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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City of Columbus Secures Second Drug House Emergency Board-Up in Past Two Days

Franklinton property was scene of 'heavy drug trafficking' and gun violence

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to vacate and shutter another west side drug house. Today it was a Franklinton property described in court documents as a “one-stop-shop” for illegal narcotics and a site of frequent gun violence.

City Attorney Klein’s office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [297 Avondale Avenue](#), which is located within walking distance of Avondale Elementary School. The owners of record are Charles and Sarah Cook of Columbus.

City attorneys also were prepared to go to court tomorrow to shut down a third west side drug house. However, a fire at the property has effectively preempted the need for the case to proceed.

“The drug epidemic that is plaguing our society requires a broad-based response, ranging from criminal prosecution to treatment and addiction services,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “We’ll continue to be aggressive in shutting down drug houses operating in residential neighborhoods, especially those near our schools.”

Columbus Police began investigating the property several months ago in response to community complaints of drug trafficking and shots being fired at the premises. Police officials contacted owner Charles Cook in mid-August and made him aware of the “criminal conduct of his tenants, the danger his tenants posed to the neighborhood, drug activity complaints stemming from his property, illegal firearm activities related to his property” and the possible consequences if he failed to take action.

The drug activity continued and on January 17, 2018 narcotics detectives executed a search warrant. After having to make a forced entry, detectives found:

- A semi-automatic weapon
- A rifle
- 4.3 grams of heroin
- 4.3 grams of crack-cocaine
- Four people inside, one of whom was arrested for felony possession of heroin

“This is the second emergency board-up order we secured in the past two days,” said Assistant City Attorney Kristen Dickerson. “This property is approximately three miles down the road from the drug house we just shut down yesterday.”

In filing a civil motion for injunctive relief along with the TRO request, Dickerson, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the west side of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the Cooks are guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that they, as owners 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 for 1:00 p.m. on Monday, February 5, 2018.

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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