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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City Sues California Investment Company

LLC deemed a 'repeat offender' with 23 properties cited for multiple code violations

COLUMBUS, OH—Mt. Helix Acquisitions I, LLC, a San Diego-based company with holdings of hundreds of properties in the Midwest, is being sued by Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. for consistently failing to maintain 23 of its Columbus properties up to the minimum standards of city code. The initial complaint was filed on August 22nd of this year and the first pre-trial hearing was held today in the Franklin County Environmental Court.

Out of the 23 properties named in the complaint, seven were occupied at the time of the filing and 16 were vacant. Five of the properties have subsequently been sold but with very little work done toward compliance.

The city's complaint asserts that Mt. Helix employs "business practices [that] are diverting local resources from other significant community needs."

The complaint seeks restitution for these resources, which includes thousands of dollars the city has expended to cut grass and weeds, clean up solid waste, and board up the properties. Mt. Helix also owes nearly \$4300 in delinquent sewer service payments and has failed to pay \$25,837.31 in property taxes. Delinquent property taxes constitute a public nuisance independent of the nuisance violations of city code.

"Our analysis of the Great Recession housing crisis indicated that one of the factors contributing to neighborhood destabilization was out-of-state limited liability companies holding bundles of properties and behaving like absentee landlords," said Columbus City Attorney Richard C. Pfeiffer, Jr. "Here we are almost 10 years later and we still must remain vigilant."

The city's complaint deems Mt. Helix a repeat violator of city codes after members of the city's Pro-Active Code Enforcement unit tried to work with the company's local agents for the past two years to bring the properties into compliance. According to the complaint, "some of the properties were brought into compliance, and others were not. Some of the properties that were initially complied fell out of compliance."

"From the city's standpoint, we are looking out for the interests of our residents," said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. "Ideally what we want to see is these out-of-state investors retaining reliable local management companies that don't merely respond to city complaints but instead take a proactive approach to ensure their properties are up-to-code and well-maintained."

A status conference is scheduled for November 30, 2017. If Mt. Helix continues to fail to bring their properties back up to code, a preliminary and permanent injunction hearing is set for next year.

If the injunction hearing proceeds, Karac, who filed the complaint on behalf of the city, is requesting that the court issue several orders against Mt. Helix, including prohibiting the company from “maintaining properties that are dangerous to human life, or no longer fit and habitable, or that constitute a hazard to the public health, welfare, or safety by reason of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, or abandonment.”

The city also is asking the court to appoint a receivership to take over the properties named in the lawsuit.

A list of the properties along with the specific code violations can be found in the city’s [complaint](#).