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Court Orders Receiver for Drug Flophouse

City Attorney's Office obtains relief for neighbors

The City Attorney's Office today obtained a court order for the appointment of a receiver to oversee the cleanup of a Clairemont Mesa property that has plagued neighbors with narcotics activity and trash for years.

The receiver will abate the nuisance, oversee renovations, and offer counseling, therapy, or treatment services to the property owner.

Beginning in early 2018, neighbors began complaining to the San Diego Police Department about narcotics activity occurring at 2610 Arnott Street. Over time, it became evident that the property owner had ceded control of the property to transients. Police have arrested people at the property for being under the influence of drugs and have recovered paraphernalia including needles loaded with drugs. Abandoned, inoperable, and stolen vehicles have also been recovered by police from the property. During a code compliance inspection on April 25, 2019, investigators found dead mice inside the house, an improperly installed water heater, dangerous electrical wiring, and large piles of junk and trash outside the property.

In October 2018, the City issued a Notice and Order to Repair Substandard Building and Abate Public Nuisance, but the property owner refused to address the health and safety violations and the nuisance continued. Just three weeks ago, police arrested six people at the house on outstanding warrants for parole violations, for being under the influence of a controlled substance, and for resisting arrest. During a search of the residence, officers recovered several baggies filled with narcotics. Drug paraphernalia was also found, including smoking pipes, needles, and scales used for weighing narcotics.

“The appointment of a receiver will give the homeowner immediate access to the resources he needs to bring this property up to code and to address the underlying issues leading to this unfortunate situation,” City Attorney Mara W. Elliott said. **“Our intervention will bring relief and peace of mind to impacted neighbors who’ve fought hard to reclaim their neighborhood.”**

This case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorney Paul Prather. The City will recover the costs of rehabilitation, cleanup, attorney fees, and receiver fees from the property owner.

The City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit was established in 1984 to address nuisance properties and blight throughout San Diego. This unit works in partnership with the Code Enforcement Division of the City Development Services Department, the San Diego Police Department, other local agencies and the community to identify and aggressively address problem properties.

Since 2015 the Nuisance Abatement Unit has filed 14 other health and safety receiverships with the court. These cases also involved substandard housing violations, public nuisance and extreme hoarding conditions. In the past, the City would pay to abate the violations, costing taxpayers thousands of dollars, then seek a lien against the property. With receivership actions, the City does not spend any money abating the nuisance. Instead, the property is rehabilitated using funds borrowed from the equity in the property. The City may also collect all costs of prosecution, including attorney's fees and investigative costs.

Community members may report code, health and safety and environmental violations to the City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit at 619-533-5655.

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