

> Subject: Ordinance 900

> From: douglas@barry-jester.net

> Date: Mon, 7 Dec 2015 20:29:13 -0500

> To: sallytsilver@hotmail.com

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> Sally,

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> I will be out of state on Wednesday, on a business trip, so cannot testify in the hearing on this bill. You may share my comments with the committee.

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> Ordinance 900 and related actions were undertaken because of the fairly rapid conversion of traditional residential neighborhoods into "student rentals" that was occurring in the 1980s and early 1990s. This was occurring because of growth in MSU enrollment without addition of on-campus housing, shifts in dormitory occupancy from 2 or 3 per room to 1 or 2 per room, and increasing numbers of students bringing cars to college when they didn't have adequate parking in traditional student housing areas on or off campus.

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> Ordinance 900 recognizes that, in East Lansing, renting houses to large groups of unrelated persons is incompatible with the traditional family-occupied neighborhood, much as are other commercial uses. We reached this conclusion based on analyses showing:

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> 1) Many single-family houses rented to groups of students were the source of high numbers of public nuisance (noise, litter, public urination, problem parties, alcohol consumption by minors, trespass on adjacent properties for parking, etc.) complaints and citations, becoming nuisance properties.

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> 2) Rates of complaints and citations for such public nuisance were an order of magnitude less per capita in apartment buildings and other non-fraternity multiple-dwelling units.

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> 3) Single-family houses occupied by groups of unrelated students were badly maintained, and difficult to properly maintain, creating a variety of safety hazards. We had at least four deaths in the early 1990s due to maintenance and over occupancy problems - a fire death due to sleeping in a closet, a carbon monoxide poisoning, and two falls through railings.

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> 4) In most of the neighborhoods affected by Ordinance 900, properties were designed for parking a single car and parking four or more cars because each student renter has their own was making the neighborhood excessively congested, causing property destruction and encroachment on neighbors.

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> 5) Owner-occupied properties adjacent to properties licensed for rental to 4 or more unrelated persons sold for \$15,000 to \$20,000 less than comparable properties not adjacent to such rentals.

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> 6) Large numbers of people in the affected neighborhoods were complaining about their home becoming unlivable due to interrupted sleep, property destruction, and neighborhood blight.

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> The intended results of Ordinance 900 was to stop conversion of single-family neighborhoods into student rentals, direct the student rental market into development of new multiple-unit housing and mixed-use buildings, and create the conditions for conversion of some single-family housing back into its design use. It worked.

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> No doubt, follow-on policies are needed. The comprehensive plan revision on which the City has worked for the last 18 months will

identify some areas that are predominantly rental for up-zoning and redevelopment for multiple dwelling units and will provide for mixed use in some additional commercial areas. The City had a study committee working on this issues in 2014 and early 2015 but action on that report was delayed pending the recent election. The new Council will soon resume work on these issues.

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> It would be unfortunate if the legislature preempted our ability to protect East Lansing's owner occupants from the adverse effects of conflicting use of neighboring properties as group rentals. At a minimum, they should not act while the City is actively working on the issue.

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