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City of Columbus Shuts Down Linden Drug Den

Property had documented history of violent crime, drug dealing, gun activity

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to board-up a Linden drug operation that was running out of a residential home located a few soccer pitches away from Mapfre Stadium, the current home of the Columbus Crew Soccer Club. The City Attorney's office has now obtained injunctions to shut down 17 drug-related nuisance properties so far this year.

Records indicate that the Columbus Division of Police responded to [2363 Velma Avenue](#) several times over the past couple of years and have obtained covert purchases of heroin and crack cocaine from the premises. Law enforcement officials sent several warning letters to the property owner, Holly Royer, who lived at the premises, notifying her that failure to abate the drug activity could result in legal action against her.

Immediately after the Franklin County Environmental Court granted City Attorney Klein's motion for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order this afternoon, officers from the Investigative/Tactical Unit raided the property and enforced the court's order to board up the premises.

“While I continue to strongly advocate for reforming our state’s drug sentencing laws to treat addiction as the substance use disorder that it is, it is equally important for us to do everything we can to put drug dealers and traffickers out of business,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “We once again want to thank the Columbus Division of Police for being on the frontlines of our battle against the drug epidemic.”

According to court documents, Columbus Police have conducted several covert purchases of crack cocaine and heroin from the premises, resulting in at least four search warrants that turned up various evidence.

Last year, officers were dispatched to the premises regarding shots fired into the property, but the residents and other witnesses refused to cooperate with the police after they arrived.

Soon thereafter, officers were once again dispatched to the premises on a report that a male was brandishing a gun. The suspect was apprehended and discovered to have two outstanding warrants for his arrest.

Detectives issued nuisance warning letters to Ms. Royer on November 9, 2017, August 28, 2018, and September 5, 2018 to inform her of the illegal drug activity occurring at her property. However, the drug dealing continued, as narcotics detectives just recently obtained a covert purchase of crack cocaine from the premises.

“We greatly appreciate the court granting us the emergency board-up order and hope shutting this property down for the foreseeable future will provide relief to the neighbors who live nearby,” said Assistant City Attorney Heidi Tawardos.

A hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief against the property owner is scheduled for Friday, October 18, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.

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. The owner also would be permanently enjoined from “conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting” a public nuisance anywhere else in Franklin County, Ohio.

In order to secure closure of the property, Tawardos, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to Police Zone Five on the east side of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owner is guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that she “knew of, participated in, or acquiesced to the activity which constituted the nuisance” as prescribed by [Chapter 3767](#) of the Ohio Revised Code.

A copy of the court [order](#) is available online.

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