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## City of Columbus Shuts Down West Side 'Meth Mart'

*Fatal drug overdose at the property late last year led to ongoing police investigation*

**COLUMBUS, OH**—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured an emergency court order to immediately vacate and shutter a west side property that was being used by multiple drug dealers and prostitutes as a base of operations. At one point, Columbus Police found close to two dozen people crammed inside the 840 square foot residence with four total rooms. Police also responded to the premises numerous other times for incidents that included weapons violations, burglary, fights, disturbances, stolen vehicles, and multiple drug overdoses. It is the 19<sup>th</sup> drug house the city has shut down this year. More than half have been on the west side.

City Attorney Klein's office filed a request for an *ex parte* temporary restraining order earlier today in the Franklin County Environmental Court to shut down [1915 West Mound Street](#), which is located approximately 500 feet from West Mound Elementary School. The owner of record is listed as Steven Schall.

Officers have recovered various types of methamphetamine from the premises over the last several months, including just two days ago when \$2500 worth of pre-cut, post-cut, and "clear rock" methamphetamine was confiscated. Officers also have discovered heroin, crack cocaine, fentanyl, and "Xanax bars" connected to the premises.

**"There have been at least four drug overdoses associated with this property, and it now becomes the 19<sup>th</sup> drug house we've shut down this year, 10 of which have been on the west side,"** said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **"This case also is indicative of the possible resurgence of methamphetamine, which is all the more reason why we need to focus on the root causes of drug abuse and human trafficking. That's why I'm proud to join Franklin County Prosecutor Ron O'Brien in a bipartisan effort to change Ohio's drug sentencing laws to address addiction through treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration."**

According to court documents, police officials first became aware of suspicious activity at the property after paramedics were unable to revive a drug overdose victim at the premises on November 5, 2017.

On May 25, 2018, paramedics responded to the premises on the report of another overdose and administered Narcan to an unconscious female victim. The victim was revived and admitted that she used heroin.

On July 17, 2018 police received a call that “a large amount of prostitutes” were at the premises and drugs were being offered to passers-by. Police responded to the premises four more times in the month of August on reports of a disturbance, a fight, a burglary, and a narcotics complaint.

On October 28, officers who were monitoring the property for narcotics trafficking made arrests that resulted in the recovery of 37 grams of suspected crystal meth, along with crack cocaine, fentanyl, two “Xanax bars” and various drug abuse instruments. One of the arrestees also admitted that he had two large bags of substances that “were being used to cut methamphetamine and heroin.”

On October 29, detectives conducted a covert purchase of heroin from the premises, leading to a court-ordered search warrant. The following day, officers from the Investigative Tactical Unit raided the property, confiscating over \$3000 worth of heroin, cocaine, marijuana, and methamphetamine, along with suspected cutting agents and miscellaneous ammunition.

During the raid, officers encountered over 20 individuals inside the 840 square foot residence. Two individuals were arrested on outstanding warrants and five for felony drug offenses. The owner, Mr. Schall, was onsite at the time and signed an official document acknowledging that he was on notice that illegal drug activity was occurring at his property.

Police continued to respond to the premises and on December 1, they received a call of a person with a gun. Officers subsequently arrested two individuals while also seizing three bags of “various suspected narcotics,” including crystal meth. Two days later, officers encountered an individual with an active warrant for her arrest and a “bag of meth” in her possession.

On December 12, officers monitoring the premises made an arrest and recovered a stolen handgun and various types of methamphetamine with a street value of approximately \$2500.

**“With an elementary school only a few hundred feet away, it was imperative that we get an order to close down the property,” said Assistant City Attorney Zach Gwin. “We appreciate the judge issuing this temporary restraining order and look forward to the next hearing.”**

A hearing for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2018 at 8:30 a.m. The property is also subject to numerous code violation orders.

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, Gwin, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the west side of Columbus, is seeking to prove that the owner is guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that he “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’s order](#) is available online.