

DRAFT FOCUS GROUP PROPOSAL

We have been asked to study the Williamsburg rental situation with an eye toward allowing more than three unrelated persons to rent single family homes in areas zoned RS-2. Without meaningful and enforceable restrictions, residents owning homes in neighborhoods both close to the college and outside the immediate area, have a great deal to lose if changes are made to multiple tenant occupancy regulations in RS-2 Zoned areas of the City. Residents of these neighborhoods understand and are sympathetic to the need to both provide additional student housing opportunities off campus as well as protect the privacy rights of the tenants.

The Focus Group feels that through a joint effort between the College, City, Landlords and Neighborhood Residents, additional rental housing opportunity can be made available while at the same time maintaining the viability of Single Family Neighborhoods in the City and makes the following:

PROPOSAL

- The College of William & Mary establish an office of off campus housing.
 - Could be established as a subset of the on campus housing effort with oversight provided as a collateral duty for existing staff.
 - Would require only minimal additional staff (part time), very little office space and a computer.
- All students either required or those who desire to live off campus would be required to use the off campus housing office as a clearing point.
 - Serves a central point for listing off campus housing. Owner occupied as well as absentee landlord rentals would apply.
 - As a central clearing point, landlords desiring to rent to students could list their property with the college off campus housing office.
 - Each listed house would show the number of authorized renters, (three or more if multiple renter conditions are met.)
 - Prior to signing a lease or agreeing to share a lease at a particular home, student would check with the off campus housing office. Computer records would show when the maximum number of renters for that particular residence was reached. If the maximum for that particular residence had been reached the student would be told by college officials that there was no availability at that residence and they would be required to find other housing. Housing office could provide a list of additional availability.

ENFORCEMENT

- Students living off campus would be provided and encouraged to study and adhere to literature regarding expectations and conduct in single family residential neighborhoods.
- Landlords would use more stringent standardized leases the contents of which would be agreed upon by College and City officials and with input from neighborhood residents. This could be accomplished by an addendum to a

landlord's normal lease. Addendum would include, if not already stipulated in the landlord's lease, expected conduct, number of authorized occupants and setting consequence for non compliance. (Significant fines, eviction, etc –as yet to be determined.)

- Should neighborhood problems arise:
 - Neighbors would first approach tenants and express their concerns.
 - If above unsuccessful, notify off campus housing office, Landlords and/or Management Company as appropriate.
 - Provides an opportunity for college officials to council renters not following required regulations/guidelines.
 - If conduct particularly egregious, or either of first two options are not feasible (info not available, can't reach etc. Call Williamsburg Police.
 - Williamsburg police in all cases report complaint to College officials (Off Campus Housing Office.
 - Off Campus Housing office further involve Campus Police or Dean of Students as appropriate. (Additional opportunity for on campus administrative guidance.)
- In the event student's renters are found to be disregarding off campus housing guidelines they would be subject to college disciplinary action (Code of Conduct / Honor Council applies because they would be dealing with college officials on campus.)
- In no case should it be necessary for student's names to be provided to City officials because they would be under the jurisdiction of the college.

ADVANTAGES:

- Protects Neighborhoods from violations of current City rental and property maintenance regulations.
- Student privacy would be assured. Residency information would remain with the College where it is currently maintained.
- Facilitates accurate off campus residency information for emergency contact purposes which would remain within the domain of the College.
- Provides a central point of contact for residents, city officials and if necessary police in the event neighborhood disturbances occur.
- Allows more than three unrelated renters in a single family home provided conditions are met. (Safety, parking, size etc.)

DISADVANTAGES:

- Requirement to establishment of an Office of Off Campus Housing. (Resources for same could possibly be shared between the College and City of Williamsburg).
- College would have to require students to give actual addresses to college officials. (If necessary this could be made a requirement of admission to the College.)