

Mu Omega Pi members being asked to move

By Jim Sullivan
Echo Staff

Members of the Mu Omega Pi fraternity residing at 301 East St., known as the Vahs House, are being asked to move out at the end of the semester due to a zoning violation.

According to an e-mail statement by Mu President and junior Jacob Dungey, the situation involves "an issue that pertains to Mu Omega Pi and not the rest of the public."

But according to the fraternity's neighbors and the City of Olivet, it is a public issue. City of Olivet Police Officer Lt. Douglas Davis said, "The weekend before [Homecoming] there was a citizen complaint." Also, the noise issue was raised in City Council meetings in October.

According to Mu Omega Pi member Mack Shannon, junior, the party prior to Homecoming was the fraternity's Orange Crush party. "We got a noise complaint from the mayor, and the police came out to enforce the noise complaint."

"I think it was Campus Safety who relayed the message from Dr. [Linda] Logan and the complaint was brought back to us," said Shannon. "We were to receive a fine and community service [from the college] because of the party."

"It's a zoning issue because it is in a residential area," said Davis.

"Three years ago," according to Davis, "Barb Spencer [executive assistant to the president] and her husband sold the house. It's owned by Bob Gillette; he leases it to the college." City records show that the house is owned by Olivet Campus Housing, LLC, based in Bloomfield Hills. The mailing address for Olivet Campus Housing, LLC, is the same one used by American House Senior Living Community, a company of which alum Bob Gillette '63 is a foundation board member.

"The college is leasing it now. The college wanted to turn it into a mini-dorm," said Davis. "The college sought to get a special use permit, but because

they didn't have the required parking, it was not granted."

With no special use variance to the residential zoning code in hand, the College allowed students to use the house as a mini-dorm.

"It was recently occupied by [women] in the year before us. They were allowed to live there - the reason for them being allowed is they're quiet. But in our case, we are not quiet," said Shannon.

It was the Homecoming Party that "was the actual turn of events for us," said Shannon. At the Oct. 20 City Council meeting, Davis said that "about 70-75

by both the college and the city for two years."

According to Davis, "It was miscommunication. The college did receive a zoning special use permit on two or three other houses they acquired, one on Shipherd Street and one at Church and College."

"It wasn't intentional; it's just one of those things that happened. It wasn't until they were having behavior problems that questions started coming up," said Davis.

"Linda Logan talked to the City and she did her best to prevent everything that happened," said Shannon. "We as an organization have to respect the neighbors. If we put ourselves in their position, we would do the same thing."

Logan said, "Larry Colvin and I did go see the Mayor and Chief of Police to discuss the house after Homecoming. During that visit we discovered the zoning concern."

At the Nov. 8 City Council meeting, Colvin asked permission for the students to remain in the house until the end of the semester. Permission was given.

According to the unofficial City Council minutes obtained by the *Echo*, City Commissioner Steve Penny asked what the plans were for the future use of the house. Colvin said, "The lease expires in December and the College would let it go back to the owner."

Olivet College Campus Housing Director, Tammy Walters said, "I don't know anything about [Mu being asked to vacate the East Street property] but if they ask for a space I will try to find them a space."

"What people see as a bad situation, we see as reconstruction. We have to look at the bigger picture. Our organization is only as strong as our morals and discipline and we need to be aware of what we need to change," said Shannon.



Jake McCans/ECHO

Members of the Mu Omega Pi Fraternity reside in the Vahs House.

people" were at that party. According to Campus Safety Director Phil Reed, "There were a lot of people there and we assisted in closing it down."

"The way Larry Colvin explained it to us is that it's the zoning," said Shannon about the impending move. "In so many words, we were not allowed [by the City] to live there, but the college allowed it. So they just saw this as a way to put us here for the time being. The College just needed someplace to put us."

Just how the College used the residence to house the students without the special use permit is unclear.

Building and Grounds Director Larry Colvin, who is also Mu's advisor, said "I am still not sure how the lack of zoning approval for the house was missed

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