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North Linden Property Becomes First Drug House Targeted for Board-Up in 2019

After a record 18 drug houses shut down last year, north side property with long and troubled history is next on Columbus City Attorney's list

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus is seeking to vacate and shutter a North Linden property that has been the scene of persistent drug trafficking, shootings, an overdose, and police raids. The property at one point was even slapped with a United States Department of Justice Anti-Terrorism Lien filed by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Ohio. City officials were particularly troubled by recent community complaints that narcotics were being sold from the premises to juveniles.

City Attorney Klein's office filed a complaint for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [2507 Azelda Street](#), which is located near two city parks and the Linden Community Center. The preliminary hearing is scheduled for Thursday, January 31, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. The defendants in the case are listed as Kenneth Fields, owner/occupant of the property, and his daughter, Cassandra Fields.

“Every day our city is battling the drug epidemic and it's really important for us to understand the root causes of addiction and focus on treatment,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “It's also imperative for us to continue working with the Columbus Division of Police and the community to aggressively go after drug operations, especially those conducting business right in the middle of residential neighborhoods.”

In 2013, both Kenneth Fields and Cassandra Fields were charged with felonies after narcotics detectives obtained black tar heroin from the premises on multiple occasions. At one point, Ms. Fields admitted to police officials that she sold drugs from her house to “20-50 people per day.”

In 2015, police officers responded to a shooting at the premises and obtained information that drugs were being sold there once again. After obtaining evidence of heroin sales, officers executed a drug trafficking warrant on March 31, 2015.

In 2016, Columbus paramedics responded to the premises on reports of a drug overdose and revived a victim with the use of Narcan.

In February 2018, Columbus Police responded to a shooting incident at the premises and noted that one of the windows had been shot four times.

In October, police officials began a covert investigation of the premises after receiving

community complaints that juveniles were purchasing drugs from Cassandra Fields at her house. Officers conducting surveillance of the property noted “a large amount of vehicle and foot traffic in and out” of the premises.

After at least four subsequent undercover purchases of illegal drugs from the premises, police officers executed a search warrant on December 12, 2018. Officers encountered both defendants, as well as two 18-year-olds, a 19-year-old, and three juveniles aged 15, 16, and 17. Police also seized cash, illegal drugs, and ammunition.

“We’re hopeful that our first complaint of the year will result in a positive outcome for the surrounding neighborhood,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. “It’s particularly unsettling to know that minors were being sold drugs out of this property, which is close to two city parks and a community rec center.”

In order to secure closure of the property, Karac, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the North Linden area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owner/occupants of the property are guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that they “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

A copy of the city’s [complaint](#) is available online.