



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, May 30, 2019
Contact: Meredith Tucker, 614.965.0203
Email: mctucker@columbus.gov

Columbus Shuts Down Two More Drug Houses—with One Known to Be ‘Open for Business’ All Day and All Night

Properties were the scene of dozens of police runs for domestic violence, shots fired, narcotics complaints, drug overdoses, burglary, stolen vehicles, alleged prostitution

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein announced today that the City of Columbus secured emergency court orders to board-up two more drug houses, bringing the city’s total to 11 shut down so far this year. Records indicate that the Columbus Division of Police responded to the two properties dozens of times for incidents involving narcotics trafficking, prostitution complaints, multiple drug overdoses, burglary, shots fired, domestic violence, theft, and stolen vehicles. The owner of one of the properties overdosed on heroin three out of the nine times officers and paramedics were called to the premises to try to revive unresponsive victims.

In separate hearings earlier this afternoon, the Franklin County Environmental Court granted City Attorney Klein’s motions for *ex parte* temporary restraining orders to board up [1717 Union Ave.](#) on the city’s west side and [936 Elizabeth Ave.](#) in the Eastmoor neighborhood. The Columbus Division of Police and other city agents descended on the properties in coordinated raids to enforce the court orders soon after they were issued.

“These properties were a persistent drain on taxpayer resources and a danger to both the community and the officers who were routinely dispatched to the premises,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. “Boarding up 11 drug houses already this year clearly illustrates our need to hold criminals responsible for their actions while also really focusing on the root causes of crime and addiction.”

1717 Union Avenue

According to court documents, Columbus Police responded to this property at least 28 times in the last year and a half for complaints that included domestic violence, shots fired, theft, drug overdoses, narcotics complaints, burglary, suspicious persons, stolen vehicles, and other disturbances.

On February 2, 2018 officers arrested a suspect at the premises in a vehicle that he had stolen from his girlfriend. On April 10, 2018 paramedics received a call about a heroin overdose at the premises. On July 10, 2018, officers investigating another report of a stolen vehicle discovered heroin, 526 grams of crystal meth, digital scales, a meth pipe, two syringes, and a glass jar containing a “white residue.”

On August 26, 2018, officers were dispatched to the premises on report of yet another stolen vehicle and arrested two individuals. Officers also confiscated crystal meth from one of the suspects. On August 27, 2018 officers found more crystal meth in a vehicle associated with the premises. The driver was placed under arrest for multiple criminal charges, including driving without a license and driving while under OVI suspension.

On August 31, 2018, narcotics detectives executed a search warrant at the premises and seized heroin, methamphetamine, cash, digital scales, and ammunition. One of the tenants was arrested for drug trafficking. After a series of other incidents at the premises, including a robbery and a suspicious fire, narcotics detectives conducting covert surveillance of the premises in February of this year arrested an individual in possession of black tar heroin, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, and psilocybin mushrooms. In March, detectives obtained covert purchases of heroin from the premises and subsequently executed a search warrant. Officers seized a weapon and ammunition, methamphetamine, and heroin.

936 Elizabeth Avenue

Columbus Police have responded to this property numerous times in the last two years for complaints including drug trafficking, burglary, robbery, assault, shots fired, and least nine drug overdoses. On three occasions during a two month time span last year, the owner, Dorothy Priest, overdosed on heroin and had to be revived by paramedics.

Officers and paramedics also were dispatched to the premises on reports of unresponsive drug overdose victims on: October 16, 2018; February 17, 2019; April 5, 2019; April 9, 2019; May 19, 2019; and May 21, 2019.

Narcotics detectives investigating the premises made several covert purchases of crack cocaine in March of this year. Officers executing a search warrant seized crack cocaine, a semi-automatic handgun and ten rounds of ammunition. On April 1, 2019 law enforcement officials sent Ms. Priest official notice via certified mail that she had an “immediate duty to cease any and all illegal activity” occurring at her home. At least four of the drug overdoses occurred after the letter was sent.

Hearings for preliminary and permanent injunctive relief against both properties are scheduled for Monday, June 10, 2019 starting at 12:00 p.m.

Copies of the court orders for [1717 Union Avenue](#) and [936 Elizabeth Avenue](#) are available online.

###