



SEUNA Update



Southeast University Neighborhood Association, Inc. P.O. Box 6658, Syracuse, NY 13217 seuna@juno.com Winter 2003

UNSAAC Update: Recommendations for Street Closing Funds

Code enforcement needs ignored

For the past nine years, neighborhood groups have applied to the University Neighborhood Service Agreement Advisory Committee (UNSAAC) for funds, the source of which is yearly payments SU makes to the city for having closed streets or portions of streets in 1993. The funds available for 2003-2004 total \$312,750, and are intended to "address special impacts upon these neighborhoods by the provision of enhanced governmental services and assistance to maintain the safety and welfare of those neighborhoods." Four areas are specifically mentioned:

- Police and fire protection
- Code enforcement
- Neighborhood community organization support
- Park and public area improvements

SEUNA has played an important role in the formation and ongoing work of the committee. For the first time, SEUNA submitted proposals to fund two full-time, dedicated code enforcement officers and the continuation of the Neighborhood Patrol. Eight other community organizations submitted proposals totaling \$571,514.

At a public meeting on January 8 at Soule Library, the committee announced its preliminary recommendations: Of the three proposals that SEUNA submitted, funding for the NP proposal (\$40,000) only was recommended. The reason given for the rejection of a Code Enforcement Examiner (\$59,210) and a Quality of Life Inspector (\$35,200) was "to fund them would be contrary to the basic principles of City government in that there would be no guarantee that the Examiner and Inspector would be permanently assigned to the Special Neighbor-

hood District defined in the Ordinances."

In SEUNA's view, if UNSAAC funds can be used to pay for extra police patrols, why can't these funds be used for code enforcement? Both are city services, both are needed to address SU's impact on the neighborhood. From 1994-96, UNSACC money had been used to fund extra code enforcement in the neighborhood. Instead, the committee recommended that SEUNA concentrate on "community education regarding code violation and quality-of-life issues." Syracuse is understaffed in code enforcement; SEUNA's efforts to "educate" would generate more code violation complaints, resulting in the need for more code enforcement.

Recommendations for the allocation of funds included:

1. University Neighborhood Preservation Association \$189,500 (60%)
2. Westcott C.Center. \$45,000 (14%)
3. SEUNA \$40,000 (13%)
4. Westcott CDC \$22,000 (7%)
5. Sherman Park Assoc. \$5,000 (1.5%)
6. Eastside Soccer \$4,000 (1%)
7. Westcott Teen Center \$3,500 (1%)
8. Westcott Cultural Fair \$2,500 (.7%)
9. WENA \$750 (.2%)

On the committee were: John Oldfield (Chair, SEUNA), Councilors Michael Atkins and Bill Simmons, Jessica Crawford (SU), Jim Messenger (UNPA), Marie Lange (Thornden Park Assoc.), Stark Donnally (WENA), and John Giroux (City)

SEUNA will continue to advocate for code enforcement in our neighborhood. As taxpayers, we have a right to city services, and we must demand that laws be enforced to protect our property values and the quality of life in our neighborhood.



Tell the city what you think about code enforcement

Code enforcement is the theme of SEUNA's Annual Meeting

Don't miss this chance to learn more about how codes are enforced in our neighborhood and how violations are processed in the city. You will have the opportunity to air your views and speak directly to Jim Blakeman, head of Code Enforcement for the City of Syracuse. Common Councilors Mike Atkins and Bill Simmons, Honorable Judges William McKinney and Karen Uplinger, and Lt. Joe Cecil of the Syracuse Police Department have also been invited.

Date: **February 6** (Thursday)
Time: 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
Place: Westcott Community Center
(corner Euclid & Wescott)
Please spread the word among your friends and neighbors.

Keep Our Sidewalks Shoveled

SU's Hookway Proposal Coming Up for Review

Neighbors are gearing up to fight SU's latest proposal for development of the Hookway Tract, this time the construction and maintenance of seven athletic fields.

The neighborhood has been fighting non-residential plans for Hookway ever since it was acquired by the University in 1955. The first proposal was for married-student housing. Then came a nine-story apartment building with town houses. There have been two proposals for Wegman's grocery stores, the most recent for a superstore like the one in Dewitt. Hookway neighbors seem no more interested in accepting this plan than those in the past.

In November SU held a follow-up meeting at Skytop to communicate changes to the \$1.5 million project. These enhancements were offered to address concerns neighbors had raised at a public forum in October, including lights, fencing, aesthetics, and pedestrian issues:

- Field lights would be turned off at 8:30 p.m. instead of 10:00 p.m.
- The proposed parking area along the Upper Hookway fields would not be lighted.
- Fencing would be moved closer to the fields and given a green coating to make it less obtrusive.
- The proposed sidewalk adjacent to the fields along Colvin Street would be extended to the eastern property boundary (past Upper Hookway).
- A portion of the property (untested landfill to the north) would be transferred to the City.

These changes, however, do not address neighbors' other concerns including drainage, noise, pesticide use, traffic, habitat destruction, and the preservation of trees and the existing tree line.

The most contentious issue is SU's request for a zoning change from R-A1 residential to P.I.D. (Planned Institutional District). Why is this significant? R-A1 zoning allows the construction of only single-family, residential structures. Under P.I.D. zoning, the following uses

are allowed: schools, hospitals, care homes, religious institutions, civic uses, fraternities/sororities, day care centers, commercial schools; also accessory uses such as residential, off-street parking, retail and/or service.

SU has repeatedly denied it has plans to develop anything other than fields, but institutional requirements change. Over time, it may be determined that "improved" fields require permanent bleachers, more lights, a larger sports facility, more parking, athlete dorms and accessory services such as retail stores. In fact, this list of uses is included on SU's application to the Planning Commission as "the maximum potential development of the site if developed as permitted by the proposed zoning."

Why the change to P.I.D.? SU insists it must have the field lights and that this cannot be accommodated with a variance to the existing zoning, hence the requested zone change to P.I.D.

Neighbors have argued that the 9-12 lights on the two middle fields in Upper Hookway would not extend the playing hours significantly since the lights would be needed in October and part of November only. In May, June, July, and August, the lights would not be required since it would still be light until 8:30. In April, there is sufficient early morning light. These lights—40-50 feet high—would be permanent structures, vertical eyesores that do not disappear when not in use.

SU has given assurances that deviating from their plan to "improve" the fields would require a review process, and that residents would be notified prior to any change of plan. An attorney secured by the neighborhood coalition, Alliance for the Preservation of Neighborhoods, cautioned that a P.I.D. would give the University latitude to change their plans further down the road, and leave neighbors with little power—and time—to oppose these changes.

One SU official, Beth Rougeux, told a gathering of neighbors on December 11 that SU would sell the land if the request for a P.I.D. were turned down. Mention of developers building homes on Hookway made some residents nervous; others pointed out that homes have the advantage of bringing added tax revenue to the city. Still others had discussed the idea with real estate developers, who were skeptical about building new homes in

Show Up at the Planning Commission Hearing

Can we count on you to show up at the Planning Commission hearing on **Monday, January 27 at 6:00 p.m.** at City Hall (Common Councilors chambers)? To carpool, call Harry Lewis at 472-3110.

Or write the Common Councilors: Bea Gonzalez, Van Robinson, Katherine O'Connell, Joanne Mahoney, Stephanie Miner, Steven DeRegis, Martin Masterpole, Rory McMahon, Michael Atkins, Bill Simmons

Common Council Office mailing address: Room 314 City Hall, Syracuse, NY 13202.

Phone: 448-8466 Fax: 448-8423

the city, much less on soggy Hookway. The possibility of homes being built on the Hookway Tract is remote.

One has to ask: If SU were to sell the Hookway Tract, what would they use for fields? Right now they argue that they need the fields — there is nowhere else to create them. It is not likely, therefore, that SU will give up the property. Without a change in zoning, SU can still create fields, maintain them, even fence them, and save over a million dollars in the process. Result: Everyone can enjoy the full use of the land without disturbing the environment and losing an important neighborhood feature.

What do the majority of neighbors want? Above all, they want to preserve the residential character of the neighborhood and the natural features that are a part of it. Hookway Tract is a neighborhood resource; it should not be fenced off and "institutionalized" with lights and permanent structures. Nor should it be allowed to be developed into other "approved institutional uses." To preserve the residential quality of the neighborhood, neighbors must not allow SU's requested zoning change to P.I.D.

You can help block this zoning change by writing your common councilors and voicing your opinion at the Planning Commission hearing (details above). We can stop the zoning change if we turn out in sufficient numbers. Please act!

Too Much Light: A Nuisance

Bob Bellandi

Some property owners in the SEUNA neighborhood have installed "street lights" in their backyards and front yards. These big lights shine bright light far beyond the owner's property, onto neighbors' property, and into houses. Those installing the lights don't realize that not everyone is grateful, and may instead consider the light a nuisance.

Adjacent property owners don't have to tolerate such lighting. It's a violation of the City's zoning code for light to cross property lines. If owners want to turn night into day, they must confine that light to their property.

If you're affected by nuisance stray light, you have a few options. You can seek the property owner's cooperation and ask him/her to reduce the lighting. Such a reduction is often easily done by winding duct tape around the top two-thirds of the light shade.

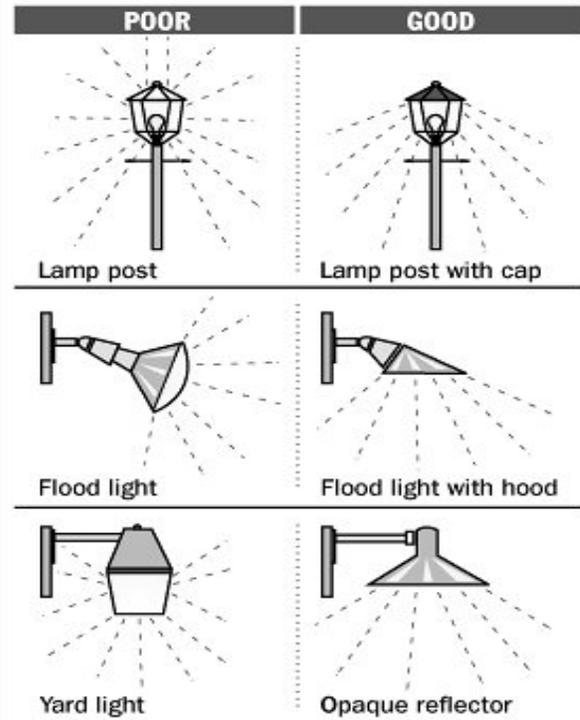
If your request for cooperation fails, you can call Jim DiOrio of the Syracuse Code Enforcement Office at 448-8653. He will pursue nuisance light cases.

Many times such lights are installed for "security," but security is often much better served by lights on motion detectors, simple attachments that connect to house wiring and can be purchased at hardware stores for about \$20.

Graphics provided by the International Dark-Sky Association. For more information, visit www.darksites.com.

Directing the light

Simple reflectors and caps can help focus light downward and cut back on light pollution above suburbs and cities.



Corrections and Clarifications

There are several points in the story, *SU Proposes Construction in Hookway Area*, in the Fall 2002 SEUNA newsletter, which require correction or clarification.

- S.U. has asked the city to change the zoning of its Hookway property from RA-1 (residential) to P.I.D., or Planned Institutional District, not "Planned Industrial District" as we had reported.
- The "60-vehicle parking lot" mentioned in our story would not be a new parking lot. The existing parking lot would be paved and curbs installed.
- Only the upper Hookway Tract, about one third of the area, would be fenced in. The lower tract would not be fenced, lighted, or irrigated.
- Our article stated that "lawns are artificial." We did not mean by this that the University would be installing artificial turf; we meant to say that lawns, particularly those installed for playing fields, are man-made environments that must be maintained through the application of chemical fertilizers, weed control agents, and insecticides.

Ballot for SEUNA Board of Directors 2003

Vote for any or all nominees; write-ins can be added below. (Please include address and/or phone number of write-in candidates. One ballot per household. Please return to ballots to SEUNA, 935 Lancaster Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210 no later than February 6. Your address appears on the reverse side.

Richard Kornatowski

Michael Stanton

Andrea Brand

James Hagarty

I wish to nominate: name _____
address _____

SEUNA Notes

- New committees are forming on Noise, Trash, Parking, Code Enforcement, Town-Gown Relations, and the Westminster Steps Memorial Landscaping Project. If you would like to join one of these committees—or propose one—or help in any way, *call Harry Lewis at 472-3110* or email us at seuna@juno.com.
- Winter is in full force, and residents should remember that clearing the sidewalk is both considerate AND required by law. Ordinance 27-72D requires all property owners to clear the snow and ice from their sidewalks by 6:00 p.m. the day following the accumulation. In the case of rental properties, it is the OWNERS' responsibility to clear sidewalks. To report non-shoveled walks anonymously, fax your complaint to police at 448-8724.
- If you think the city-owned strip between the sidewalk and the street in front of your house could use a tree, why not request one from the city? Call the city at 448-2489. Your request will be entered into the SyraStat system for follow up. If you have specific questions about trees, call Brian Liberti at 473-4330 ext. 3014 or Sue DePalma at ext. 3020. You may be given a choice as to the kind of tree planted. Trees requested now would be planted in the spring, at the earliest. Trees are provided and cared for by the city.
- SEUNA members now have an online forum for all our neighborhood concerns. To join, please email James at JWHagarty@yahoo.com. This group is new, so please spread the word!
- Welcome new neighbors:
Ryan & Vakerue Mone, 519-521 Euclid Avenue
Julie Ann Mc Gaulley, 1083 Westmoreland Avenue
George J. Foster, 609 Broad Street

Ann Marie Hotaling, 1021 Broad St.
Donald Hughes, 157 Strong Avenue
Kay J. Faus, 400-402 Broad St.
Jeurji Alaamir, 233-235 Roosevelt

A Tribute To Bob Volk

Bob Volk stepped down as board member and secretary in November, 2002 after serving SEUNA for many years. President Harry Lewis has this to say about Bob's years of service:

Up until late last year, this man has been the backbone of SEUNA. Without Bob, there would have been no newsletters and board meeting minutes. There was also the answering of all the letters, always keeping SEUNA's purposes in the forefront of his communications.

How many years Bob has been doing this is truthfully unknown to me, but without him, I feel my job as President would not have been tenable. The entire board and SEUNA members thank you, Bob!

SEUNA Update

Southeast University Neighborhood Assn., Inc.
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email: seuna@juno.com Laura Martin, Secretary
<http://community.syracuse.com/cc/seuna/>



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TO OUR VALUED NEIGHBOR:



SOUTH EAST UNIVERSITY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ Recommendations for UNSAAC funds announced
- ◆ Update on SU's Hookway Fields Project & upcoming hearing
- ◆ Annual meeting on February 6
- ◆ Election of 2003 board members
- ◆ New members' online forum
- ◆ A tribute to Bob Volk
- ◆ New committees forming