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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, November 15, 2018
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City Attorney Looking to Shut Down Two Clintonville Drug Houses (and an RV)

Joint lawsuit filed to board up two connected drug operations located minutes apart from each other, with an RV used as a 'drug shuttle'

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced that the City of Columbus is seeking to vacate and shutter two Clintonville properties that have caused multiple police runs for drug violations, overdoses, potential counterfeiting and check kiting, and several fugitive arrests, including an individual wanted on seven outstanding felony warrants for pandering nudity to minors. The living conditions of both properties were described in court documents as being unsafe and uninhabitable, with one in such a deplorable state that the drug-addicted owner began living in an RV illegally parked in the yard. The RV also was used to shuttle back and forth between the two properties.

City Attorney Klein's office filed a complaint for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief in the Franklin County Environmental Court to board up [715 E. Weisheimer Road](#) and [622 Garden Road](#), which are located near each other in a residential neighborhood that includes two schools, Colerain Elementary and Dominion Middle School, that are within walking distance. The preliminary hearing is scheduled for Monday, November 19, 2018 at 11:30 a.m.

“We’re going to target criminals and places that are contributing to the drug epidemic, regardless of where they’re located in our community,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. **“We want to thank the community and the Columbus Police Division for working with our office to identify the connection between these two drug houses, which helped build our case against them.”**

In March 2018, Columbus Police and EMS personnel responded to a call of a suspected drug overdose. On scene, they revived W. Richard Martin III, the owner of 715 E. Weisheimer Road. Nathan Leighly, one of the residents of 622 Garden, was with Mr. Martin at the time.

On April 3, 2018 police officers and paramedics responded to a reported drug overdose at the Weisheimer property and found an unconscious female victim inside. They also encountered an individual named Mary McDaniel, who was uncooperative and refused to tell the officers the name of the victim or what drugs they had taken. The victim was revived with Naloxone and Ms. McDaniel was arrested.

The following day, officers observed two females and an unknown male at the premises. As the officers approached, the man ran away while the women remained and were identified as both having outstanding warrants for their arrest. Mr. Martin alleged that the women were there to help him fix his house. The officers recovered marijuana, a digital scale, a stolen handgun and

ammunition.

On April 14, officers encountered Mr. Martin and a woman in a van parked at the premises. Martin claimed they were trying to “make repairs to the car.” The officers found pills, a crack pipe, syringes, a burnt spoon, and crystal meth inside the vehicle. Both Mr. Martin and the other individual were arrested.

On April 28, officers responded to the premises and arrested an individual who had a bag of marijuana, multiple glass pipes, a bag of pills, and an open liquor bottle in his vehicle.

On May 21, officers once again arrested Mr. Martin for possession of narcotics. His 16-year-old son was with him at the time. A little over a week later, police received a community complaint that a young woman was lying in the yard with a needle stuck in her arm.

On June 1, city code enforcement officers inspected the property and found it didn't have running water or electrical service. It also had “significant fire damage” and standing water in the basement. Due to what the inspectors determined to be uninhabitable living conditions, the city issued emergency vacate and board up orders. At this juncture, Mr. Martin began living in an RV parked in the rear of the property. The community complaints of suspicious drug activity continued.

Court records indicate that late last month, officers encountered a juvenile, who was later identified to be Mr. Martin's daughter, living with him in the RV. The area around the vehicle was “riddled with needles and drug paraphernalia.” Franklin County Children Services were notified and took immediate custody of the child.

Police officials have noted various individuals going back and forth between Mr. Martin's property and 622 Garden Road, sometimes on foot or bike but oftentimes being shuttled by Mr. Martin's RV. On September 24, officers arrested Mr. Leighly, who was standing near the RV at the time, for possession of black tar heroin, needles, and white powder residue.

On October 11, police responded to 622 Garden Road on a report of “suspicious individuals...carrying book bags in and out of the house.” The responding officers made several arrests after finding illegal narcotics, syringes, drug paraphernalia, and a backpack filled with “blank check paper and counterfeit money.”

On October 30, one day before neighborhood children would be trick-or-treating, officers arrested an individual from the premises who was wanted on seven outstanding warrants for pandering nudity to minors.

“No part of Columbus is immune from drugs,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. “It's particularly troubling to know that all this illegal activity was occurring in a residential neighborhood within walking distance to two schools.”

In order to secure closure of the property, Karac, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the Clintonville area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owners of the two properties are both 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.

A copy of the city's [complaint](#) is available online.