



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 4, 2020

Contact: Tammy Roberts Myers, 614.743.3346

Email: TARoberts-Myers@columbus.gov

Using Civil Litigation to Combat Crime, City Attorney Targets Two More Drug Houses

Properties were the scene of drug dealing 'all day and all night long,' gun violence, accidental overdoses

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that his office is on pace to exceed the number of drug-related nuisance cases filed in 2019 after taking legal action against two more crime-ridden properties this week—bringing the total to 22 this year. The City Attorney's office filed 23 such cases in 2019.

Klein filed complaints for injunctive relief in the Franklin County Environmental Court against [1442 Hildreth Avenue](#), a Mt. Vernon area property described in court documents as a location where drug dealers were known for selling crack cocaine and heroin "all day long" and "all night long," and [199 Haldy Avenue](#), a west side property that was connected to a large drug bust in March when the Columbus Division of Police confiscated 35 pounds of methamphetamine, five pounds of heroin, and a huge stockpile of ammunition.

If the properties are 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 owners also would be permanently enjoined from "conducting, maintaining, using, occupying, or in any way permitting" a public nuisance anywhere in Franklin County.

"Even with the court limiting its operations for several months due to the pandemic, we're on pace to surpass the number of drug-related cases we filed last year," said Klein. "Unfortunately, drug traffickers who profit off the suffering of others weren't going to take a break because of coronavirus—in reality, they likely took advantage of the fact that there was less access to resources and services for those struggling with addiction—and it's incumbent upon us to use our legal authority to help neighborhoods facing an unprecedented array of challenges this year."

1442 Hildreth Avenue

According to court documents, the Columbus Division of Police has been receiving community complaints about the property, which is located two blocks south of Saunders Park on the city's near-east side, since at least mid-2017. Narcotics detectives conducted several covert purchases of crack cocaine from the premises that year and evidence obtained in a subsequent search warrant included drug paraphernalia, a handgun, magazines, live rounds, and DNA fingerprints.

On January 3, 2018, police officials formally notified the property owner of the illegal activity

occurring at the premises and her legal responsibility to abate the criminal conduct.

On June 7, 2019, police received a call from the premises stating there was a person with a gun, and there were people screaming in the background. On September 15, 2019, officers responded to an accidental drug overdose. The victim was initially unresponsive, but was stabilized while being transported to the hospital.

On December 17, 2019, officers responded to a call of shots fired at the property after several men drove up to the house and at least one of them shot a gun soon after exiting the vehicle. On January 7, 2020, police officials once again sent a letter to the owner notifying her of the criminal activity occurring at the premises.

On May 31, 2020, police received a call about a person with a gun making threats over what was believed to be a drug deal. On August 4, 2020, narcotics detectives conducted an undercover purchase of “a dub”—or \$20-worth of crack cocaine—from the premises.

“I’m proud to be a part of our office’s initiative to combine criminal investigations with civil litigation to shut down nuisance properties that plague neighborhoods with guns, drugs, and violence,” said Assistant City Attorney Heidi Carr. “We’ll continue to use all the tools available to us in the legal system to try to help neighborhoods suffering from the corrosive effects of drug trafficking.”

199 Haldy Avenue

This North Hilltop property came to the attention of the Columbus Division of Police after officers responded to the premises at least five times for drug overdoses between August and October 2018.

On February 23, 2020, Columbus police and paramedics were dispatched to the premises on another accidental overdose. The victim was treated for opioid use, administered Narcan, and transported to a nearby hospital.

On March 25, 2020, narcotics detectives executed a search warrant at the premises, obtaining evidence that led to the recovery of 35 pounds of methamphetamine, five pounds of heroin, a “large cache of ammunition,” and a “large amount of cash.”

On April 1, 2020, police received a call regarding a person with a gun at the premises. The caller stated an individual pulled a gun on him and was now inside the house. On August 6, 2020, officers were advised that a wanted felon, whom they had been trying to locate for several months, was at the premises. Police arrested the individual on active warrants for felony forgery and possession of criminal tools, as well as a parole violation related to a burglary.

“Fifteen out of 22—nearly seventy percent—of our drug-related nuisance cases this year have been located on the west side,” said Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin. “It’s important for us to explore all possible legal remedies, especially since this property continues to be the scene of criminal activity even after the large drug bust there in the spring.”