



Ainslie Wood/Westdale Community Association
of Resident Homeowners Inc.
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September 22, 2011

Mr. Ted McMeekin ted@votetedmcmeeikin.ca
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Dear Candidate:

RE: Student Housing in Near-Campus Communities

The AWWCA is the largest dues-paying neighbourhood association in Hamilton, with about 600 members. We are a volunteer, nonprofit association with the mission of preserving, protecting, and enhancing the Ainslie Wood/Westdale community and the quality of life for all residents, and of organizing, communicating, lobbying, and pursuing the needs of the members of the association.

Both Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Hudak have pledged 60,000 additional post-secondary openings if elected. Mr. McGuinty's government has already added over 200,000 openings. These increased spaces have been added with no plan for housing the students. As a result, the neighbourhoods next to McMaster University have changed significantly, particularly over the past 10 years. Over 36 percent of our single-family homes have been converted to multi-student rentals, many owned by absentee landlords. The number of conversions grows significantly every year as the undergraduate population of McMaster increases.

While we believe most citizens agree that we need to prepare our population for the future with higher post-secondary graduation rates, those of us who live near the university have seen the student population in several of our neighbourhoods become the majority. Students bring enthusiasm and ideas, but the lack of provincial government funding for undergraduate housing has led to increased vandalism, decreased attention to property standards, and the loss of schools, churches and other institutions that support families in near-campus neighbourhoods. In addition, students are often subjected to unsafe housing options. We understand that many of our concerns are the municipality's responsibility; however, without funding for residences to support the influx of students, the municipality and the citizen taxpayers are being overwhelmed when it comes to properly planning and accommodating the high student population.

What is your plan for housing the ever-increasing number of students and supporting the infrastructure of the city (such as improved public transit to and from campus) so that our near-campus community can have a balance between students and permanent residents?

We would appreciate a reply before our next board meeting on October 3.

Yours truly,

Dr. Jay Parlar
President