



March 2019

Dear Sigma Rho Brothers:

**Subject:** Response to the Beta National's Plan to Sell the Sigma Rho Chapter House

**Background**

As you may have seen and heard by now, our National fraternity' office has decided to sell our beloved property at 202 E. Daniel (a copy of their announcement is attached). As you may recall, I was the previous President of the Sigma Rho Housing Corporation up until April 2017 so I feel it is my duty to provide you all with a little more color around this situation. The facts as presented in the announcement are correct but it does not tell the "full" story. But first, I must personally thank those brothers that stepped up a few years ago to get the chapter back on campus and the house ready for the young men to occupy, particularly folks like Mike Murphy, Mike Langan, Les Meier, Larry Nicholson and many others...you know who you are. Without their efforts we never would have had a fighting chance to make a come back.

**Previous Plan to Rebuild the Chapter House 2015-16**

The part of the past 3 years that was left out of the announcement was the fact that the House Corporation at the time had a well thought out plan to sustain both our chapter and our chapter house for years to come. We worked diligently with the firm, Royal Properties, a local (Champaign) and well known property development and management firm owned and operated by two of our very own brothers (Mike Henneman and Rick Schmidt) to develop such a plan. The plan included a 7,000 sq ft. structure that would house all of Betas social needs (e.g. chapter room, alumni library, social gathering space, dining hall, study rooms and a few sleeping rooms for the Exec committee) surrounded by an apartment complex that not only our undergraduate brothers could reside but others as well so that the apartment revenue could help sustain the Beta structure for years to come. Given all of the issues fraternities are having with young men living on their own within a fraternity house, the House Corporation thought it presented the best solution to keep what happens late at night separate from the benefits of being part of a social organization. Unfortunately, our general fraternity rejected the plan without basis and here we are, now having to sell our historical property because we can't afford to maintain it.

**Concerns About What Happens to the Proceeds of the Sale**

Although the general fraternity indicated that the proceeds from the sale of the house will be set aside for Sigma Rho, many of us believe that they have absolutely no intention of doing that rather use those proceeds to fund other initiatives or even the myriad of legal fees that have hit them the past few years. Frankly, once they have the funds in-hand they will no longer be held accountable to anyone within the Sigma Rho family and can do what they want with those funds...that is just not right.

**Speak up if you like – tell the National Office how you feel about this**

So, I just wanted to make sure that you all understood and heard the "full" story behind the past few years and also understand that it could have been avoided...and still can. I have written to the our national office outlining my displeasure with this course of action and pleaded with them to resurrect the Royal Properties plan and save Sigma Rho. If you feel like I do, I urge you to write them as well.

In the end, whatever happens with our chapter or even the house itself, it can't take away the memories we all have of our time in Champaign and the lifelong friends that we have established.

-kai-

Dave McMurray '81