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City Takes Action against Hilltop Bar with Long History of Violent Crime, Drugs and Theft

City Attorney Klein says accountability measures necessary following string of violence and criminal activity at the Spotlight II Lounge in the Hilltop which presented substantial risk to public safety

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced the City secured a preliminary injunction against the owners of Spotlight II Lounge in the South Hilltop neighborhood following a series of violent crime, shootings, robberies and other criminal activity at the bar in recent years. The court ordered the bar to close the weekends of Aug. 19-21 and Aug. 26-28. The bar is also subject to a number of other restrictions during all other days, including:

- The bar will close by 1 a.m. and no patrons may be inside the establishment after 1:15 a.m.
- Bar owners must maintain licensed, uniform security during all hours of operation and until 2 a.m.
- Owners must take reasonable measures to prevent loitering on the premises and sign a criminal trespass form that permits law enforcement to remove any individual found on the premises after 2 a.m.

“The long history of violence and criminal activity at this bar presents a substantial safety risk to patrons, employees and area residents, and it’s imperative that the City step in to hold property owners accountable and protect public safety,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. **“We want to work with property owners to end the violence, but if that proves too much for them to address, we will not hesitate to take further action, including shutting the bar down for good.”**

According to court documents, since July 1, 2021, Columbus Police (CPD) have been dispatched to the premises at least 50 times, the majority of which occurring between the hours of 1-5 a.m.

Among the calls for service were a drug overdose on July 10 and shots fired on July 28, 2021.

On July 31, 2021, CPD responded to a shooting and homicide after a fight began in the parking lot as the bar was closing.

Additionally, CPD has received dozens of calls for stolen vehicles, car break-ins, fighting, theft, shots fired, and other disturbances at the premises over the past year, including on May 4, 2022, when a patron allegedly stole a firearm from security and fired a shot.

On May 8, 2022, a large group of men were reported to CPD for fighting outside the premises. The situation escalated and at least one shot was fired.

On June 4, 2022, CPD responded to a report of shots fired at the premises, where witnesses stated they heard multiple shots from the parking lot. Three shots struck the outer wall of the premises and another struck the window of a vehicle.

On June 18, 2022, Ohio Investigative Unit agents executed a search warrant of the premises to obtain copies of security footage to assist in the investigation of a shooting that occurred outside the bar. While executing the warrant, officers observed numerous health code violations and evidence of drug use at the premises. Agents issued violations to property owners.

Additionally, Spotlight II has engaged in unlawful adult entertainment performances on multiple occasions in violation of Columbus City Code.

Property owners owe \$7,274.47 in delinquent property taxes. Property taxes were last paid on June 21, 2021. A property constitutes a public nuisance where property taxes remain unpaid in excess of one year from the date of assessment.

“The violent crime and firearm related offenses at this location constituted an ongoing threat to the surrounding neighborhood,” Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin, who is the Zone Initiative attorney for the city’s west side. **“We are glad the owners were willing to come to the table and make serious commitments for the safety of patrons and neighbors.”**

The next scheduled court date will be held on Nov. 14, 2022.

Court documents on Spotlight II are attached.

[Spotlight II Agreed Preliminary Injunction](#)
[Spotlight Trespass Form](#)

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