



New Social Housing on Spring Garden Road

Photo by Mark Simkins

By **TOBY SANGER**

OVER A DOZEN PEOPLE spent last Thursday night and the early hours of Friday morning on Spring Garden road to increase public awareness of the housing crisis.

Barney Savage, chair of the Student Union of Nova Scotia and a member of the Housing for People Coalition which organized the event, says even though the vacancy rate has gone up, there is still a serious problem with affordability.

"Student aid provides about \$200 per month. . . it's very difficult to find a room in Halifax for \$200," says Savage.

The action was spard by provincial government stalling on the implementation of the housing program it announced in the budget last March, which promised 1500 new social housing units this year.

Johanna Oosterveld, a member of the HPC and a worker at the North End clinic, says she expects that the government will actually build fewer social housing units this year than last.

She says the government must enunciate a clear housing policy so there is less opposition from residents who adopt a "not in my back yard" attitude towards social housing.

"We need to look at more than just providing boxes to live in,"

Oosterveld says. "The government hasn't paid much attention to community life."

Oosterveld says she was involved with the action because "housing has a great deal to do with people's ability to lead healthy lives."

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