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# City Attorney Zach Klein Says Fort Rapids Property Owners Held in Contempt and Fined for Repeatedly Failing to Fix Serious Health and Safety Code Violations

*Fort Rapids site is the second east side commercial property city officials have gone after in as many weeks to have owners held in contempt of court, fined and required to develop plans to fix up properties*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced the Franklin County Municipal Court Environmental Division sided with the City to hold in contempt of court the owners of the former Fort Rapids Indoor Waterpark Resort on the City's east side. The decision comes after property owners repeatedly failed to abide by a court order to bring the property into compliance with all health and safety codes. The Court awarded the City \$199,000 in contempt fines and doubled daily fines against property owners, which now total \$2,000 per day until the property is brought into compliance.

Last week, City Attorney Klein announced the Court sided with the City in a contempt motion made against the owners of Eastland Mall, fining owners \$10,000 with additional \$1,000-per-day fines until the property is brought up to code.

**“Whether it’s Eastland Mall or Fort Rapids, these properties that hold so much potential for the east side need to be kept up, and we will continue to hold owners accountable for failing to meet the demands of the Court, the City, and the surrounding community,”** said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“Compliance with health, safety and fire codes isn’t optional, and bringing these properties back into compliance is the first step to making them productive elements to the future of our east side neighborhoods.”**

In addition to the \$199,000 contempt fine and \$2,000 daily penalties for noncompliance, the Court also mandated that the defendant must submit within 30 days written plans for the full rehabilitation of the property, including a project timeline for all outstanding violations, a plan for fire safety system improvements, plans for securing the exterior of the property, and a plan for continuing maintenance at the premises. Owners must also post cash or bond for 125 percent of the costs of the full rehabilitation plan. Failure to comply with these sections of the order would result in jail time for the defendant.

The former site of the Fort Rapids indoor waterpark was initially declared a public nuisance in August 2021 for failure to bring the property into compliance and secure proper permits for renovations. Just 12 months later, the Court imposed daily fines against property owners for repeated failure to address various code violations and dangerous conditions at the property. The property remains in violation of various health and safety codes.

**“The City has a number of tools to hold owners accountable to ensure their properties are safe and up to code. The actions taken at Fort Rapids are aggressive and hopefully enough to get this site turned around to be a viable option for future use or development. It’s what the east side deserves,”** said Property Action Team Chief Attorney Steve Dunbar. **“I’m thankful to Code Enforcement and the Fire Prevention Bureau for helping our team bring a successful case before the Court.”**

The defendant has until July 27, 2024, to present a rehabilitation plan and deposit necessary funding or face jail time until those conditions are met. A compliance hearing is set for August 1, 2024.