

**From:** Katie Ryan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 10, 2014 10:53 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** 1919 Wayne Street

June 10, 2014

Dear Ann Arbor Planning Commission,

My name is Katie Ryan and I live at 1548 Waltham Drive in Ward #4 of Ann Arbor, Michigan. I work in Ward #2 at Angell Elementary School, 1608 South University Avenue, and have done so for the past 17 years.

I am writing in support of the Jesuits' petition to receive a special exemption use so that they can live at 1919 Wayne Street. I have been a member of Saint Mary's Parish since 1995 and I have known the St. Mary's Jesuits since they began their tenure at the church.

I know the Jesuit order well. My brother, Casey, has been a member of the Jesuits for the past twenty one years. Casey currently resides in a Fenwick Hall, a freshman dormitory, where he ministers to students. He also serves as the director of the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College. Casey's experience with the Jesuits spans from leading student service groups to the Dominican Republic and Mexico to build houses for the poor, to working in a L'Arche community in Toronto with the severely disabled to directing retreats in several parts of the United States. I could go on and on about him, but in short, he's a remarkable man and I am proud to call him my brother.

Although my brother will not be one of the men residing at 1919 Wayne Street, I can vouch that the men who will reside there are just as well accomplished. The Jesuit order is not one in which men join easily. The formation period for Jesuit priests is often well over a decade. This period is full of discernment, education, a variety of service experiences, prayer and reflection. Many men do not make it through the rigors of this long formation period. The men who will be living at 1919 Wayne are of a caliber that few achieve: they are well educated, compassionate and thoughtful men who desire to make the world a better place. They would make superb neighbors in my opinion.

I recall a controversy, similar to the Jesuits' request, over the New Life Church (next door to Angell at 1541 Washtenaw Avenue) and how this group would fit into the neighborhood. I believe this issue erupted when the New Life organization planned an addition to create their worship space. There were concerns from the Oxford Housing Association regarding unsightly construction, attraction of cults and lost property values, much like some of the concerns around the Jesuits' request to reside at 1919 Wayne Street.

In the seven years since the New Life church's completion, it has been my experience that New Life's contributions to our neighborhood and school have been beyond positive. The auditorium construction is appealing and functional. We hold many annual school events such as graduation ceremonies, instrumental music concerts, evening talent shows and special assemblies as our

school does not have a space in which we can accommodate our entire community at one time. All the New Life community asks in exchange is parking for their Sunday services. Without exception, the New Life staff is most generous and accommodating to all of our needs. They are positive and encouraging in all of their interactions with teachers, Angell families and students. They are superb neighbors.

I like to think that the children that I teach at Angell might experience a diversity of neighbors beyond the fraternities, sororities and the local college students playing beer pong on warm spring days. The Jesuits and New Life Church add a different dimension of university life that is important for children to witness as they form their understanding of what college is all about.

I know that the Jesuits from St. Mary's will fit in well with their neighbors at 1919 Wayne Street and will greatly contribute to the well being of the neighborhood without question. **I urge you to consider their petition to make their residence at 1919 Wayne Street.**

**I also ask that you change the date of the Planning Commission public hearing and vote so that all members of the Planning Commission can be present to hear and vote on this very important issue.**

Again, I ask that you please vote (or encourage the vote) in favor of the Jesuits' petition.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Katie Ryan

Teacher, Angell Elementary School

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