

December 11, 2009

Joint Release  
City of Williamsburg  
College of William & Mary

This paper builds on the ongoing community conversation in Williamsburg about student rental in neighborhoods near the College.

Mayor Jeanne Zeidler speaking for the City, and President Taylor Reveley speaking for the College have jointly summarized the actions and responsibility of their institutions. They have also recommended responsibilities of others, specifically, owner occupants, student renters, and landlords. The goal is to improve relationships and goodwill among all the parties, and to improve the quality of life for all in city neighborhoods.

Recommendations:

**William & Mary**

- WM will be an active participant in seeking solutions.
- President will continue meeting with Mayor and City Manager on a monthly basis.
- Senior administrators will continue meeting on a regular basis with the Morton Hall Group - citizens representing the Neighborhood Council of Williamsburg.
- Long term housing solutions will be addressed. WM undergraduates want to live on a residential campus. This is not the norm at most other state-owned VA colleges. WM will begin planning for additional bed spaces on campus – later this year – that will include 200 beds. WM will also continue planning for a mixed use retail/residential building (56 beds) near the WaWa on Richmond Road. Presently, WM houses 74% of our undergraduates on campus. These additional beds will raise WM's percentage close to 80%, and the cost of these two projects will total more than \$30M.
- Among public colleges only VMI (100%) and Longwood (75%) house more. Other examples - UVA houses 40%; JMU houses 34% and Virginia Tech 38%. WM will continue working with City and County on more student retail and entertainment options – New Town, High Street.
- Office of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office will address off campus behavior issues by:
  - Distributing “How to Be a Good Neighbor” to students at the beginning of each semester that includes guidelines for students living in neighborhoods and tips for living off campus.
  - Establishing a website ([www.wmoffcampus.com](http://www.wmoffcampus.com)) to provide additional information about off-campus living and available housing, the City of Williamsburg Guide for Students, etc.

- Playing a role in resolving complaints of persistent problems; such a complaint process must also involve neighbors, landlords and City Police. If a resident is unable to remedy a problem involving students after reaching out to them, the resident can call the Student Affairs Office during normal business hours at 221-1244. (Note: see Neighbors section for night time process). As necessary, the student(s) will be asked to meet with an administrator.
- Working with the Athletic Department to assist any players creating problems off campus.
- College will review current alcohol policies as part of its review of the Student Handbook.
- Campus Police will join City Police in responding to overnight complaints involving students and will provide a report to the Dean of Students Office the following morning.

### City

- City of Williamsburg will continue to take an active and aggressive role to promote successful, healthy neighborhoods near campus, and to promote the interests of both owner occupants and renters.
- Mayor and City Manager will continue to meet with WM President and Chief of Staff monthly.
- Senior City officials will meet with student representatives (Student Assembly and others) on a frequent basis.
- City will join the College in establishing a “Williamsburg Neighborhood Relations Committee,” (as recommended by the Focus Group on Housing Near Campus) composed of city, college, student, homeowner and landlord representatives.
- City will administer its “Rental Inspection Program” to upgrade the condition and safety of rental housing.
- City will administer the “Property Maintenance Program” to improve care of houses and yards in neighborhoods near campus.
- City will enforce Noise and Nuisance Ordinances working closely with Campus Police, both with directed patrols and response to complaints.
- City will enforce the “Unrelated Person” Zoning Ordinance, and implement the recently adopted modifications to the Zoning Ordinance to allow four unrelated persons for qualified properties.
- City will educate landlords, renters, and owner occupants by:
  - Conducting annual door to door information sharing in vulnerable neighborhoods.
  - Hosting two annual “block parties.”
  - Informing landlords in writing of any code violations involving their renters.
  - Distributing city produced literature such as the “Resident Guide – Student Edition” via multimedia annually.
- City will encourage and work for more student-oriented retail near campus.
- City will promote through land use designation, additional opportunities for student-oriented housing off campus but accessible to campus by walking, cycling and/or transit.

## **Neighbors**

- When students move in, neighbors will welcome and introduce themselves, discuss neighborhood needs and issues with noise, trash, etc.
- Work with City to inform absentee landlords about condition of rental properties and the behavior of tenants in those properties
- Call the City if violations are observed of any City Ordinance.
- If issues with student renters persist after reasonable efforts to resolve, call the Student Affairs Office at 221-1244 to explain situation or ask questions.
- Encourage absentee landlords to assist renters and/or to sell to owner occupied.

## **Students**

- Receive and review information on “How to Be a Good Neighbor” and learn responsibilities of off-campus living.
- Respond to neighbors’ welcome and reasonable requests.
- Understand the College will now be more engaged through the Division of Student Affairs and the President’s Office and aggressively seek remedies to any off campus problems.
- Support Student Assembly’s plan to create an “Off Campus Housing Association” to further provide training for off campus responsibilities (student to student) and work cooperatively with the College, City, citizens and landlords to promote understanding.

## **Landlords**

- Provide information to tenants at beginning of rental that will assist with how to be a good neighbor.
- Take actions against tenants for violations of leases.
- Maintain proper condition of the property – cut grass, paint, repairs, other improvements appropriate to neighborhood to ensure code and safety regulations are met.

## **Final Recommendation**

In order to better hold the parties accountable for living up to their responsibilities, and to create an ongoing forum for dialogue and new recommendations, the City and College support the creation of a “Williamsburg Neighborhood Relations Committee.” This is to be accomplished before the start of the 2010 spring semester and include one representative from the College (selected by the President), Neighborhoods (selected by the Neighborhood Council), City (selected by the Mayor), students (selected by the Student Assembly President) and landlords (selected by the Mayor) to assess progress and make recommendations to improve relationships. The Committee would organize itself and meet on a monthly basis.