

# Town, gown meet to settle housing situation

Continued from Page 1  
By ANNE CONNERS  
Collegian Staff Writer

violating an ordinance which limits to three the number of unrelated people living together in a single-family home.

"I would really love to talk with you people," Rita Federaro of the Holmes-Foster Neighborhood Association told Undergraduate Student Government President Emil Parvensky after the meeting. "You're a victim of the landlord and if I live next door, I'm a victim of the landlord too."

Steve Mastroski, also of the Holmes-Foster Association, invited students to meet with the association and "deal with (the landlords) who are profiting from the deterioration of these neighborhoods."

Parvensky said that the students would be more than willing to meet with the neighborhood associations, but added that townspeople would have to place more trust in students.

"Just like there's no typical citizen,

there's no typical student," Parvensky said. "To group us into one and say that all of us are irresponsible is a travesty."

Borough officials unequivocally told the audience that they would enforce the three-person limit and crack down on noise, health and property maintenance violations — measures that most of the citizens support.

Health Officer Mark Henry, Zoning Officer Carl Hess, Code Enforcement Director James Quigley and Police Chief Elwood Williams all told the audience what action their departments had taken as a result of the concern about the preservation of single-family neighborhoods.

The borough officials passed out a citizen's guide to "Solving Housing and Maintenance Problems" and State College Municipal Manager Carl Fairbanks presented a report detailing the borough's efforts for solving the noise, parking and property maintenance problems that often result when groups of students live in single-family neighborhoods.

To control the noise problem, Williams

said that a Wednesday, Friday and Saturday night "strike force" has been created to keep things quieter on what he said students traditionally regard as party nights.

**'You're a victim of the landlord and if I live next door, I'm a victim of the landlord too.'**

—Emil Parvensky,  
Undergraduate Student  
Government president

Encouraging citizen input, Williams said that the police will be trying to respond more quickly to noise violations by putting a higher priority on those complaints.

Williams also encouraged residents to pursue their noise complaints to the district magistrate level.

"The magistrate looks at a case much more favorably especially if someone other than the police officer is being bothered," he said.

In the area of zoning enforcement, Hess said after hearing a citizen complaint, he reviews the history of the property as well as checking the property maintenance and zoning hearing files.

When tenants are suspected of violating the occupancy limit, the zoning office attempts to check the property. If tenants refuse to let zoning officers in, Hess said the department must show probable cause to obtain a search warrant, which is difficult to do.

Most of the time, rather than getting a search warrant, Hess said the borough would monitor the house for property maintenance and noise violations in addition to asking concerned neighbors to keep information on the tenants and their vehicles.

Fairbanks said that the borough has received three occupancy violations' complaints recently. After investigating them,

the borough reported that the first case was a mistake, in the second the landlord voluntarily agreed to reduce the number of tenants and in the third the landlord is being ordered to reduce the number of tenants.

Organization for Town Independent Students President Peter Cutrone questioned the humanity of the borough's process.


"Where did the displaced tenants go and how are they being handled? Are they being thrown out on the street?" he asked.

Hess said that renters have 30 days to find a new place to live if they are in violation of the occupancy limit.

To make sure that landlords aren't trying to stuff more than three students in a house, Quigley said that the code enforcement office inspects each rental unit after a complaint is received, after a change in ownership or after the owner asks for a change in use for the property.

However, Quigley cautioned that the code enforcement office is understaffed and that the system is not perfect.

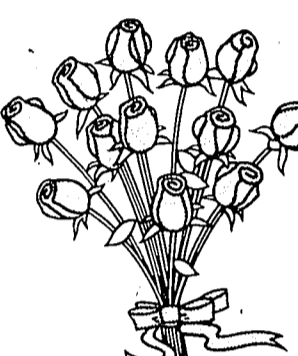
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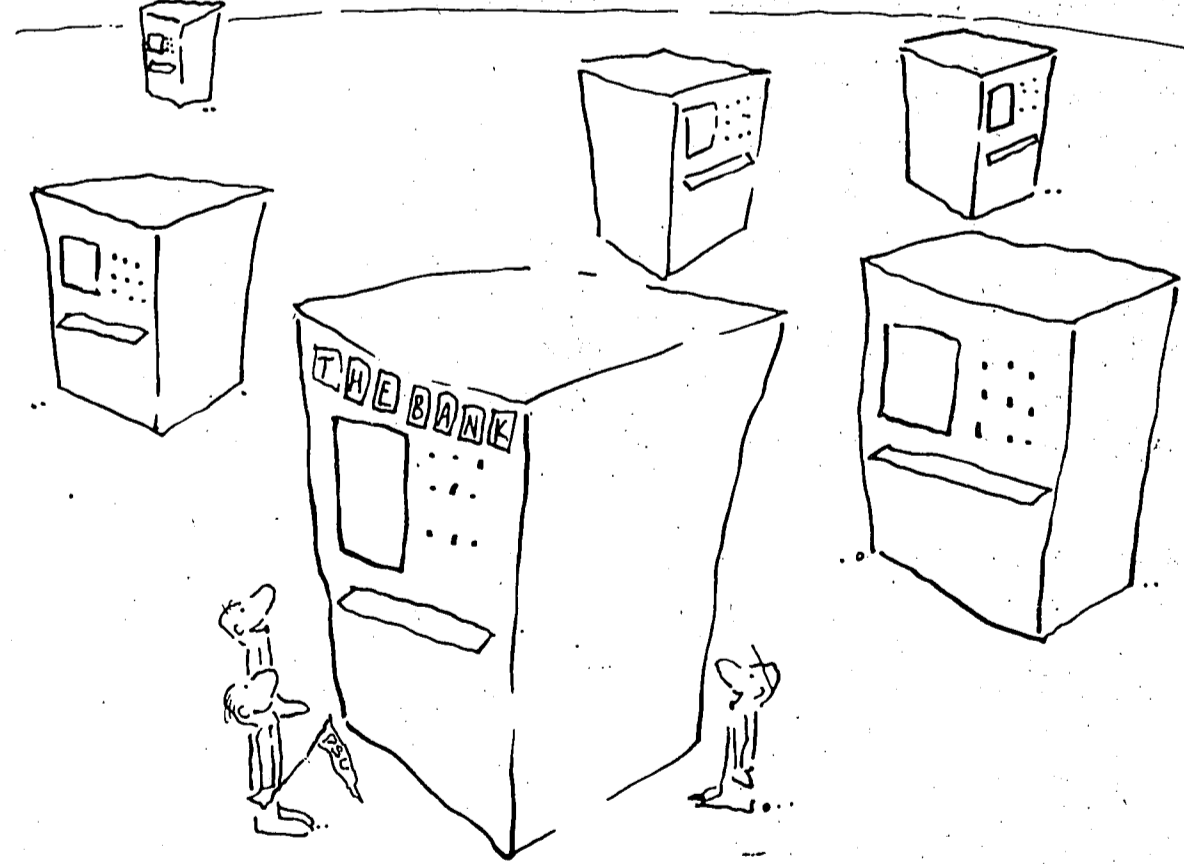
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