

The Fraternity Relations Committee was invited to attend a meeting with Joy Fulkerson, Coordinator, Fraternity/Sorority Life; Dr. Joe Sherlin, Vice Provost and Dean of Students,; and Jeff Howard, Associate Dean of Students. The information received from this meeting was significant and hopefully will help to answer many questions and concerns generated by neighbors/residents of the Southside Neighborhood area. The results are summarized below:

ETSU Security's Role (some have suggested they take a more active role in policing the neighborhood fraternities)

--ETSU Security is able to have a support role only, as their jurisdiction is ONLY on ETSU's campus.

--ETSU Security is strictly a liaison between Johnson City Police and ETSU (except on campus).

--ETSU Security is called out to each and every incident that occurs off campus that relates to the fraternities and their students. They report to the scene, receive a copy of the Johnson City police report, make their own report as well, and report the entire incident back to ETSU.

ETSU Administration's Role

--Sanctions on fraternities for infractions (this includes but is not limited to, any underage drinking, unregistered parties, noise violations, disorderly conduct—see ETSU for complete list if needed)

--Red-flagging satellite houses (fraternities using other residences as “fraternity houses”)

Due to space, we are not able to list all infractions and sanctions attached to them, however, when a fraternity or fraternity member is identified by ETSU as having broken rules the ETSU Judicial System gets involved. There are a variety of disciplinary sanctions that apply to the violations targeted which may include: warnings, reprimands, restitution, community service, restrictions, probations, suspension of registrations, and ultimately withdrawal of the fraternity's registration. While often we neighbors and residents think very little is going on in the way of discipline, there are in fact many disciplinary cases ongoing at any given time, some minor, some very serious. Multiple examples were given at this meeting that we were totally unaware of.

Johnson City Police's Role

--Johnson City Police has all jurisdiction for all criminal behavior that goes on in our neighborhood.

--These include but are not limited to noise complaints, speeding, disorderly conduct, underage drinking, unregistered fraternity parties, etc.

--ETSU has had recent meetings with the JC Police and has requested additional traffic patrols for speeding on W. Pine, additional patrols (foot patrols included) on W. Maple, with particular attention to the corner of W. Maple and Cherokee and particularly Thursday-Sunday, increased citing of fraternities who are breaking laws/ordinances (rather than just telling them to stop).

To Note: Noise complaints can only be cited when the decibel level meets a certain threshold—the policeman goes to the edge of the property where the complaint call originated and measures the level from there—the decibel level threshold in our area is higher than in many other places, so this would have to be challenged/changed by law.

What can we do?

- 1) Call 911, issue your report/complaint to the police, follow-up with the police and make sure the report has been filed.

Call the police department and request a “Watch Order” or an “Extra Patrol Order” for specific areas of concern (i.e., W. Pine for speeding, the corner of W. Maple and Cherokee on weekends). While the police are aware of our concerns, they cannot be all places at all times, particularly on weekends, so they are requesting that if you do not see patrols at times and places you think they need to be present, please call again to make sure the “Watch Order” is in place for that area and time.

- 2) Submit written statements with any additional information of any problematic incidents directly to ETSU—they claim that they will absolutely use it and have many times. There are, as we speak, ongoing investigations and sanctions due to these reports. These can be sent via e-mail to: fulkersj@etsu.edu.
- 3) Contact Alumni Boards—all fraternity houses are privately owned by these boards. They have vested interests in these houses and want them to behave/succeed. They absolutely do not want their charters pulled, so feel free to call them with any concerns/complaints. The contact information for these boards are as follows:

Sigma Nu Fraternity

Kenny Burnette, Chapter Advisor
kburnett1@metlife.com<mailto:kburnett1@metlife.com>
(423) 773-5938

Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity

Jerry Jones, President of the Housing Corporation
jerry@doylestire.com<mailto:jerry@doylestire.com>

Justin Wright, Chapter Advisor
jtwright73@yahoo.com<mailto:jtwright73@yahoo.com>
(423) 767-6743

Sigma Phi Epsilon Fraternity

Preston Ralston, President of the Alumni Volunteer Corporation
preston.ralston@smithbarney.com<mailto:preston.ralston@smithbarney.com>
(423) 300-8312

Alex Heins, Chapter Counselor

alexheins@yahoo.com<mailto:alexheins@yahoo.com>
(423) 865-661-0355

Sigma Chi Fraternity
Ken Bailey, Chapter Advisor
knbailey@embarqmail.com<mailto:knbailey@embarqmail.com>
(423) 620-0285

This also leads to the answer to other common questions related to moving the fraternities to ETSU campus. The answer is that this is not going to happen for several reasons: since they are privately owned, the owners have to agree to sell the houses; the cost of building new houses on campus is prohibitive both to these boards and ETSU; the 4 left in the neighborhood have been grandfathered in and have existed here for over 50 years; a study has been done as recently as last year comparing these neighborhood fraternities with other similar university situations (i.e., MTSU)—conclusion: it costs too much (one reason is the chapters are too small), and ETSU is not able/willing to make up the cost difference at this time.

Bottom line: There are definitely things we can do. Yes, calling 911/police and going through the time and effort it takes to make a police report can be irritating. Passing along concerns/complaints to ETSU and the alumni boards can also be time-consuming. However, we cannot say nothing can be done and change cannot occur if we do not make the effort. And only one person or organization also cannot make a difference; this is change that we can only accomplish together, in cooperation.