

Town Takes Action to Condemn Unsafe Stony Brook House Illegally Converted to Off-Campus Student Housing

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Farmingville, NY – On Friday, March 9, the Town of Brookhaven Law Department took action to condemn a house located at 1423 Stony Brook Road in Stony Brook. The ranch-style house was shared by eight to ten students and had been illegally converted to include living space in the garage and basement. The doors for each bedroom were equipped with key locks and some of the rooms included a refrigerator and microwave oven. The garage and basement apartments included two bedrooms, kitchen and bathroom each. The basement also included a coin operated clothes washer and dryer. Up to 10 students may have been living in the house at the time of the inspection. The house was the subject of numerous

complaints from the neighbors who contacted the Town of Brookhaven and the action to condemn was taken shortly thereafter.

The property owner was issued numerous housing code violations by the Town Law Department, including No Smoke Detectors, No Carbon Monoxide Detectors, No Rental Permit and Illegal Use as a Rooming House. The Town Assessor also revoked the owner's STAR property tax exemption and notified the Suffolk County District Attorney and New York State Attorney General's office for prosecution. Stony Brook University cooperated fully with the Town and the displaced students were offered dorm rooms on campus.

Supervisor Romaine said, "This was one of the worst cases of illegal student housing that we have seen in the Stony Brook area. Off-campus housing that is not in compliance with Town Building and Fire codes threatens the health and safety of the students who reside there and the neighbors who live nearby. Thanks to the Town Law Department and the vigilance of the neighbors, another threat to the quality of life in the community has been shut down. I urge students and their parents to make sure that their housing complies with Town code. If they believe that it does not, the Town will investigate and take swift action against landlords who are in violation."

Councilwoman Valerie M. Cartright said, "The safety of our residents is paramount in the Town of Brookhaven. All homes should be compliant with local and state laws. Illegal rentals and illegal conversions are extremely serious issues that can have deadly consequences. Thanks to a community effort, including the Town and neighborhood residents, we continue to address unsafe problem properties to improve the quality of life in our communities." The Stony Brook community has experienced an increase in off-campus student housing over the past several years and many of the homes are not in compliance with Town Building and Fire Safety codes. Off-campus houses that are rented to students are required to have rental permits issued by the Town of Brookhaven, insuring that they have been inspected for safety, in compliance with all building and fire codes, and have the required smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors. Brookhaven Town has actively prosecuted unscrupulous landlords in the community who have illegally converted single family homes into "rooming houses" and Supervisor Romaine said that the Town will continue to make safety in off-campus housing a top priority by cracking down on those who are in violation of Town code. SUNY Stony Brook mandates that all off-campus housing listed with the University's Office of Commuter Student Services and Off Campus Living be compliant with all Town codes and have a valid rental permit.

In 2013, Supervisor Romaine launched a mobile phone app to help fight illegal off-campus housing across Brookhaven Town. The app, which was the first of its kind on Long Island, allows residents to immediately report housing and property violations as they see them, helping to increase enforcement of housing codes within our communities. It is available for both Apple iPhones and Android mobile phones. With simple fill-in fields, drop down menus of violations and automated e-mail, this software application is a powerful weapon in the Town's arsenal for addressing code violations, and improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

To download the free mobile app, residents must visit the Town's website at www.brookhavenny.gov from a mobile device. A pop up window will appear asking if they want to install the app. By clicking "yes," they are directed to the market place where the app can be downloaded. It's easy and takes only seconds to complete the download. Residents can also call 631-451-TOWN between the hours of 9:00 am to 4:30 pm to report housing violations. For more information or to access the Town's Code Book, go to www.brookhavenny.gov.

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