

President Wallace D. Loh
University of Maryland
1101 Main Administration Building
College Park, MD 20742-6105

March 12, 2013

Dear Dr. Loh,

On behalf of the College Park Berwyn District Civic Association I wanted to let you know that we are very pleased that the university is making an enormous effort to improve public safety throughout the city. However, we are disappointed that Berwyn was left out of the proposed concurrent jurisdiction that would extend the student code of conduct into the College Park Neighborhoods. Therefore the student code of conduct would not apply to the Berwyn neighborhood. Our concerns are that this would be detrimental to both student safety and to the well-being of the residents of Berwyn.

Berwyn has been at the forefront of extending the student code of conduct to off-campus areas as well as implementing concurrent jurisdiction. The Neighborhood Preservation Task Force was originally a committee of the BDCA (Berwyn District Civic Association) to advocate for policy changes relating to these very issues. The task force sought to encourage families to purchase available housing and thereby stem the tide of rental conversions. This led to formation and incorporation of the Neighborhood Preservation Coalition (NPC) to involve citizens from all neighborhoods within College Park and the surrounding communities.

The ensuing market bust coupled with the building of high-rise apartments on Route #1 marketed exclusively to University of Maryland students, subsequently altered the demand for rental housing and curbed the frenzied pace of rental conversions. However, today, Berwyn maintains a high number of student occupied houses. We find it interesting that private commercial enterprises like The View, The Varsity and The Enclave which are occupied exclusively by students would be considered part of the concurrent jurisdiction while Berwyn, a community comprised of many working families whose work schedules and family activities differ greatly from the typical students' lifestyle would be left out of the proposed concurrent jurisdiction.

We are very concerned that an unintended consequence of not including Berwyn in the initial stage of this initiative will be that Berwyn will consequently become a **“free conduct zone”** where parties will be hosted without any fear of reprisals

from the university and where the increased costs of public order and safety would be placed on the backs of the neighborhood and the City. We have recently experienced an uptick in large out of control student parties in Berwyn. Recently, in early January, Prince George's County Police had a challenging time dispersing a late night student party on Berwyn Road. It was estimated that this party had somewhere between 150 to 175 party guests in which many of the partiers refused to obey police direction. A very large number of law enforcement personnel had to be dispatched to bring the incident under control causing a fearful situation for Berwyn residents and expending a large amount of public safety resources.

Therefore, we believe that it would make much more sense to apply concurrent jurisdiction and the student code of conduct to include Berwyn along with Crystal Springs and Lakeland and not apply them to the student high rises for the initial roll out of this new policy. After all, the operators of the commercial, for profit, student housing projects operate in a much more controlled environment and can better afford private security personnel and technology than the residents of Berwyn.

It also should be noted that the university now owns a large parcel of property that is in the Berwyn Community. This property (the former Washington Post production facility) houses major support functions of the university and represents a very large investment in property and equipment. The boundary of this property would now be accessible along 50th Place and Roanoke Avenue and would benefit from routine patrols if jurisdiction were extended to Berwyn.

It is clear from a recent testimony at a College Park work session that the city will explore special tax districts and state funds will be applied for to offset the costs of this initiative. Therefore, the Berwyn District Association believes it would be in the public's best interest to include Berwyn and drop the privately owned high rises. Berwyn, Lakeland, and Crystal Springs will provide a much better controlled test area while preparations are made to implement city-wide concurrent jurisdiction and application of the student code of conduct that all parties desire.

Sincerely,

Kevin Young
President of the Berwyn District Civic Association
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