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## 2010 In Review

# SEUNA Update

Southeast University Neighborhood Association, Inc. ~ P.O. Box 6658, Syracuse, NY 13217 ~ email@seuna.org

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## City Passes Certificate of Suitability Amendments ... Again

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On June 7, 2010, the Syracuse Common Council passed — once again — amendments to the Certificate of Suitability ordinance designed to limit conversion of single-family homes into absentee-owned rentals in the University Neighborhood Special District. But these amendments were similar to measures the Common Council had already passed back in 2007.

The story of how this came about starts in 2006 when SEUNA initiated a petition drive for two measures designed to reduce the impact of student housing in our neighborhood. SEUNA collected over 500 signatures that year from area homeowners requesting: 1) that the city amend the definition of family ordinance to allow for no more than three unrelated adults per housing unit, rather than the current limit of five; 2) that Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF build sufficient housing to accommodate at least 90% of their combined undergraduate populations (see the related student housing story on this page).

Mayor Matt Driscoll responded saying he would not support a change to the definition of family ordinance because the city did not have the resources to enforce it. City zoning administrator Chuck Ladd came up with an alternative solution — a new ordinance tied to resi-

dential parking requirements. One of the major problems that results from conversion of owner-occupied homes to student rentals is parking. Landlords often convert the entire back yard of rental properties into parking lots for

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## More Student Apartments Planned



The Park Point student apartments, at 417 Comstock Ave. opened in August 2010

In 2006, SEUNA presented Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF leadership with petitions signed by more than 500 area home-owners requesting that SU and SUNY-ESF collaborate to develop new apartment-style housing appropriate for juniors and seniors. We asked that new housing be built on campus, or near campus, in areas already zoned for multi-unit hous-

ing development. The goal, we said, should be to house at least 90% of all SU and ESF undergraduates in university sponsored housing.

About a year later Syracuse University announced plans to build apartment-style housing very much like what we suggested —

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# “MayFest” 2010: Back to Walnut Park

In 2010, city and university officials finally developed a plan to effectively deal with the annual student party known as "MayFest." Following SEUNA's suggestion, SU moved the annual year-end party back to Walnut Park, where it had been in the 1980s. Similar to Slope Day at Cornell, an area was fenced off where students over 21 were allowed to drink.

Under mayor Stephanie Miner, the city instituted a zero-tolerance policy for Euclid avenue, strictly enforcing laws against open containers, public urination and rowdy behavior.

Year-end student parties have a long history at SU. In

the 1980s, students held parties in Walnut Park. These ended when alcohol poisoning became a problem and the university asked the city to stop issuing permits for the event.

The annual party then moved to Livingston, ending in 1999 with the "Livingstock Riots." Police had to use riot gear to break up the block party when it spun out of control leaving piles of furniture and debris burning in the streets. This event so shook the community that there wasn't another student organized year-end party for six years.

"MayFest" started in 2005 when a group of students living on or near Euclid Avenue decided it would be more fun to skip the University's day-

long "MayFest" events on campus to sponsor a party in the neighborhood. SU intended MayFest "to showcase student works of creativity, discovery, research, and innovation through performances, presentations, displays, demonstrations, screenings and other means." Classes were suspended for the day so students could participate



“Mayfest” party on Euclid Avenue in April of 2009

in the many campus events. Attendance was thin in 2005, however, as thousands of students headed to the parties on Euclid instead.

In 2008 SEUNA collected signatures from 70 homeowners living within two blocks of the party asking that MayFest be brought back to campus. The university redoubled its efforts to create events so entertaining they would keep students on campus – to no avail.

The annual parties became a "tradition." When SU renamed the campus event "Showcase" in 2009, SU student leaders said thanks but no thanks. The parties on Euclid would still be called MayFest, and the party would go on.

City officials told us a year-end party was inevitable. Isn't it better, they asked, to allow the party on a day when the police know it is coming and they can be prepared?

With three to four thousand students descending on Euclid in 2009, the city opted for selective enforcement. The police chief told us that fully enforcing

the law on Euclid would require "hundreds" of arrests.

Open container laws were ignored when party goers were on the sidewalk and enforced only when they crossed the street. The nuisance party ordinance was invoked only when the mega parties got seriously out of control.

Unfortunately, this approach established MayFest behavior as the norm. When students returned in the Fall, wild parties picked up where MayFest had left off in the Spring.

In 2010, five to six thousand students attended the party in Walnut Park. Twelve officers patrolled the Walnut Park area with another 12 on Euclid. Police reported no major problems.

"As far as the activity on Euclid, it's been pretty minimal," said SU Chief of Public Safety Tony Callisto. "The majority of folks actually came here [Walnut Park] and there's a few small parties going on Euclid, but that's no different than any other nice-weather Friday."

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# The Case for a University Hill Employee Housing Program

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*In early 2010, SEUNA delivered the following letter to leaders of each of the five major educational and medical institutions on University Hill, accompanied by letters of support from Congressman Dan Maffei, State Senator David Valesky, NY State Assembly members William Magnarelli and Joan Christiansen, and Syracuse Department of Neighborhood and Business Development Commissioner Paul Driscoll.*

*The letter in response from University Hill Corporation is also on this page.*

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The American Planning Association named University Hill one of the 10 great neighborhoods in America for 2008. This honor confirmed what those of us who live in this wonderful neighborhood have long known. We also know that the residential portion of University Hill, particularly the area just east of campus, is in trouble, with the number of owner-occupied households dwindling further with every year.

This letter is addressed to the five major employers on University Hill: SUNY Upstate Medical University, Syracuse University, the Syracuse VA Medical Center, SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry and Crouse Hospital. We write to urge you, individually and

collectively, to develop new programs and new incentives to bring more of your employees to live on University Hill.

The benefits of an effective University Hill employer assisted housing program (EAH) would be many – for University Hill employers, their employees, the city, the environment, and the University Hill neighborhood.

## ***University Hill Institutions***

A University of Iowa report found that "a number of leading universities around the country have initiated programs to promote homeownership and investment in the neighborhoods adjacent to their campuses. A goal common to all these programs is elevating the reputation and appeal of the institution in order to recruit talented

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## The Response from University Hill Corp.

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*The following letter was signed by Syracuse University Chancellor Nancy Cantor, SUNY Upstate Medical University president David Smith, Crouse Hospital president Paul Kronenberg, SUNY-ESF president Cornelius Murphy, Jr., and Syracuse VA Medical Center director James Cody.*

*The letter points to various steps University Hill institutions have taken to address student pressures on our neighborhood. These include the building of new student housing, SU's Guaranteed Mortgage Program and SU's annual Service Agreement payments, a portion of which provide home purchase assistance grants to area homebuyers.*

*The authors encourage SEUNA to develop marketing materials extolling the benefits of the South East University area, and they offer to share these material with new and potential*

*U. Hill employees – an offer we intend to follow up on.*

*We continue to believe a coordinated employee housing program, administered jointly by the major U. Hill institutions, would provide benefits to the neighborhood, the city and the institutions themselves. It needn't be expensive. For instance, a program similar to SU's guaranteed mortgage program could be administered jointly by all five U. Hill institutions, amplifying not only the program's reach but also the message that U. Hill institutions encourage their employees to live on the Hill.*

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Thank you for your letter of March 10th regarding employer assisted housing. As you might appreciate in this current economic climate the

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faculty, staff, and students.”

Increasing the number of University Hill employees living on the Hill will stabilize and enhance its residential neighborhoods. These will then become selling points when recruiting employees who value the convenience, health, attractiveness and environmental benefits of pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods near work.

There are also monetary benefits. Parking represents an enormous expense for universities and hospitals, a cost that employee parking fees don't begin to cover. A single parking space can cost anywhere from \$14,000 in an open lot to \$31,500 in an underground garage. Typical annual costs per space range from about \$200 for basic maintenance of a surface lot, up to \$800 for a facility with tollbooth attendants. Because cars depreciate so quickly, parking spaces are often worth more than the cars that sit on them.

In the 1990s Cornell University determined that it needed 2,500 additional parking spaces. The university decided instead to work with city and county authorities to promote commuting by walking, biking, mass transit and car pooling. Cornell estimates it saved over \$40 million through avoided construction, maintenance and transportation costs over the 14 years of the program. A similar program at the University of Washington in Seattle obviated the

need to build 3,600 new parking spaces, saving the university an estimated \$100 million.

### ***University Hill Employees***

University Hill residents enjoy the convenience of walking, biking or taking mass transit to work; some even walk home for lunch. As a result, University Hill households can often get by with fewer cars than suburban households, an annual savings of \$7,000 to \$10,000 per car for financing, insurance, fuel and maintenance.

University Hill residents are just a short walk from two parks (Thornden Park and Barry Park), several restaurants and coffee shops, a florist, a community center, even a grocery store. Syracuse University and SUNY-ESF offer a wide variety of activities and diversions on campus, everything from lectures, concerts and films to inter-collegiate athletics – all just a stroll away.

Research has shown that residents of walkable communities tend to be healthier. A study in the Archives of Internal Medicine last year found that people who walk or ride a bike to work performed better on fitness tests, had lower obesity rates, and displayed healthier triglyceride levels, blood pressure and insulin levels.

The city-wide “Say Yes to Education” program makes this a particularly opportune time to attract employees with children. The Syracuse School District reports a 2% increase in enrollment for 2010, thanks – at least in part – to the Say Yes program. Students in

Syracuse schools benefit from the educational support Say Yes is providing at all age levels; tuition support for Syracuse high school graduates is a wonderful incentive to live in the city. More students in city schools also results in more state funding. This year's 2% increase in enrollment should bring the city roughly \$5 million in additional state education support.

There has been some controversy surrounding Syracuse University's plan to limit the free tuition option it has long offered the children of SUNY-ESF employees. Under the Say Yes to Education program, SUNY-ESF employees would continue to enjoy free SU tuition for their children if they live in the city. In fact, children graduating from city high schools can choose from more than 20 universities offering free tuition under the Say Yes program.

### ***The City***

Since the 1950s Syracuse has lost more than one-third of its population, while the surrounding suburbs have grown by a similar amount. This out-migration has left the city with vacant homes, unsupported infrastructure and a threadbare tax base. Not only are the five major employers of University Hill among the largest in the county, their workforces are also among the best educated and compensated in the area. A program encouraging University Hill employees to live on the Hill would bring the city not only their financial resources but also their intelligence and skills – assets sorely needed in the city at this

time.

The Syracuse area is remarkably free of traffic tie-ups and bottlenecks – with the exception of University Hill. Traffic arriving and departing on I-81 is an enormous source of frustration. Revisions to regional street and highway systems could cost millions and make the western edge of University Hill even less pedestrian friendly. Every University Hill employee living on the Hill means one less driver fighting to get onto and off of I-81 every day.

It must be noted that the five major employers on University Hill are all not-for-profit institutions and thus pay no property taxes. The city, of course, makes significant investments every year in infrastructure and maintenance for University Hill. At the end of every day most employees of these five institutions leave for the suburbs where other municipalities receive their property tax payments and suburban stores collect their sales tax. A program to bring more employees to live – and pay taxes – in the city would be a modest step towards redressing this imbalance.

### ***The Environment***

Syracuse University has pledged to reduce its net carbon emissions to zero (reach "carbon neutrality") by 2040; SUNY-ESF has pledged to reach carbon neutrality by 2015. Upstate Medical University plans to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2014. To achieve these aggressive goals it will be necessary to reduce car-

bon emissions from automotive commuting by faculty, staff and students.

Because walking and bicycling are the least polluting forms of transportation, increasing the number of employees living close to work is the most effective means of reducing an institution's commuter emissions. Last year Cornell University conducted an analysis to see what it would take to reduce their commuter emissions by 50%. They found it could not be done through car pooling and mass transit alone; it could only be accomplished with a significant increase in the number of Cornell employees and students living near campus, with at least half of these living within one mile of campus.

According to the Brookings Institution, per-capita carbon emissions in the Syracuse metropolitan area are the highest of any metro area in the state – in fact, per-person carbon emissions in the greater Syracuse area are almost double those in the Los Angeles area. This high carbon footprint is driven (so to speak) by our sprawling suburbs. The Syracuse Metropolitan Area ranks 83rd out of the nation's 100 largest metro areas for the number of vehicle miles traveled per capita, and we are 91st for carbon emissions from automobiles on our highways.

City residents have much shorter commutes than suburban households, and fewer cars. Last year U.S. News commended Syracuse for its high percentage of pedes-

trian commuters – over 10%. Not surprisingly, census figures show that the highest concentration of pedestrian commuters in the county is on University Hill.

### ***The Neighborhood***

Longtime residents remember a time when University Hill was home to many more of its university and hospital employees. Medical professionals walked to the hospital; educators walked to class and had informal student gatherings at their homes. The conversion of family homes into student rentals since the 1960s has posed a major challenge to our neighborhood, and owner-occupancy has suffered as a result. But the number of students seeking rooms to rent in the neighborhood has been falling for years. Three new student housing developments, completed or under development, will absorb over 1,100 of the students renting rooms in area houses. This will free up over 270 former single- and two-family homes for other uses. What better use than to house University Hill employees?

Despite the falling number of student renters, conversion of family homes into rentals continues to be a problem near campus. Students will pay more for a room that's close to campus than for one that's far away. This encourages investors to outbid families when family homes near campus come on the market.

City crime statistics show that as

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## The Case for a University Hill Employee Housing Program

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the percentage of rentals on a street goes up, so do robberies and burglaries. The transient nature of these properties makes them more vulnerable to petty criminals. Owner-occupied properties, with their “eyes on the street,” bring stability to the neighborhood and make it safer.

The problem of rental concentration near campus can be addressed if the universities develop a list of approved housing for undergraduate students living near campus. This should make it possible to control the number of student renters near campus and to maintain a better balance between renters and homeowners.

### *A Plan for University Hill*

There are a variety of incentives and approaches that could be incorporated into an effective employer assisted housing program for University Hill. We hope the major University Hill institutions will set annual goals for the number of employees they expect to attract to live on the Hill, then develop incentives and programs to achieve those goals, adjusting these as necessary.

We recommend that any EAH program offer higher incentives for employees buying homes within walking distance of work – that’s where the largest advantages will be realized in terms of lower emissions and reduced parking requirements.

A mortgage guarantee program, like the one now offered by Syracuse University, could be a useful component of a larger EAH program. The mortgage guarantee has clearly been a welcome benefit for SU employees purchasing a home in the university area. In our experience, however, it has not been a compelling incentive – on its own – to choose the university area over other options.

We’ve noticed that some of the most successful EAH programs bring multiple employers together under a common umbrella organization. This allows the sharing of promotion and administration expenses and makes it easier to apply jointly for grants. Perhaps the University Hill Corporation could bring the major employers on the Hill together to provide a single, flexible program.

Here is a sampling of EAH programs in other cities:

**Yale’s Homebuyer Program** is the most ambitious EAH program we’ve seen. Employees who buy a home in one of the neighborhoods near campus receive \$5,000 in their first year and \$2,500 in each subsequent year for up to ten years, providing a total benefit of up to \$30,000. More than 900 Yale employees have taken advantage of the program. The Homebuyer Program is one of the factors credited for New Haven’s economic “renaissance.”

**The University of Rochester** offers a \$9,000 incentive for buying

a home near campus (\$3,000 from the University, \$3,000 from the City, and up to \$3,000 from a participating local bank). With the extension of the federal tax credit for new homebuyers, employees can add an \$8,000 tax credit for a total benefit of \$17,000. During the past 18 months 78 employees have taken advantage of this program, most of them first-time buyers.

**Johns Hopkins** offers up to \$17,000 in financial aid under its 'Live Near Your Work' program. The Rouse Company Foundation provided a grant of \$2.5 million, which is matched by Johns Hopkins. Their goal, from 2008 to 2012, is to provide grants to over 300 Johns Hopkins employees who choose to purchase homes in designated Baltimore City neighborhoods.

**In Cleveland, the “Greater Circle Living” program** is jointly sponsored by Case Western Reserve University, The Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, The Cleveland Museum of Art and Judson at University Circle. Employees of these institutions are provided forgivable loans of up to \$15,000 when they buy a home in the Greater University Circle area.

**Duke University** stepped in to buy a dozen of the worst kept student rental houses in the Trinity Park neighborhood near campus, reselling them to

residents and investors with covenants requiring owner-occupancy and historically-appropriate renovation. Many of these renovated homes became showpieces, including one of the largest former party houses which is now home to the dean of Duke Chapel and his family.

The **Illinois Institute of Technology** recently expanded its employer assisted housing Program to provide a \$10,000 forgivable housing loan for employees who agree to live in their homes for at least five years. Employees who also participate in the “Find your place in Chicago” program are eligible for an additional \$10,000 if they buy within four designated neighborhoods.

In 1998 the **University of Pennsylvania** initiated the Enhanced Mortgage Program which provided a forgivable loan of \$15,000 at mortgage settlement, or \$21,000 in multiple payments over a seven-year period. This program complemented the university’s existing Guaranteed Mortgage Program which offered mortgage guarantees of up to 120 percent for mortgage principal, closing costs and home rehabilitation/improvement expenses. From 1998 to 2004, 386 University of Pennsylvania faculty and staff purchased homes west of campus. The university itself acquired and rehabilitated 20



SEUNA led efforts last year to address the poor condition of the Westminster Steps. As a result, the city replaced the center handrail from top to bottom and many of the concrete steps have been repaired. Obviously, there is still work to be done.

distressed properties and returned them to private homeownership.

These are just a few examples of employer assisted housing programs in other cities. We hope the University Hill hospitals and universities will recognize the enormous benefits to be derived from

an effective homeownership program here and will start working towards implementation of such a program on University Hill.

We are anxious to discuss this issue with you and look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

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## Response from University Hill

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educational and medical Institutions are focused on maintaining current programs and employment, particularly those institutions which are dependent on federal and state appropriations. There is little discussion of expanding benefits at any of the institutions at this time.

Over the last several years, the institutions have taken seriously the call of the neighborhood organizations to reduce student pressures on their neighborhoods. Syracuse University built the \$49 million, 250 unit Ernie Davis Residence Hall, and two private developers have built housing for 650 students on Comstock Avenue and East Colvin Street. SUNY-ESF will soon begin construction on a project to house 450 students. SUNY Upstate Medical University has acquired two financially troubled apartment complexes, Harrison House and Townsend Tower, and will spend \$20 million to rehabilitate these units for faculty, staff and students.

The Syracuse VA Medical Center and Housing Visions Unlimited (HVU) have partnered on two projects on the eastside, Maple Heights, which replaced a vacant and deteriorating Cherry Hill complex and Eaglewood East, which provided a mix of affordable housing for veterans and their families. There is an opportunity to work with HVU and create more of these projects to enhance the east neighborhood. SUNY Upstate Medical University intends to issue a request for proposals this summer to developers, to replace the failed Kennedy Square project with a mixed use complex anchored by the Biotechnology Research Center. The Kennedy Square project can potentially create hundreds of units for faculty and

staff within easy walking, biking, and shuttle bus ride from the institutions. University Hill institutions are spending millions of dollars to relieve student pressure on the SEUNA neighborhood, to build housing in close proximity to the Institutions and to replace failed apartment complexes with new viable housing and mixed use projects.

Syracuse University operates a Guaranteed Mortgage Program, one of the oldest and most successful employer assisted housing programs. To date 209 faculty and staff have taken advantage of this program to purchase homes in eligible areas, including the SEUNA neighborhood. Syracuse University, in partnership with Home HeadQuarters, offers a \$2,000 cash grant to any homeowner who purchases a home in a designated Matching Cash Grant Zone, which includes part of the east neighborhood. It should also be noted that through Syracuse University's Service Agreement some \$150,000 is contributed annually through the University Neighborhood Preservation Association (UNPA). UNPA has provided home purchase assistance grants to more than 500 homebuyers regardless of their employer status.

A recent study by University Hill Corporation indicates that a higher percentage of University Hill employees live in the city than the average for all employers. We believe this is a testament to the success of our existing efforts. We believe that a broader marketing effort aimed at all home buyers regardless of employment status will pay greater dividends in the South East University neighborhood than one that is limited to our employees alone.

We believe that the Say Yes to Education program provides a perfect platform for a marketing effort. Under

the terms of Say Yes, a family who has school children who complete the 10th, 11th and 12th grades in the Syracuse City School District will receive free college tuition at any SUNY or CUNY institution, Syracuse University and Cooper Union. Additionally, most of the private partner colleges (currently 21) extend the tuition guarantee to students from families with incomes less than \$75,000. Students from families with incomes of more than \$75,000 who are attending a Say Yes Private Compact College may receive a Choice Grant of up to \$5,000. We believe this is a powerful incentive for families with children. The South East University Neighborhood, as one of the most attractive neighborhoods in the city, has much to offer these families. We believe a marketing program to emphasize the benefits of living in the South East University Neighborhood aimed at these parents would open a much broader market opportunity.

In addition, all of the institutions attract many new employees every year. Many of these employees come to Syracuse and begin looking for a house. We believe it could be effective to reach these families with a packet of materials that would explain the benefits of living in the South East University Neighborhood, the benefits of the purchasing assistance provided by UNPA, the benefits of the existing employer assisted housing program and the substantial benefits of Say Yes to Education. We would welcome an effort by SEUNA to gather the testimonials to the neighborhood and to combine these materials into an effective marketing program aimed at new employees.

We appreciate your interest and look forward to your response.



## More Student Housing

(Continued from page 1)

the first new student housing in almost 40 years. Independent developers would lease the property from SU, provide the capital, construct the apartments and operate them as private businesses. The only tenants, however, would be SU juniors and seniors.

Comstock Avenue between East Adams and Marshall Streets. It opened in 2010.

These student apartments look nothing like traditional dormitories. University Village Apartments, for example, feature separate bedrooms for each resident, full kitchens and full-size washers and dryers in each unit. There is a game room, a fitness center, a fire-

storm water management techniques, permeable pavement, sustainable building materials, indoor bicycle storage facilities and a pedestrian-friendly design.

In November, SU announced plans for its third student apartment complex. Allen & O'Hara is proposing a \$27 million, 325 bed development for SU College of Law students. The apartments would

be constructed on an SU parking lot three blocks west of the Carrier Dome and two blocks west of the new SU law school building.

All this new student housing is certainly a welcome development, but is there a noticeable lessening of pressure to convert family homes into student rentals? It seems in the square mile just east of campus that the battle goes on just as before. Homeowners watch anxiously



Centennial Hall, the first dormitory for SUNY-ESF students, is scheduled to open in 2012.

Two developers worked with SU on the first two projects.

University Village Apartments, across from the Hookway Fields on Colvin Street, is a six-building, 432-bed complex built by Allen & O'Hara, a national development firm headquartered in Memphis Tennessee. It opened in 2009.

The second project, Park Point Syracuse, was developed by Wilmorite, headquartered in Rochester. This 345-bed high-rise is on

place lounge, a theater and a tanning dome.

This Spring Allen & O'Hara, with local contractor Hueber-Breuer Construction, began work on SUNY-ESF's first dormitory. Centennial Hall, just a few blocks east of the Carrier Dome, will provide 452 beds for SUNY-ESF undergraduates. The project is planned to achieve LEED Silver certification from the US Green Building Council. It incorporates

whenever a family home comes on the market, and homes continue to be lost.

Of course, much of this new student housing has yet to come online. Even when it does, all announced projects total about 1,500 beds. That still will leave thousands of undergraduate students looking for housing off-campus — far short of the 90% goal.

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## Recent Neighborhood House Sales

1232	Cumberland Ave.	\$120,000	6/29/09	Kevin & Martha Morrison
801	Cumberland Ave.	\$137,500	6/30/09	Diane & Norma Campbell
874-876	Lancaster Ave	\$175,000	7/6/09	M. Egnote & P.B..Anderson
333	Miles Ave.	\$123,000	7/21/09	P. Fenton & N. Ouderkirk
311	Kensington Rd.	\$118,000	8/10/09	Ellen Paradise
1411	Lancaster Ave	\$141,500	8/11/09	Jason & Emily Dittman
1240	Westcott St.	\$171,500	8/31/09	Bachaia Karam
726	Fellows Ave.	\$125,000	9/2/09	David Czerkies
1584	Westmoreland Ave.	\$136,500	9/14/09	Benh Quoc & on Hung Huynh
943	Westcott St.	\$115,000	9/16/09	Paul & Katherine Dallemagne
203	Berkeley Dr.	\$180,000	9/30/09	Mary Ann Laubacher
740	Ostrum Ave.	\$500,000	10/1/09	Syracuse University
708-710	Lancaster Ave	\$315,000	10/6/09	Orange Property Rental II, LLC
719-721	Maryland Ave.	\$166,000	10/6/09	Orange Property Rental II, LLC
915	Cumberland Ave.	\$95,000	10/9/09	Michelle & Thomas Taylor
741-743	Lancaster Ave	\$187,500	10/21/09	D. Campio, M. & E. Albanese
1307	Westmoreland Ave.	\$146,000	10/22/09	Julie Walos
819	Maryland Ave.	\$175,000	11/30/09	Couvares & Gladys McCormick
224	Fellows Ave.	\$139,000	12/2/09	Jessie Daino & Kimberly Bolen
616	Cumberland Ave.	\$162,500	12/11/09	Brian & Kate LaClaire
205-207	Roosevelt Ave.	\$97,500	12/28/09	Maria Rosenberg
909-911	Ackerman Ave.	\$186,000	1/12/10	RMP Properties, LLC
334	Berkeley Dr.	\$210,000	2/2/10	Tom Brutsaert & R. Hopkins
152	Miles Ave.	\$125,000	2/12/10	Mark LaClair & Alison Smith
944	Westcott St.	\$66,501	2/25/10	Comstock Co. LLC
722-724	Westcott St.	\$175,000	3/9/10	Paul Walsh
338	Berkeley Dr.	\$241,000	3/15/10	Charles Benjamin & J. Abdella
612	Westcott St.	\$143,500	3/15/10	Timothy & Tamora Liebe
501	Cumberland Ave.	\$132,000	4/19/10	Joshua Mile & Joella Bova
966	Lancaster Ave	\$140,000	4/20/10	Big Bear Associates
944	Westcott St.	\$126,000	4/20/10	Big Bear Associates
712	Lancaster Ave.	\$175,000	4/23/10	Andrea Bucci
554-556	Westmoreland Ave.	\$80,000	4/23/10	Paul & Theresa Brzuszkiewicz
340	Roosevelt Ave.	\$12,000	4/30/10	Jake Buck, LLC.
311-313	Buckingham Ave.	\$137,500	5/7/10	Andre El-Amir
116	Dorset Rd.	\$225,000	5/14/10	Claudia Miller
333	Berkeley Dr.	\$300,000	5/25/10	Megan & Cliff Davidson
110	Dorset Rd.	\$203,000	5/27/10	Laura Steinberg
826	Maryland Ave.	\$127,000	5/27/10	Syracuse Quality Living, Inc.
1653	Westmoreland Ave.	\$191,700	5/27/10	Kip & Anna Stearns
1048	Westmoreland Ave.	\$156,000	5/28/10	Jeremiah Malei & J. Alex
120	Buckingham Ave.	\$179,500	6/1/10	Gretchen Purser & J. Nissim
1209	Westmoreland Ave.	\$149,000	6/4/10	Rachel Bass
720	Sumner Ave.	\$185,000	6/7/10	Timothy & Haley Hornstein
234	Roosevelt Ave.	\$155,000	6/11/10	Ella Cameron
105	Haffenden Ave.	\$155,000	6/22/10	Michael & Karly Grifasi
1219	Lancaster Ave.	\$163,500	6/25/10	Kevin & Aimee Bott
322	Miles Ave.	\$130,380	6/29/10	Merrick & Tamara Doody
1426	Westmoreland Ave.	\$145,000	7/1/10	Thomas Benzel

**Members**  
**Mark your calendars**  
**SEUNA**  
**Annual Meeting**

**March 16th, 2011**

**7:00 to 9:00 pm**

**Erwin First United  
 Methodist Church  
 920 Euclid Ave**

**If you aren't a member  
 yet, please join us.**

*Membership is \$10 for one  
 year, \$16 for two years. A life-  
 time membership is \$100.*

Name:
Address:
Phone:
Email:

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

**Certificate of Suitability Amendments**

*(Continued from page 1)*

tenant vehicles. Because there are so many more vehicles, they often are parked over sidewalks, blocking driveways and even in front yards.

The first part of the legislation tightens restrictions on parking in the backyard of single- and two-family houses throughout the city. A single-family home is allowed a backyard parking area no larger than 918 square feet; a two-family house can have a parking area no larger than 1,224 square feet. When you take account of the space required to backup and turn around, no more than three cars are allowed to park at the back of a single-family home; no more than five cars are allowed at the back of a two-family home.

The second part of the legislation applies only in the University Neighborhood Special District, and only to properties that are not already legally recognized rentals. The more than 800 rental properties in the university area that already have a Certificate of Suitability are exempt from the new restrictions. The new amendments apply only to properties that are currently owner occupied.

Before a Certificate of Suitability may be issued allowing an owner-occupied property to become an absentee-owned rental, the owner must demonstrate that an off-street park-

ing space can be provided for every bedroom in the house. If a single-family home has three or fewer bedrooms, and the back yard is large enough to accommodate parking for all bedrooms, a Certificate of Suitability (C of S) may be issued. If a single-family house has four or more bedrooms, the property cannot provide off-street parking for all bedrooms and a C of S will not be issued. Similarly for two-family homes, if there are more than five bedrooms for both units, no C of S may be issued. The property must remain owner-occupied.

What happens if a grandfathered home with a C of S becomes owner occupied? The C of S is nullified. If a future owner wants to convert the property into an absentee-owned rental, the application will be evaluated under the new requirements.

In 2007 these new measures were passed by the Common Council and signed into law by Mayor Driscoll. In 2008 area landlords (the Syracuse Property Owners Association or SPOA) filed a lawsuit asserting that the city violated state law when it failed to complete a full environmental impact assessment prior to passing the amendments. Onondaga County Supreme Court Judge James Murphy agreed, overturning the ordinance on this technicality.

*(Continued on page 12)*

## To Our Valued Neighbor:

### 2010 In Review

- **Certificate of Suitability ordinance passed – again**
- **Plans for more student housing**
- **Mayfest moved to Walnut Park**
- **The case for an employer assisted housing program on University Hill**

### Your SEUNA Board

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### 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](mailto:email@seuna.org)  
[WWW.SEUNA.ORG](http://WWW.SEUNA.ORG)

### Certificate of Suitability Amendments

*(Continued from page 11)*

In 2010, Mayor Stephanie Miner and Corporation Counsel Juanita Perez Williams worked diligently to ensure quick repassage of the C of S amendments. The measure passed by a vote of six to three.

Councilors voting "Yes" were :

- Bill Ryan (D)
- Kathleen Joy (D)
- Lance Denno (D)
- Jean Kessner (D)
- Thomas Seals (D)
- Nader Maroun (D)

Voting "No" were:

- Mat Rayo (R)
- Pat Hogan (D)
- Ryan McMahon (R)

Many thanks to SEUNA members who made phone calls, wrote letters and attended meetings to ensure re-passage of this important measure last year. Unfortunately, this victory was bittersweet. Annulment of the 2007 law allowed rental conversions to go forward on Livingston, Comstock, Stratford, Ostrom and Westminster.

We will need the continuing support of our members to preserve and implement this hard-won protection for our neighborhood.

CS&