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City Attorney Zach Klein files lawsuit against west side apartment owner following years of criminal activity, code violations, and unpaid property taxes

Lawsuit follows nearly 200 calls for service, repeated code violations, and years of neglect at multiple properties

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the Property Action Team filed a lawsuit against the owner of multiple properties on the west side after years of criminal activity, dangerous code violations, and unpaid property taxes. The lawsuit targets the Burgess Apartments at 21-39 South Burgess Avenue and an adjacent commercial building at 2603-2607 West Broad Street, both owned by Xiao Yu Huang.

“These properties have generated hundreds of calls for service while criminal activity and dangerous conditions continued to pile up,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“Enough is enough. It’s time for this owner to address these longstanding problems and be held accountable.”**

According to court documents, the Columbus Division of Police (CPD) have responded to the properties nearly 200 times since October 2023. Those calls included assaults, burglaries, shootings, reports of people with guns and knives, robberies, drug activity, overdoses, disturbances, and numerous reports of other suspicious activity. The Columbus Division of Fire also responded to 48 incidents over the past two years, including five suspected overdoses and 25 emergency transports to area hospitals. The lawsuit further alleges the properties have become a hotbed for felony drug activity and other criminal offenses.

In addition to criminal activity, City inspectors also found numerous housing, property maintenance, and code violations at the Burgess Apartments. Despite being cited last year, many of those violations remained uncorrected during a follow-up inspection in June 2026. Code Enforcement has also been forced to secure vacant units at the complex at least eight times over the past year due to emergency conditions.

The lawsuit also notes that the owner has failed to pay property taxes on all 16 apartment parcels and the adjacent commercial property for more than a year, a condition that qualifies as

a public nuisance under Columbus City Code. The City is also seeking relief related to new code violations at the commercial building, which was the subject of a previous nuisance lawsuit in 2022.

In its lawsuit, the City is asking the Environmental Court to declare the properties public nuisances, order the owner to correct all code violations, implement measures to prevent future criminal activity, pay delinquent property taxes, and, if necessary, appoint a receiver to take control of the properties, make repairs, or sell them. The City is also seeking authority to close the properties if warranted and recover the costs of any abatement efforts.

“This lawsuit isn’t the result of one bad inspection,” said Property Action Team Chief Steve Dunbar. **“Our team has worked alongside city partners to document years of criminal activity and dangerous conditions at these properties. Our goal is always voluntary compliance first, but when that doesn’t happen, we won’t hesitate to ask the Court to step in and hold negligent property owners accountable.”**

**Editor’s note: A copy of the complaint can be viewed by clicking the link below.*

[2026 EVH 060367 - 7 9 2026 - EVHCOMP - CV Docket - 7 20 2026](#)

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