



Friday, August 31, 2007 4:41 PM [Right-Mind](#)

## Written testimony for the Sept. 4 Public Hearing ★★★★★

A press release from Bob Hieronymus, Executive Vice President of Administration and Advancement at New Saint Andrews College:



Dear Madam Mayor and Honorable City Council Members:

On behalf of New Saint Andrews College, I am writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed changes to the Moscow City Zoning Code related to the definition of family and boarding houses. While we whole heartedly oppose “party houses” and agree that any behavior which disturbs the peace of our neighborhoods should be prohibited, we believe the proposed changes to the code will not correct these behavioral problems and will unjustifiably encroach on the property rights of the vast majority of people in Moscow, who are not now part of the problem.

**Consider how the proposed ordinance will affect five nuns living next door to a party house of four young men?** The nuns will be told to get a conditional use permit, but the four next door continue to throw parties, make noise, park on lawns and litter yards. What’s been accomplished?



**We ask you to reject the proposed zoning changes for following reasons:**

1. **The proposed zoning changes will not correct problems identified.** The proposed changes supposedly address behavioral problems limited to a few individuals at even fewer houses in our community. The current law-breakers who ignore the noise ordinance or act thoughtlessly toward their neighbors will not suddenly become sensitive renters and neighbors. Adding new, more complicated sections to the zoning regulations will do nothing to change the attitude and behaviors of those inclined to disrespect their neighbors and their neighborhoods. Neighbors will still need to call the police when the four unrelated students next door throw a drunken party. Unless the code addressing the current behavioral problems is enforced, nothing will change. The proposed changes will be ineffective and should therefore be rejected.
2. **The proposed zoning changes are overbroad and create new problems for law abiding citizens.** Not only will the proposed zoning changes not fix the real and perceived problems, they **will erode the rights of all Moscow property owners**. In effect, the changes will turn many families and renters who are currently law-abiding citizens into potential law-breakers or force them to seek special governmental permission for just doing what was never a problem for anyone else in the first place. The proposed changes not only smash a gnat with a sledgehammer, it is the wrong gnat. Moreover, the proposed changes needlessly push the nose of city government under the doors of all Moscow homes to address a small and isolated problem. The proposed changes are to zoning what DDT is to pest control. They are overbroad and over-reaching, they multiply problems, and should therefore be rejected.
3. **The proposed changes will likely result in arbitrary and selective enforcement with discriminatory motivation.** Unfortunately, those of us at New Saint Andrews are all too familiar with **zoning regulations being used against the College by those with anti-religious and ideological motives**. **The abuse of zoning regulations for discriminatory reasons has a long and ugly history. We**

**believe the changes proposed will almost certainly be abused – arbitrarily and selectively – via citizen complaint in a way that has nothing to do with behavioral problems that the changes were originally intended to fix.** Our suspicion is that the proposed changes, by their over-reaching nature, have less to do with fixing a party house problem than with **giving handles to those who would seek to harm those associated New Saint Andrews and members of Christ Church.** Let me remind the Council that **a certain citizen in Latah County has already filed a blanket discriminatory zoning complaint against all the members of Christ Church and Trinity Reformed Church who have had a New Saint Andrews student live with them, not because of any bona fide reports of behavioral problems, but simply because the students and families were associated with the College and Christ Church or Trinity Reformed Church.** The proposed changes before you open the door for further unwarranted and discriminatory action against us. Unless that is your intention, I urge you to vote against these changes.

4. **The proposed changes will actually magnify the kinds of problems it claims to fix.**

As many in Moscow know, for the past 14 years New Saint Andrews has, in harmony with the current law, encouraged its students to live with local families when possible and appropriate. We believe this encourages responsible behavior among college age students better than them merely having them live in apartments or shared rental units on their own. **Almost by definition, New Saint Andrews students who live with families cannot become the creators of the “party houses” that the proposed zoning changes claim to address. Yet many of these students who now live quietly and peaceably with local families will, if these proposed zoning changes pass, most likely move into apartments or rental houses together.** That will expand the potential for more, not fewer, “party houses” in the absence of more senior adult supervision. Parental oversight and maturity will give way to more groups of 18-21 year olds trying to oversee themselves. While most will continue be quiet and peaceable neighbors, the proposed change will actually encourage more, not less, of what is perceived as the problems these changes seek to correct. We urge you to reject the proposal for it will potentially undermine what has been an excellent environment for our students, and exacerbate, not fix, the problems it purports to correct.

To summarize, the proposed zoning changes:

1. Do not address the principal problems of behavior in “Party House” neighborhoods,
2. Unnecessarily intrude city government into families and homes that are not now and never have been a problem,
3. Will likely lead to arbitrary and selective enforcement with discriminatory intent, and
4. Will actually encourage housing arrangements that will potentially lead to more of the kind of problems the changes are intended to solve.

For these reasons, I urge the City Council to reject the proposed zoning changes. As an alternative, I encourage you to enforce – and strengthen if necessary – the existing disturbing the peace laws.

Thank you for considering our comments and concerns,

Sincerely,

Roy Alden Atwood, Ph.D.  
President

## Comments

### **# re: Written testimony for the Sept. 4 Public Hearing**

Friday, August 31, 2007 6:18 PM by [Dave](#)

There were only seven boarding house complaints. Three of those complaints were from the same individual. One of the complaints was from Huskey who shot at Christ Church families with NSA students living as part of their host family.

One complaint were validated by the city. The owner thought he owned a duplex and thought he was complying with Moscow's wishes. The situation was resolved.

One complaint was found to be invalid, but the owner was working on his house and didn't have the proper building permits. He got the required permits.

One complaint was found to be valid, but was reversed when it was made clear that the UofI students living at that home were members of the foreign student exchange and that they lived in a family manner with their hosts.

The other complaints did not violate the Moscow codes.

So for sake of seven complaints that were easily resolved using the existing code we are going to set Moscow on fire with a new law.

By the way the Boarding House Committee didn't even look at the boarding house complaints until they were well under way trying to save Moscow from itself.

### **# re: Written testimony for the Sept. 4 Public Hearing**

Friday, August 31, 2007 8:20 PM by [Kate](#)

Using house remodeling as an excuse to complain about drunken boarding house parties as per Dave's post above sounds about right for the Intolerati zealots. And for this all 23,000 of us have to lose property rights and more of our remaining scraps of freedom. Behold the collateral damage from the Get Wilson,CC,NSA agenda. The Intoleratis didn't fall far from their Lenin, Stalin, Madeline Albright agenda tree where it doesn't matter how many people you hurt to get your own way.