dropped in in yard and along the sidewalk. I will say, there has been a dramatic reduction in this issue and we feel that St. Thomas and our liaison Amy Johnson have helped educate the students on what it means to be part of the community.

That being said, there are some good arguments for making a broader change to the zoning code, with its outdated definition of "family." However, undergraduate college students who rent housing for 1-2 years are not the kind of nontraditional family unit that the study was meant to address, and there is arguably no-good reason to apply the broader zoning change to student rentals within the Student Housing Overlay District. The reduction in students per unit has coincided with the reduction in disturbances, parties, and general disregard for the neighborhood.

The Student Housing Overlay District, an initiative of then councilman Russ Stark, was put into place in 2012 to stabilize housing stock in Merriam Park and Macalester Groveland. Many single-family homes around the University of St. Thomas were being converted to student rentals and there was real concern that a vibrant part of the city was slowly degrading into a Dinkytown environment, driving out long term renters and homeowners. We are grateful to the City for enacting this important zoning code provision, which remains an important tool we rely on to keep our neighborhood strong. Increasing the number of undergraduate students who can live together in a rental house from four to six will undermine that and other shared goals.

Please listen to those who have requested that the proposed change be deferred, so that WSNAC, in partnership with the City, can more rigorously examine this proposal, and its significant impacts, in the context of the specific needs of the Overlay District. We ask for your support as we continue to work on ways to successfully, respectfully and safely share the space within this uniquely situated part of our City.

Thank you,

Harry Balley  
2062 Iglehart Ave  
St. Paul, MN