



CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE

645A Pine St, PO Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849
VOICE (802) 863-0442
FAX: (802) 652-4221

March 11, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing about the University of Vermont's Office of Student & Community Relations (OSCR), a program that I believe qualifies for an innovation credit in STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System for higher education.

As the Director of the Burlington Code Enforcement Office and a former Burlington Police Department Lt., I have a breadth of experience in addressing and evaluating quality-of-life issues in the City. I am confident in my assessment that this program has broken new ground and proven its worth in fostering sustainability at UVM and in the community.

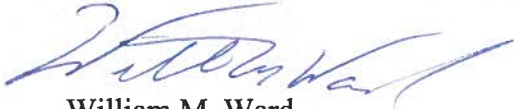
Since the 1980s, many of the neighborhoods near the University experienced a significant growth in student renters and a significant decrease of multiple year renters and homeowners. This imbalance of rentals to home ownership, compounded by the differences in lifestyles, community expectations, and experience living on one's own, resulted in impacts on quality-of-life, such as trash, social noise and property degradation. In addition, student residency is transient in nature and, as a result, students often feel little attachment to a neighborhood. This made it imperative that the City and the University work with students and their neighbors to create an infrastructure for relationship building that would result in action to create more healthy and peaceful neighborhoods.

OSCR provides such a framework through their Neighborhood Grants Program, Community Coalition, Welcome Bags effort, Off Campus Life newsletter and other communications, and a Street Strategy that they are piloting now on Isham, Bradley, and Buell Streets in Burlington. The efforts are showing success. For example the most significant issue on Isham Street was noise. In 2012, The Burlington Police Department recorded 52 noise calls on Isham St. In 2013, the number of noise calls dropped to only 33, a 37% decrease. The number of noise tickets issued dropped in half, from 25 to 12. The 2012 to 2013 noise complaint data for two neighboring streets, Greene St. and Hickok Place (streets similar to Isham St. in size, location, and number of college rentals) only decreased by 1 on Greene St. and increased by 1 on Hickok Place. During the same time period, burglaries also decreased on Isham St. from 10 to 2. Other positive signs, the number of students who rent on the street for more than 1 year is increasing and more landlords have invested in their properties, including one who donated land to the ISGOOD (Isham St. Gardening and Other Optimistic Doings) neighborhood group for a blueberry and herbal garden. The street strategy has indeed shown itself to be a model that we wish to bring to other neighborhoods in Burlington.

In addition to the Isham St. effort, the Code Enforcement Office has been a part of many coordinated activities with the OSCR, which include the Spring Move Out Project, Community Coalition, landlord workshops, and Off Campus Living Workshops to name just a few.

The most important parts of the OSCR's innovations are its collaborative town-gown approach; its focused strategy on a pilot that, if successful, can become a model for other streets; its practice of doing things "with" not "to" or "for" people; and its attention to best practices and lessons learned. These are all things that foster and support sustainability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "William M. Ward", written in a cursive style.

William M. Ward
Director of Code Enforcement
City of Burlington