



Progress on Petitions

Last year SEUNA volunteers went door-to-door collecting over 500 signatures on two petitions of importance to the neighborhood southeast of campus. The first petition asked that the city address the high density of students and student rentals near campus by amending the city's definition of family ordinance to allow no more than three, rather than the current limit of five, unrelated adults. The second petition asked that Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF build additional, apartment-style housing suitable for juniors and seniors.

We are pleased to announce that your voice has been heard. Significant progress has been made in both areas.

Read on.

New ordinance to control rental conversions

Students pay more for a room closer to campus than for one further from campus. Over the years, area landlords have catered to this demand by buying up family homes near campus and converting them to student rooming houses. As the number of rentals increased near campus, remaining families have felt more and more compelled to move away. Potential homeowners have been afraid to buy homes on some blocks near campus because the trend was all too clear – it was only a matter of time before all homes on these blocks would become rentals.

That all changed Oct. 11th when the mayor signed into law an ordinance giving new life and hope to the near-campus neighborhood.

This measure puts important new restrictions on which properties can be converted to absentee-owned rentals. The architect of this new law is Zoning Administrator Chuck Ladd who, at the urging of Mayor Driscoll, used his considerable knowledge of Syra-

cuse zoning law to devise an ingenious solution. Councilors-at-Large Bill Ryan, Stephanie Miner and Kathleen Joy piloted the measure through the Common Council, and the ordinance passed unanimously.

Student rentals can cause a variety of

problems in single-family neighborhoods — noise, litter, late-night parties — but the biggest problem is often parking. When our neighborhood was constructed early in the last century, trolleys traveled down Euclid, headed for downtown, every 10

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New Housing for Juniors and Seniors

It has been more than forty years since Syracuse University constructed new housing for its student.

This year SU started work on a new \$50 million, 140,000-square-foot residential complex for 250 undergraduates. The project, at 619 Comstock Avenue, is scheduled to open in August of 2009.

SU is also considering proposals from two independent developers for new residential housing to be built on university owned property.

As suggested in SEUNA's petition last year, both projects would be apartment-style housing intended for juniors and seniors. Both would be financed by the developer, not the university. Both would allow the developer to lease land from the university.

One proposal is for a complex of six new buildings on East Colvin Street, across the street from the Hookway athletic fields. The proposal was developed by Allen and O'Hara Con-

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Artist's rendering of proposed SU housing, in foreground, for 432 students on East Colvin Street

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struction out of Memphis, Tenn. The complex would have five, three-story residence halls, and one recreation and study center.

The other proposal, from Wilmorite Inc. of Rochester, N.Y., is for a new residence hall on the corner of Comstock Avenue and East Adams Street, near the new East Adams Street garage.

Combined, the two new projects would house a total of 777 students, with 432 beds in the complex on East Colvin Street and 345 beds in the new facility on East Adams Street.

SU spokesman Kevin Morrow told the Post-Standard "We're listening to presentations from each of the developers and are cooperating with the developers and with the city as we all explore these opportuni-

ties...We still have quite a long ways to go before either of these projects would be considered a reality."

SU says the new apartments are intended to address housing concerns facing the university, and issues facing the neighborhood east of campus.

"The neighbors have long expressed a concern about the density of off-campus student housing," Morrow said. "And to the university, students' out of class experience, including the place in which they live, is very important."



Student housing in Pennsylvania, similar to what is proposed for Syracuse.

SEUNA targets illegal parking and trash violations

Since early fall, SEUNA has been sending letters to City Hall every few weeks with dozens of pictures of cars parked illegally near campus. We have also sent letters with photos of trash set out prior to collection day. In response, the city has stepped up both parking and trash enforcement in our area. Violations have far from

disappeared, but there has been a noticeable improvement.

Some city officials credit our letters with helping to move forward a stalled proposal to implement new "booting" technology that can be used to immobilize vehicles with multiple unpaid parking violations. The Common Council and mayor

recently approved the city's investment in this new technology and the city plans to start booting vehicles with multiple violations in January.

Booting is especially important near campus where so many violators have out of state license plates. We hope that the new booting technology will lead to fewer parking tickets being torn up and discarded on neighborhood streets.

University Partnership addresses “Density”

After months of public meetings and analysis, the University Neighborhood Partnership has issued a report that concludes with a list of recommendations for the university neighborhood.

The report says that the study was undertaken in response to SEUNA's petition drive to address the increasing density of defacto rooming houses near campus, and the consequent loss of owner-occupied homes near campus.

Although the University Neighborhood Partnership report includes “density” in the title, it actually addresses only the consequences of density, rather than density itself. This may have been done to demonstrate that homeowner complaints about student rentals can be addressed without disrupting the concentration of students near campus. In the process, the UNP side-stepped the most important problem facing our neighborhood: the continuing loss of owner-occupied homes near campus.

You can download the full UNP report at SU's Office of Government & Community Relations webpage.

SEUNA has serious concerns with several of the UNP recommendations, particularly the proposal to create a “Special District” within our neighborhood where all property owners — including homeowners — would be assessed a special fee.

UNP—Background

In 2004 Chancellor Nancy Cantor pulled together various SU faculty and staff to create the East Neighborhood Task Force. One of the recommendations emerging from the task force was that a new neighborhood group be formed, “a problem-solving entity comprising SU, the City of Syracuse, the east neighborhood associations, the Syracuse Property Owners Association, and student leaders in partnership.” SU convened meetings to discuss formation of this group in 2005, suggesting the

following structure for the steering committee:

- One representative each from the following entities: SU, SUNY-ESF, LeMoyne College, the City of Syracuse and the Syracuse Property Owners Association (SPOA, the group representing the area's largest landlords).
- At large representatives from the following categories: one landlord who isn't a member of SPOA; two students living off-campus and two area home owners.

The UNP side-stepped the most important problem facing the near-campus neighborhood: the continuing loss of owner-occupied homes near campus.

- One moderator, currently Tom Wolfe, dean of Hendricks Chapel.

Unlike the universities and landlord association (SPOA), none of the area neighborhood associations have a permanent seat on the UNP.

The Recommendations

SEUNA's board of directors has reviewed the UNP “density” recommendations and we offer our comments below.

None of the recommendations include supporting rationale or justification. Where possible, we have tried to explain what we believe to be the reasons behind the recommendations.

There are two recommendations included on page twelve of the report that should not have been there: a proposal to establish a special district within the University Neighborhood Special District, and a proposal to establish a permit parking system on Euclid Avenue. Two of the homeowners participating in the UNP project objected to these proposals and, under the rules of

consensus, these “recommendations” should not have been made at all.

1) *Creating a Special District within the Special Neighborhood District.* Consider establishing a special district within the existing Special Neighborhood District, with a preliminary report within six months and action within one year.

SEUNA opposes this recommendation. There is no indication where this special district within the district would be formed or why it would be formed. As best we can determine, this proposal originates from a comment by one of the major landlords at one of the public meetings. He recommended that a special district be created within the University Neighborhood Special District where the concentration of student rentals is highest. Property owners in this area — homeowners and landlords alike — would

be assessed a special fee to help pay for the extra costs resulting from rentals. Area landlords seem quite interested in this proposal.

Student rentals do result in higher city costs for items like trash collection and parking enforcement, but there are already city charges and fines in place to collect funds for these expenses — from those who cause these expenses. If more public funds are needed (we don't believe they are) they should be collected solely from property owners that have been issued a Certificate of Suitability, required for all absentee-owned properties in the university area.

2) *Parking: Ticketing, booting and/or towing (or otherwise removing or penalizing) of illegally parked vehicles.*”

SEUNA supports this recommendation. Since early fall SEUNA has been sending letters to City Hall every few weeks with dozens of pictures of cars parked illegally near campus. In response, the city has stepped up enforcement in our

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Ed Smith moving to K-8 format

This fall Ed Smith School welcomed its first class of seventh graders as part of an overall restructuring that will move the school from K-6 to K-8. This year's seventh graders will remain at Ed Smith next fall, becoming the first eighth grade class in years.

Some neighborhood residents may recall a time when Ed Smith was K-8. One of the rationales for returning to this configuration is that older students can provide leadership and role modeling for younger students.

Research has demonstrated that when students are taught in an environment where adults track with students throughout their elementary years, academic standards go up and students are more likely to reach graduation.

Another factor leading to the change was the clear pattern of families moving to the suburbs at the point where

their children left Ed Smith after 6th grade. The stress of moving children from an environment where they are known, to a middle school where students from four elementary schools converged was causing many students and their families to leave the district. Even in this first year, the restructuring has resulted in the retention of families at a rate unparalleled in recent years.

Plans to make Ed Smith K-8 were more than three years in the making. Many parents attended regular planning meetings and special forums to collaborate with district personnel and building administrators.

Renovations, primarily to the basement level, have now been completed, creating space for the arts program and other specialized classrooms. Network cabling to support computer applications will

help to integrate technology across all academic areas.

Current seventh graders at Ed Smith are switching classes to study English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students choose between French and Spanish, with advanced sections in math and foreign languages. Ed Smith is joining other K-8 schools in the East Side Quadrant to create modified sports teams, and also to share resources that will make it possible to offer additional enriched academic programming.

At the elementary level, Ed Smith continues its strong tradition of excellent teaching, parent involvement, inclusion of special needs students, and collaboration with Syracuse University. The creation of the K-8 program further solidifies the school as a cornerstone of the University neighborhood.

University Partnership

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area. Parking violations have far from disappeared, but there has been a noticeable improvement.

The Common Council and mayor recently approved the city's investment in new "booting" technology and the city plans to start immobilizing vehicles with multiple violations in January.

3) Parking Recommendation: Restrict parking on Euclid Avenue between Ostrom and Lancaster to permit parking by residents only, Monday to Friday, hours to be determined.

SEUNA opposes this recommendation. Repeatedly over the years, area landlords have proposed permit parking or increased parking on neighborhood streets to relieve the crush of student-owned cars in the neighborhood. In fact, few homeowners would benefit from permit parking since they usually can find sufficient parking space in

their garages and driveways. The real parking problem near campus is too many cars, not too few parking spaces. SU and SUNY-ESF should encourage students to store their vehicles in long-term parking and do more to encourage student use of mass transit. The city should also be doing more to control the number of students crowded, legally and illegally, into area rentals.

4) Noise Recommendation: Fully fund the Neighborhood Safety Patrol from the Service Agreement funds and request a member of the Syracuse Police Department be designated as coordinator with responsibility for reporting to the UNP, as requested.

Until recently, SPOA (representing the largest landlords) contributed \$20,000 annually towards the extra police patrols. In 2006, when the city passed a new ordinance requiring that all rentals be inspected every three years, the landlords took back their \$20,000 and used it instead to sue the city.

SEUNA agrees that this \$20,000 should be covered under the University Neighborhood Service Agreement. In fact, this change has already been implemented for 2008-2009.

SU pays an annual sum to the city each year to address the impact it has on the surrounding area. The total from SU for 2008-2009 will be \$362,000. Of this, about half — \$167,670 — will go to the University Neighborhood Preservation Association to promote homeownership in the area. The figure for additional police patrols will be \$75,000 — up from \$57,000 the previous year. Although SEUNA administers these funds, they never touch our bank account. We only authorize payments from the city to the police as the work is completed.

The second part of the UNP recommendation sounds like it might move oversight of the police patrols from SEUNA to the UNP. SEUNA see no reason

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New Ordinance

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minutes. Many homes got by with one car, some with no car.

Today families have one, two or sometimes three cars. Student rentals have anywhere from four to eight cars - one for every tenant. Many backyards at these rentals have been paved over to create parking lots, but cars spill out onto the streets just the same.

In effect, the new ordinance restricts future rental conversions to only those properties where parking can be self-contained.

As you read this description of the new ordinance, keep in mind that it will have no effect on the over 800 rentals already established in the area — these will be grandfathered. The new ordinance will only effect the future conversion of owner-occupied houses into absentee-owned rentals.

1. The ordinance will place new, city-wide restrictions on the area that can be used for parking at the back of any single- and two-family house (parking has never been allowed at the front of a house). The city already restricts parking to no more than 30% of the entire lot. The new ordinance will add to this an absolute ceiling on the square feet of parking allowed. The result will be that a single-family house will be allowed to accommodate no more than three off-street parking spaces; a two-family house will be allowed to have no more than six off-street parking spaces.
2. Since the University Neighborhood Special District was established in 1991, owner-occupied homes converting to “absentee-owned” rentals (where the property is not the owner’s primary residence), must first obtain a

“Certificate of Suitability” from the city.

The city inspects the property and, among other things, determine which rooms in the house may be offered by the landlord as sleeping quarters (bedrooms).

Under the new ordinance, a certificate of suitability will only be issued if the property can provide one off-street parking space for every bedroom in the house. In effect, this will limit future rental conversions to only single-family houses with three or fewer bedrooms, and two-family houses with six or fewer bedrooms (in fact, there are very few two-family houses in the neighborhood that aren't already absentee-owned).

Just to be clear, here are some things the new ordinance will not do:

- The new ordinance will not require that any parking area already legally established at the back of a house be reduced to the new limits. If the parking area was installed before the ordinance went into effect, and it is within the legal standards in effect at that time, it will be grandfathered.
- The new ordinance will have no effect on rental properties that already have a valid Certificate of Suitability at the time the law went into effect. Rental properties without a Certificate of Suitability will also be grandfathered if they filed a complete application for a Certificate of Suitability prior to the new ordinance going into effect.

Here are some interesting benefits of the new ordinance:

- Lately we've seen quite a few parents from out of town looking to buy properties in the

neighborhood for their children while they attend SU or SUNY-ESF. If the child is listed on the deed as an owner of the house, it will be considered to be owner-occupied. If the house is in the parents' name alone, it will be considered absentee-owned and a Certificate of Suitability will be required.

- The major problem with parent-owned properties has always been that when the children graduate the house is often sold to a landlord – this has been the pattern all over the country, not just in Syracuse. Under the new ordinance, parents who have purchased a house with four or more bedrooms will find they can only sell the house to other parents like themselves – or to an owner-occupant.
- In the past, neighborhood residents have occasionally purchased rental houses near them and then sold them to owner-occupants. The worry has always been that these new owners might turn around and sell the house to a landlord again. Under the new ordinance, when a grandfathered rental property becomes owner-occupied, the Certificate of Suitability is revoked. To become an absentee-owned rental again the new owner would need to reapply under the new rules. Therefore, it will be possible for neighbors to buy larger grandfathered properties and then sell them to owner-occupants, knowing that these properties can never again become absentee-owned rentals.

Although this new ordinance doesn't do everything we had hoped for, it still should be effective in controlling the continuing loss of family homes near campus – something we desperately need at this time.

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to transfer oversight of the patrols to the UNP, but we also see no reason the UNP couldn't receive periodic reports from the police regarding the patrols as well.

5) Trash Fund extra trash pick-ups at the beginning and end of the semester from Service Agreement Funds.

SEUNA opposes this recommendation. The city already has ordinances specifying when trash may be set out for pickup. The city also has a fee schedule for extra trash pickups, outside the weekly schedule, when necessary. We see no reason why Service Agreement Funds should be used to pay for extra trash pickups just because tenants and landlords find it inconvenient to put trash out at the proper time, or in the proper manner—or are unwilling to pay an extra fee when additional trash pickups are needed.

6) Health and Safety Fund property code education and enforcement services in the Special Neighborhood District during evening and weekend hours from Service Agreement funds.

“Code education” has always been the responsibility of the area universities. SU offers courses and materials on how to choose a rental, how to be a good neighbor and informing students about relevant city laws and codes. We believe the universities should continue to pick up the tab for this service.

It has long been recognized as a problem that there are no code enforcement officers on duty in the city during evenings and weekends. On the other hand, we've been told that funds cannot be earmarked for use in only one part of the city. Any funds given to the city for code enforcement would have to be utilized throughout the city.

SEUNA would support this recommendation only if a way can be found to keep *Service Agreement funds* contributed for code enforcement in the university area.

Recent Neighborhood House Sales

440 Westcott ST	\$70,000	Aug 13, '07	Rufino Ramos
444 Westcott ST	\$80,000	Aug 13, '07	Rufino Ramos
125 Westminster Ave	\$139,000	Aug 20, '07	Kirin Makker & Jeff Blankenship
324 Berkeley Dr	\$231,350	Aug 22, '07	Graham Leuschke & Moira McDermott
909 Cumberland Ave	\$105,000	Aug 23, '07	Michael Cahill
809 Cumberland Ave	\$137,500	Aug 29, '07	Daniel & Susan Kendrick
260-262 Roosevelt Ave	\$90,000	Aug. 17, '07	Scott Hendersen
708-710 Lancaster Ave	\$165,000	Aug. 29, '07	John Revelle
1037 Westcott Ave	\$126,500	Aug. 31, '07	Donald & Cheryl Butler
537 Buckingham Ave	\$125,000	Dec 18, '06	Michael Amati & Jill Priest
140 Knsington Place	\$122,000	Dec 20, '06	Katherine Smith
721 Lancaster Ave	\$240,000	Feb 2, '07	Stephen & Deborah Procoppio
910 Ackerman Ave	\$160,000	Feb 2, '07	Stephen & Deborah Procoppio
855 Ackerman Ave	\$155,000	Feb 2, '07	Richard Klinh III
819 Maryland Ave	\$182,500	Feb 23, '07	Amanda Elliot
303 Berkeley Dr	\$384,000	Feb 5, '07	James & Susan Swanson
1023 Westmoreland Ave	\$82,000	Jan 18, '07	Maarten Jacobs & Andrea Lazipone
1311 Lancaster Ave	\$92,000	Jan 19, '07	Laura Harrington
1351 Westmoreland Ave	\$136,000	Jan 22, '07	Jeff Montalbano
263 Buckingham Ave	\$97,225	Jan 23, '07	Charles Susman
728 Westcott St	\$145,000	Jan 25, '07	Robert & Angela Vogt
963 Ackerman Ave	\$148,000	Jan 26, '07	Stephen & Mary Ellen Rook
435 Buckingham Ave	\$166,860	Jul 10, '07	Michael Burkard
908 Cumberland Ave	\$125,000	Jul 13, '07	Jacqueline Frair
1511 Westmoreland Ave	\$152,000	Jul 6, '07	Gail Gardner
948 Ackerman Ave	\$108,000	Jun 11, '07	Stampede VI LLC
136 Buckingham Ave	\$144,900	Jun 13, '07	Cory Falter & Heather Wolfe
868 Ostrom Ave	\$263,000	Jun 18, '07	Isaac Benishai
905 Comstock Ave	\$211,000	Jun 18, '07	Isaac Benishai
315-317 Euclid Ave	\$162,000	Jun 22, '07	767 Ostrom LLC
819 Lancaster Ave	\$146,000	Jun 27, '07	Stephen Procoppio
632 Fellows Ave	\$95,600	Jun 28, '07	Tamara Breed
343-345 Buckingham Ave	\$145,000	Jun 28, '07	Real Property Enterprises LLC
235 Kensington Place	\$152,500	Jun 29, '07	Charles & Janice Micsenyi
1026 Westcott St	\$105,319	May 10, '07	Paulina Kernacova
909-911 Westcott St	\$170,000	May 10, '07	Paul Walsh
251 Roosevelt Ave	\$60,000	May 11, '07	Karmulah & Shymoon Hodein
945 Cumberland Ave	\$120,900	May 16, '07	Brian Sallie
1240 Westcott St	\$145,000	May 21, '07	Mark Bonavitacola
411 Fellows Ave	\$108,000	May 21, '07	Stephen & Elizabeth Barnes
105 Kensington Rd	\$220,000	May 24, '07	Richard Albertson & Denise Lechenby
331 Kensington Rd	\$128,125	May 4, '07	Scott Albert & Emily Lazzau
220 Fellows Ave	\$78,500	May 7, '07	Bibati & Jill Ouikahilo
128 Miles Ave	\$100,000	Oct. 10, '07	Rocco Morganti
726 Fellows Ave	\$97,000	Oct. 16, '07	Jason Vinal
124 Miles Ave	\$108,000	Oct. 5, '07	Scott Matthews
1333 Lancaster Ave	\$76,500	Sep. 10, '07	Christopher Rice & Corine Martin
254 Roosevelt Ave	\$115,000	Sep. 12, '07	Brad & Melissa Fierke
946 Ackerman Ave	\$160,000	Sep. 13, '07	Arthur Geiger
732 Lancaster Ave	\$50,000	Sep. 7, '07	Rufino Ramos

Join SEUNA

This month's issue of SEUNA Update is being sent to many area residents who aren't yet members.

If you aren't a member yet, join us today so you can attend our annual meeting on Feb. 21st! Or bring your membership payment to the annual meeting and pay at the door!

Membership dues are \$10 per year, \$16 for two years.

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

Mail your membership check and information to SEUNA, 935 Lancaster Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210

SEUNA Members! Don't miss the...

SEUNA 2008

Annual Meeting

Thursday, February 21th

7:00 to 9:00 pm

Westcott Community Center

826 Euclid Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210

2007 SEUNA Board of Directors Ballot

Please vote for any or all nominees; write-ins can be added below (please include contact information). One ballot per household.

Please return this ballot to SEUNA, 935 Lancaster Avenue, Syracuse, NY, 13210, no later than February 16th. Be sure to clip this ballot so you include your address printed on the reverse side. Or, if you'd rather, you can bring this ballot to the annual meeting.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ross Andrews | <input type="checkbox"/> Orville Bakeman | <input type="checkbox"/> Pat Janecek |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Harry Lewis | <input type="checkbox"/> Joe Russo | <input type="checkbox"/> Dan Smothergill |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Stanton | <input type="checkbox"/> Beth Theiss | <input type="checkbox"/> Mary Beth Williams |

I wish to nominate:

name _____
address _____
phone# _____

Your SEUNA Board

Michael Stanton - President
Ross Andrews - Vice President
Harry Lewis - Treasurer
MaryBeth Williams - Secretary
Orville Bakeman
Pat Janecek
Giancarlo Moneti
John Oldfield
Joseph Russo
Dan Smothergill
Beth Theiss

Join SEUNA

SEUNA is a completely voluntary, member-funded, not for profit organization. Annual membership is \$10.00 for one year; \$16.00 for two years. **Please mail your check, along with your name, address, phone number and email address to P.O. Box 6658, Syracuse, NY 13217.**

email@seuna.org
WWW.SEUNA.ORG

A Brief History of Student Rental Migration

In 1980, according to the US Census, the numbers of undergraduate students living to the east of Lancaster and to the west of Lancaster were roughly equal (this includes, of course, students from SU, SUNY-ESF, LeMoyne College and Onondaga Community College).

From 1980 to 1990 the student population grew much more quickly east of Lancaster in the Westcott area. By 1990 there were about fifteen hundred students living east of Lancaster and only about eleven hundred living closer to campus. Long-time residents of the neighborhood remember that most of the controversy about off-campus housing the 1980s was focused much further from campus than it is today.

In 1991 the situation shifted again when Syracuse University downsized its enrollment by more than 2,000 students. At the same time LeMoyne was also bringing more of its students back to live in university housing. The 2000 census reflected these changes, registering significant reduc-

tions in the number of undergraduate students living in the various University Hill neighborhoods.

North of campus the number of undergraduate students dropped by 500. South of campus, in the Outer Comstock area, the number of undergraduates went down by more than 600. On campus and at South Campus there were also major reductions.

The biggest drop in the undergraduate population occurred east of Lancaster in the Westcott area. The number of students there actually fell by more than half, going from 1,500 students in 1990 to a little more than 600 students in 2000.

Only one sector of University Hill didn't experience a drop in the number of undergraduate students following SU's downsizing — that was the area just to the east of campus. In this area, between Lancaster and campus, the number of undergraduate students actually increased by 30% from 1990 to 2000.

South East University Neighborhood Association, Inc.

PO Box 6658

Syracuse, NY 13217

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To Our Valued Neighbor:

Winter 2007

Progress on petitions

- **New city ordinance to control rental conversions**
- **New student housing for Juniors and seniors**