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City Shuts Down ‘Deplorable’ Drug Den

Troubled property posed ‘a threat of immediate and irreparable harm’ to the surrounding community

COLUMBUS, OH—A notorious drug den that has plagued Columbus’ North Linden neighborhood for years has been vacated and boarded up this afternoon after City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. secured a preliminary injunction order against the property owner in the Franklin County Environmental Court earlier today.

Community complaints regarding the property, located at [2873 Norwood Street](#), included rampant drug activity, prostitution, extensive waste and debris, and uninhabitable living conditions.

Since 2016, the Columbus Police Division has responded to 43 calls for service to the property for assaults, disturbances, and illegal drug activity, including a heroin overdose in May this year.

“The deplorable living conditions and illegal activity occurring at this property made it a danger to the neighborhood,” said Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr.

The city originally filed a criminal environmental complaint against the owner, Lyndon Lannaman, on April 3, 2017. Lannaman pleaded no contest and was placed on probation.

However, the drug activity, prostitution, and code violations continued. Code inspectors found piles of human waste “amassed” in the rear yard, along with other violations including overcrowding, inadequate egress due to unsanitary conditions, exposed wiring, missing smoke detectors, and other fire hazards.

While only one bedroom was deemed habitable, multiple people claimed the property as their primary residence. Reports indicate that the majority of the individuals occupied and slept in the basement.

Police officers also considered the property “a place where individuals with felony warrants [attempt to] hide from law enforcement” and have arrested several wanted felons at the premises.

On October 17, 2017 police officers arrested an individual with “an active nationwide warrant” for burglary. The man also admitted to having a bag of crystal meth in his possession at the time of the arrest.

The following day, police officers arrested another wanted fugitive on a felony drug possession warrant. The man was found hiding in the basement. During the arrest, officers also encountered another individual on the premises who had a syringe containing methamphetamine sticking out of his sweatshirt. He also was arrested.

On October 27, 2017, police officers responding to the premises located and arrested another individual who was wanted on felony warrants for theft and possession of drugs.

“Our first priority is to try to work proactively with property owners,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. “Unfortunately, in a case like this, the property owner left us with no other choice but to seek a court order to board up his property.”

In order to secure closure of the property, Karac, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the Linden area of Columbus, made a preliminary showing that the owner was guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that he, as owner of the premises, “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

The court found that the criminal activity and code violations at the property posed “a threat of immediate and irreparable harm” to the occupants and the surrounding community.

The owner must also “hire a professional bio-hazard company to remediate the conditions in the yard,” according to the agreed preliminary injunction order.

A hearing for a permanent injunction is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on December 4, 2017.

Copies of the city’s [complaint](#) and the [court’s order](#) are available online.