



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, January 24, 2019

Columbus City Attorney Sues Owner of Historic Franklinton Building

Iconic Bellows Elementary School declared a public nuisance, series of ‘dangerous’ code violations must be resolved

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus entered into an agreement to compel the owner of the former Bellows Elementary School in Franklinton to begin repairing a once proud fixture of the community that has been dangerously deteriorating for years. The agreed court order, which was officially stipulated this morning between City Attorney Klein’s office and Yhetkel Levi, prohibits Mr. Levi from maintaining a public nuisance and requires him to immediately remedy all exterior issues and begin planning to fix the “unsafe” and “dangerous to human life” interior conditions.

Per the agreement, Levi has until April 29, 2019 to resolve all the exterior code violations. A hearing will be held before the court that day to determine compliance on that part of the agreement, while also setting parameters for repairing the extensive interior damage.

“It’s really sad to see iconic buildings in our city fall into such a state of disrepair that they become a true danger to the community,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “We want to work with property owners to find ways to restore buildings like Bellows Elementary, but we also won’t allow properties to endanger our residents.”

The City Attorney’s original complaint, which was filed in in the Franklin County Environmental Court last October, cited Levi for failing to properly address a litany of code violations, some of which dated back to at least July 2016. The complaint indicated that the building suffered from “substantial structural failure and deterioration.”

According to court documents, some of the problems city inspectors found at the premises included:

- Significant portions of the roof, main interior ceilings, and floors had collapsed into the basement, creating “large voids” in the floor system.
- Remaining interior ceilings and floors were severely deteriorated and at risk of further collapse.
- Interior walls were deteriorated and collapsing.
- All mechanical systems had been damaged and compromised.
- Egress paths were inaccessible due to collapsed building materials and large holes in the floor.