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City Attorney Zach Klein's Property Action Team Secures Preliminary Injunction on Hilltop Apartment Complex Known for Violence, Drugs and Gang Activity

Klein says complex has seen more than 150 calls for service in recent years, and that court action was necessary to clean up the property and protect public safety

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced Environmental Court Judge Stephanie Mingo imposed a preliminary injunction against the owners of a 16-unit apartment complex on N. Huron Ave. in the city's Hilltop neighborhood. The property has been the site of significant drug trafficking and gang activity in recent years, and has seen more than 150 calls for service over that time, including for drug sales, overdoses, shots fired and violent crime.

“The level of crime and violence at this complex is among the worst I’ve seen as City Attorney, and residents are rightly fed up. I’m thankful for the work of the Division of Police to build a case to hand off to the Property Action Team to present to the Court, secure this injunction, and begin to clean up this property to benefit residents and families,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“We cannot allow these havens of violence, drugs and crime to go unchecked. That’s why we’re taking this extensive action to hold landlords accountable and ensure this complex is more safe and secure.”**

According to court documents, the complex has been a haven for narcotics sales and use in recent years and Columbus Police (CPD) has received numerous tips regarding violence and gang activity at the complex. In the past two years, CPD has responded to more than 150 calls for service to the complex, including for more than a dozen instances of shots fired, violent altercations, stabbings, overdoses, break ins and assaults. In August 2022, CPD engaged in a standoff with an individual who pointed a firearm at responding officers.

On multiple occasions, CPD was informed of narcotics sales or stopped individuals with narcotics or drug paraphernalia, many of whom indicated several units operating as drug

houses. Over the past two years, CPD obtained and executed multiple search warrants on various units within the building, recovering illegal narcotics, including fentanyl.

As part of the Court's preliminary injunction, the complex's landlords agreed to several enhanced security measures, including right of access to police, fire, code enforcement and the Court's compliance officers to ensure owners are abiding by the court's orders. Additionally, CPD reserves the right to complete a security walkthrough of the premises to determine what additional security measures to require of property owners, including lighting and cameras. Landlords must also provide a rent roll of all tenants, as well as a list of all individuals trespassed or banned from the premises, and update these lists in a timely manner.

Every tenant will now be required to sign a crime free lease addendum, and all new tenants must submit to a background check and share with CPD the results of any such screening. Leases may be denied to anyone convicted of certain felony charges of violence, possession or sale of illicit drugs within a given timeframe.

“For a number of years, this complex has been a blight on the Hilltop, providing a safe haven for drug traffickers and gang activity. CPD has been instrumental in building this case, and now, landlords are under a court order to clean this place up to make it safe for tenants and the neighborhood,” said Property Action Team Attorney Rob Doersam. **“We will continue to monitor this property for compliance and to see if any additional actions are necessary to further improve safety. That remains our top priority.”**