



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Meredith Tucker, 614.645.8997
Email: mctucker@columbus.gov

City Shuts Down Linden Drug House Used to Drop off ‘Lifeless’ Bodies of Overdose Victims

Property also the scene of alleged hostage-taking, burglary, rampant drug dealing and gun violence

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to immediately vacate and shutter a notorious North Linden residence that had prompted at least 22 police calls over the last year.

City Attorney Klein’s office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [1545 East Cooke Road](#), which is located in a quiet residential neighborhood less than one block from North Linden Elementary School. The property also is within walking distance of the Feddersen Community Recreation Center.

The owner of record is Valerie Folk, also known as Valerie Dreger, of Columbus.

“The facts of this case are certainly disturbing and it rises to the top of one of the worst,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “With an elementary school literally just down the street and a recreation center not much farther, it’s truly horrifying that this property was being used as a drop-off site for the lifeless, naked bodies of overdose victims.”

On December 18, 2017, Columbus Police officers responding to an armed robbery in the area reported that the suspect fled to 1545 East Cooke Road.

On February 15, 2018 police responded to a burglary in progress at the premises. One week later police responded to shots fired at the property.

On February 26, 2018 police responded to a call alleging that a male occupant was selling drugs and “holding someone hostage” at the property.

On March 6, 2018 police responded to a complaint of a “lifeless female body being carried into the property.” Upon gaining entry, officers located a female overdose victim naked in the bathtub and in need of immediate medical attention. A bottle of Narcan was found nearby.

According to reports, the owner was present at the time of the incident and initially feigned knowledge when police informed her of the drug activity occurring at her property.

On March 12, 2018 police responded to another call of drug activity at the premises. A well-being check on the property owner also was requested. The following day, police were called to the property because the owner pulled a gun on another occupant of the house after the occupant allegedly accused her of theft.

On March 18, 2018 police were called to a burglary in progress at the premises. Two days later, police responded to “a call of another ‘dead girl’ being carried into the residence.” The caller stated that “girls are constantly overdosing” at the property.

During an ongoing covert investigation, Columbus Police narcotics detectives obtained direct evidence of heroin and crack-cocaine sales occurring at the premises on at least four separate occasions in the month of March. The detectives then executed a search warrant at the premises and arrested two individuals on outstanding warrants. The interior of the premises were described in court documents as being in “disarray” and littered with “syringes, needles and other drug paraphernalia.”

“The illicit activity occurring at this property was alarming and intolerable,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. “Now that it is shut down, we hope the residents of the neighborhood experience some measure of relief.”

In filing a civil motion for injunctive relief along with the emergency TRO request, Karac, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the Linden area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that Ms. Folk is guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that she, 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 hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief is scheduled.

If the property is ultimately declared to be a statutorily defined public nuisance, state law grants the court authority to order the premises shut down for up to one year following the permanent injunction hearing.

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