



ZACH KLEIN COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Pete Shipley, 614.965.0203
Email: pjshipley@columbus.gov

City Attorney Zach Klein Announces Property Action Team Secures Order Shuttering a Hilltop Property known for Drugs and Violent Crime

Says City Attorney's Office, CPD, Sheriff's Office, Code Enforcement and concerned neighbors helped build a case that led to judge's order to board up the problem property

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced his office, in coordination with the Division of Police, Franklin County Sheriff's Office, and Code Enforcement, obtained a court order to shut down a Hilltop-area property known for violent crime and drug activity. Criminals had been using the vacant property belonging to a deceased individual to sell drugs for a number of months. CPD executed an order to board up the property located at 91 Orel Ave. Tuesday.

“Concerned neighbors saw a problem, stepped up to report it, and now there’s one less drug house pouring deadly narcotics into our streets. I’m thankful for the work of Code Enforcement, the Division of Police and the Sheriff’s Office who worked closely with the Property Action Team to bring a case to get this violent drug house shut down. It’s a significant win for the neighborhood and area residents who want nothing more than a safe place to live and raise their families,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein.

According to court documents, police were called to the property at least a dozen times from 2021-2022, and beginning in 2023, the property became increasingly violent and tied to drug activity, including officers responding to three reports of shots fired from March to May 2024.

In January 2023, police arrested a wanted person at the premises. Later that same month, police were dispatched on report of an assault on the property.

In September 2023, CPD received a call reporting a fight in the immediate vicinity of the home. Later that fall, a woman told police that another individual assaulted her at the premises as an act of retaliation for a prior police run to the assailant’s home. Witnesses of the incident also reported that illegal narcotics were being sold from the home.

Court documents indicate a number of arrests of known criminals at the premises since 2023, including the Oct. 2023 arrest of an individual with an outstanding warrant for theft and a December 2023 arrest of an individual running from a stolen vehicle. Also in December 2023, officers responded to a report that an individual was being held in the basement of the premises. Officers found the man bleeding from the head, where he reported to have been beaten and held in the basement.

On March 31, 2024, a caller reported one gunshot at the premises. Another report of seven to 10 gunshots were reported in mid-April 2024, and a third incidence of shots fired at the premises was made in the first week of May.

During the course of the April 2024 investigation into the shots fired at the property, officers were told that the property was an active drug house. In the following days, the Franklin County Sheriff's Office surveilled the premises on multiple occasions, noting heavy foot traffic at the residence in a manner indicative of narcotics sales. FCSO deputies intercepted one individual as he left the premises on foot, where the individual indicated they had purchased and used methamphetamine inside the house.

In addition to violence and drug-related crimes at the property, city Code Enforcement noted a number of violations in and around the home, including individuals residing in tents or other temporary dwellings on site.

“Thanks to Code Enforcement, CPD, the Sheriff’s Office and concerned neighbors, the Property Action Team was able to build a case and get this violent drug house shut down. The Hilltop is safer because our partners and the community worked together to leverage the tools we have to make a difference,” said Property Action Team Attorney Rob Doersam.