



Summer 2004

SEUNA Update



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

University Hill Corporation Exploring Home Ownership Incentives

Soon, Syracuse University may not be the only institution on the Hill offering employees incentives to buy homes in our neighborhood.

University Hill Corporation (UHC), an umbrella organization representing the major employers on University Hill, says it is exploring incentives member institutions might offer employees to invest in university area homes.

The largest UHC member institution is the State University of New York Health Science Center with nearly 6,000 employees. In fact, SUNY Health Science is the City's largest employer. Syracuse University is second with about 4,700 employees. Other University Hill Corporation members include Crouse Hospital with 2,300 employees, Hutchings Psychiatric Center with 520, SUNY ESF with about 500 and the Rosewood Heights Health Center with 300.

In 1994, SU instituted its Guaranteed Mortgage Program, designed to encourage SU employees to invest and live in the University area. Under this program the University guarantees employee mortgages, eliminating the need for either a down payment or private mortgage insurance. Employees must make this home their primary residence.

In April of this year, St. Joseph's Hospital announced an ambitious program to revitalize their north side neighborhood. As they expand their physical plant they will also be moving overhead utility lines underground, planting additional trees, shrubs and flowers, and installing

old-fashioned street lamps, and benches.

In addition, St. Joseph's will be offering their 3,200 employees a guaranteed mortgage program modeled on that at SU.

In May, SEUNA suggested that the University Hill Corporation consider a guaranteed mortgage program for its member institutions. Executive Vice President David Mankiewicz replied to SEUNA, thanking us for our suggestion. "Certainly Syracuse University has had success with this program," he said, "and all of us will be able to determine

the impact that St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center now has on the north side neighborhood with a similar program."

Mr. Mankiewicz said he would raise this issue with his institutional members. One concern he had was whether government affiliated member institutions could establish incentives for employees in Syracuse that would not be available to employees in other locations.

State affiliation hasn't stopped SUNY Buffalo from offering its employees an excellent homeownership program. The

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Westminster Stairs Looking Up

Good things are happening these days at Westminster Park.

The wide concrete stairway, rising 176 steps from the sidewalk on Euclid to a grassy outlook atop Westminster Avenue, has always been one of the neighborhood's most interesting features. This vantage point, with its small circular driveway, offers a splendid view of the campus and city beyond.

Unfortunately, in recent years the view from the Westminster outlook has been blocked by unmanaged tree and shrubbery growth. Even worse, the 80 year old stairs have fallen into disrepair, with many steps broken and pieces of handrail

damaged or missing.

This year the City has been putting Westminster back in order.

Forty-five concrete bollards (posts) at the top of Westminster were rebuilt this Spring and the metal bars interconnecting these have been repainted. In April a large group of neighbors, led by Westminster resident and arborist Norm Richards, helped clear brush and overgrowth to restore the view, enjoyed by many as the reward for climbing the many steps to the top. Of course, the park is also accessible on foot from Westminster Avenue for those who prefer a more leisurely approach.

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SEUNA Working with City on Code Enforcement

At SEUNA's annual meeting in February, members told us that code enforcement was the most important issue facing our neighborhood. Indeed, code enforcement may be the most important tool we have in our efforts to reverse the decline we've witnessed in much of the neighborhood.

The SEUNA Committee on Code Enforcement was established at our annual meeting with the goal of encouraging the City to more vigorously enforce regulations already on the books. To that end, the committee has been exploring ways SEUNA can help the various City departments charged with residential code enforcement. These include:

- The Division of Code Enforcement (DCE), responsible for enforcement of the City's "Property Conservation Code."
- The Department of Community Development.
- The Department of Public Works (DPW), responsible for, among other things, street maintenance, public lighting and trash collection.
- The Syracuse Police Department (SPD), responsible for many "quality of life" City ordinances.

As a first step, the Committee set up a meeting with Jim Blakeman, Director of the Division of Code Enforcement. At this meeting we agreed that SEUNA can usefully complement the scarce personnel of DCE by spotting and reporting codes violations to DCE.

As a pilot study, committee members have surveyed several blocks in the neighborhood, looking for code violations visible from the exterior and taking pictures when possible. It

was easy to identify several types of building and yard code violations.

From this initial study, the Committee will prepare a first list of violations and submit this to the DCE. We will also prepare a check list of potential violations to distribute to SEUNA members, asking them to look over properties in their immediate vicinity, to record violations observed and report these to SEUNA's Code Enforcement Committee.

Any City resident can report code violations using the "Zero Defects"

page at the City's website (<http://www.zerodeflectssyr.com>). You can get an even faster response by calling your complaint in at 448-CITY. But sometimes residents don't want to be identified as the one reporting a code violation.

The reporting mechanism that SEUNA's Code Enforcement Committee is establishing has the advantage of preserving the anonymity of those reporting code violations, DCE is presented with an organized list of reported violations, and SEUNA can easily follow up later to see what action has been taken.

Westminster Stairs (Cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

The City has replaced some sections of the metal handrail and removed other damaged sections. Also, the vegetation in the stair corridor has been thinned out, letting in more light and making for a safer environment.

Much work remains to be done, however. There are large tree trunks and other debris to be cleared out dating from the 1998 Labor Day storm. Sections of handrail are still missing, and the concrete steps and brick landings require attention. All of this constitutes major work.

There is hope that with the financial support of a California donor, a former resident of the neighborhood, the City may be encouraged to complete this work.

SEUNA is part of a team that will be putting together a proposal this fall for the restoration of the stairs and park. Other team members include Alix Krueger from the Parks, Recrea-



The Westminster Stairs

tion and Youth Programs; Richard Hawks, Westminster Avenue resident and chair of the landscape architecture program at SUNY ESF, George Curry, landscape architecture professor at SUNY ESF, and Norm Richards, retired professor, SUNY-ESF.

University Hill (cont.)

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"Home Loan Guaranty Program" at SUNY Buffalo underwrites employee mortgages in the University Heights neighborhood for up to 120% of the home's purchase price. That extra 20% is to cover home renovation and repairs — an important factor in any neighborhood where homes have been neglected and/or inappropriately altered.

In Albany, the University Heights & Delaware Area Neighborhood associations have taken homeownership incentives to another level. Through the "Walk to Work" program, new homeowners in these neighborhoods are offered, among other incentives, half-off tuition at The Sage Colleges and the Albany College of Pharmacy.

When our neighborhood was first established prior to World War II, many of the first crop of homeowners came from the nearby educational and medical institutions. With the citywide flight to the suburbs in the 60s and 70s, many of these professionals moved away.

With roads and highways increasingly congested and commute times growing ever longer, now is the time to invite University Hill employees back to live on the Hill.

The advantages are many: employees will enjoy living a short walk — or shuttle ride — from their offices; employers can avoid the cost of building ever more parking facilities; the City will experience reduced traffic and increased property tax revenue.

SEUNA applauds the University Hill Corporation for their efforts to establish effective home ownership incentives for our area. Their success will provide a wealth of benefits to our neighborhood and community.



WAER Interference Continues

In 1995, SU radio station WAER-FM significantly strengthened the signal it broadcasts from campus. Since that day, WAER's signal has seemed to emanate from all variety of electronic equipment in SEUNA area homes — everything from telephones to televisions. In 1996, SEUNA filed a formal complaint with the Federal Communications Commission regarding this interference.

Earlier this year, SEUNA reminded Congressman James Walsh that the FCC has yet to address the concerns we raised eight years ago. Congressman Walsh wrote the FCC on our behalf, declaring "...the apparent foot-dragging in this case on the FCC's part to be disrespectful to members of SEUNA, my office and all others affected."

SEUNA is reviewing important aspects of the situation, including procedural errors and unfulfilled promises by the University. Continuing interference problems range from the trivial but annoying, to

issues with real economic impact. Some households have found it necessary to subscribe to cable or satellite TV to deal with the interference. Others have suffered serious impacts on professional work using audio or video recording equipment.

We would like to hear of recent cases of WAER interference in any category. Anyone concerned should contact Bud Bakeman at 479-6400, or John Oldfield at 475-6251.

Barry Park Supporters Needed!

If you are an active user of Barry Park, please consider becoming involved with the Barry Park Association. The sole board member is stepping down and someone is needed to represent Barry Park at monthly Canopy meetings. If you are interested, call Judy Schmid days at 475-1603 for more information.

Special Offer

Bring in a New SEUNA Member, Renew Your Own Membership for Free

SEUNA members who bring us a new member in 2004 can renew their membership for free.

Just clip this coupon, making sure your name and address are on the reverse side. Put it in an envelop and send it with a check for the new member to: **SEUNA, PO Box 6658, Syracuse NY, 13217**. Dues are \$10 for one year or \$16 for two years. (If you're feeling generous, you can pay the new member's dues with your own membership savings).

Be sure to fill out this information about the new member:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Your SEUNA Board

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935 Lancaster Avenue
472-3110

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Please inform the board of directors of your concerns. Call President Harry Lewis at 472-3110, write to P.O. Box 6658, Syracuse, NY 13217, email us at email@seuna.org.

Visit our website:
WWW.SEUNA.ORG

Recent Neighborhood House Sales in SEUNA area, as published in the Syracuse Post-Standard

Address	Sale Price	Date	Buyer
210 Berkeley Drive	\$148,000	July 6	Ramin Gharakhanzadeh
344 Buckingham Ave.	\$121,500	June 23	Christine Alemany
541 Buckingham Ave.	\$79,900	June 24	Lucius and Patricia Denis
929 Comstock Ave.	\$130,200	July 7	C. Martin and J. B. Keller
532 Cumberland Ave.	\$106,000	May 13	R. Wilson and A. Mountz
103 Dorset Road	\$222,500	June 28	W. F. Kelleher & J. D. Thomas
1221 Euclid Ave.	\$82,500	June 10	Michael Edwards
616 Fellows Ave.	\$60,500	March 26	Mary Ritnour
200 Kensington Pl.	\$115,500	June 30	Shreedhar Navkal
320 Kensington Pl.	\$109,500	July 2	Ryan A. Sanakerq
109 Kensington Pl.	\$44,900	June 15	Glen R. Haufelner
214-16 Kensington Pl.	\$142,000	May 7	John Pease
300 Kensington Rd.	\$154,000	June 28	J. A. and C. E. Ashby
518 Kensington Rd.	\$91,500	April 16	S. McCray and A. Nichols
956 Lancaster Ave.	\$63,500	May 21	G. G. and R. C. Fassett
1343 Lancaster Ave.	\$85,000	March 26	M. Kissane and J. Felix
819 Maryland Ave.	\$128,000	June 29	Lloyd Blanchard
853 Maryland Ave.	\$70,000	June 29	Stampede V. LLC
128 Redfield Pl.	\$64,500	March 18	Allen Krum
136-138 Redfield Pl.	\$115,000	July 2	William A. Osuchowski
956 Westmoreland	\$121,500	July 7	Lois P. Agnew
985 Westmoreland	\$125,000	May 11	Jennifer Elway
1120 Westmoreland	\$86,000	July 1	S. Mironov and N. Shipunova
1222 Westmoreland	\$115,000	May 18	Kimberley M. Sallie

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