



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

Contact: Meredith Tucker, 614.645.8997

Email: mctucker@columbus.gov

City of Columbus Shuts Down Third Crime-Plagued Carryout this Year

Owner of University Area business engaged in knife fight with employee, has five pending criminal cases against him in addition to past indictments

COLUMBUS, OH—A carryout that was subject to an investigation by the Ohio Department of Taxation and systematically failed to check IDs in the University District has been shut down after City Attorney Zach Klein secured an *ex parte* temporary restraining order against the business yesterday in the Franklin County Environmental Court.

The Columbus Police Division initially began investigating *United Foodland*, located at [2222 Summit Street](#), in late 2016 and has charged the owner and his employees a total of at least 13 times for crimes ranging from underage alcohol sales to tampering with evidence, receiving stolen property and food stamp fraud.

Last September, police responded to the premises on the report of a knife fight between the owner, Khaled Hussein, and one of his employees. According to court documents, responding officers called for a medic after finding the employee at the scene “covered in blood” and “holding a large rock.” The dispute allegedly arose from a disagreement over “money owed” but authorities could not confirm the veracity of the claim.

“This establishment had the general reputation of being a place where alcohol, tobacco, food stamps and stolen property were being sold illegally,” said City Attorney Zach Klein. “It apparently also was a hostile work environment with the owner getting into a knife fight with one of his employees.”

According to court documents, Mr. Hussein was criminally charged three times at the end of 2016, including twice for selling alcohol to underage individuals.

In January 2017, he was indicted on tampering with evidence, two counts of receiving stolen property, trafficking in cigarettes illegally and attempted illegal use of food stamps. He ultimately pleaded guilty to two of the charges and was ordered to pay more than \$3000 in restitution.

That same month, police charged store clerk Jallal Mobarak with four counts of selling alcohol to underage individuals. Mobarak was employed by Mr. Hussein despite the fact that he had a significant criminal history, including felony convictions for burglary and a weapons-related offense. In October 2017, Mr. Mobarak was convicted of felony aggravated possession of drugs and sentenced to 10 months in prison.

In February 2017, another store clerk was charged with selling alcohol to an individual under the legal

drinking age. The store clerk pleaded guilty to an amended charge.

Police charged Mr. Hussein with four more counts of selling alcohol to underage individuals between October 2017 and February 2018. All four criminal cases are pending in the Franklin County Municipal Court. He also has another criminal case pending (FCMC Case No. 2018 CRB 002967) as a result of an inspection of the premises by the Ohio Department of Taxation on February 1, 2018.

Columbus police officials issued nuisance abatement warning letters to Mr. Hussein via certified mail in December 2016, January 2017 and February 2017 notifying him of the potential consequences if he failed to take action to stop the illegal activity occurring at his property. All three letters were officially received by Hussein but the illegal activity continued.

“There clearly was a consistent pattern of illegal activity occurring at this business since at least late 2016,” said Assistant City Attorney Katarina Karac. “It was particularly troubling that there was an abundance of college students, many of whom are under the legal drinking age, living nearby.”

A follow-up hearing for a preliminary and permanent injunction against *United Foodland* is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. on April 18, 2018.

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 business, Karac, who is the Zone Initiative Attorney assigned to the University area of Columbus, is seeking to prove that Mr. Hussein is guilty of maintaining a nuisance by establishing that he, as owner 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.

Copies of the city’s [complaint](#) and the [court’s order](#) are available online.

###