



CITY OF DANBURY
OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Livable Neighborhoods 2013
“Building a Better Danbury”

July 2013

July 29, 2013

Honorable Mayor Boughton and City Council Members:

Below is a table highlighting UNIT activity from the time of last month’s City Council report. This does not include any UNIT activity regarding follow up and re-inspection work from previously noted issues. The UNIT works to ensure that each and every issue is resolved as quickly as possible.

Time Period	May 24 – June 23, 2013
Number of Quality of Life Issues	100
Year to Date	550

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (20)
- Abandoned/foreclosed houses (13)
- Blight/Miscellaneous (28)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (11)
- Exterior Blight Order (5)

It has been another very busy month for our department. Statistically, most of our complaints have been from residents concerned about the overgrowth of properties, the majority of them being vacant. Also, residents bring to our attention various areas around town where there are line of sight safety issues for vehicular traffic due to brush and branch overgrowth. Additionally, many residents also notify our department of areas where the sidewalks are not passable due to low hanging branches or overgrown shrubbery. Needless to say, our department takes care of it all. Whether it’s coordinating with property owners, the Highway Department or simply taking care of it ourselves, our department ensures that the issue is resolved promptly.

The UNIT continues to work with lenders in ensuring that the vacant properties around town are maintained and secured. Both The News Times and the Patch ran an article regarding the abandonment of 21 Spring St, a historical property in Danbury, known as the Octagon House. The UNIT is working very hard to clean this property up and secure. Read below for more details.

The UNIT continues to be a presence downtown, ensuring that the quality of life is kept up, thus ensuring a safe and welcoming place for businesses, its stakeholders and its customers. In partnering with the Danbury Police, several tickets have been issued to individuals for drinking in public, loitering and trespassing. It is a top priority to eliminate these behaviors downtown, and while it's a difficult task to enforce, our department remains vigilant in cracking down on these unwanted issues. Additionally, as partners of the State's Attorney Office, if these individuals are not able to pay for the cost of the fine, they will be assigned to our department to complete community service. Last week, an individual who was assigned 25 hours, spent his days with our department cleaning up Main Street of litter and repainting the railings along the sidewalk.

UNIT HIGHLIGHTS:

Exterior Blight Citation Warnings Issued:

In July, the UNIT issued five (5) Exterior Blight Warnings to property owners. In this case, thirty days are allowed for the property owner to remediate the issues highlighted on the citation warning. If compliance isn't achieved during this time frame, then our department goes to the next step of issuing daily fines of \$100/day until the issues have been resolved.

Below is a review of the warnings sent:

- **30 Rowan Street:** Property is being used as a dumping ground. There is no structure on this property. Garbage, mattresses and old furniture is littered about, as well as an unregistered RV that has been abandoned on the property. Also, the grass and weeds are over 4' high. The property needs to be cleaned in its entirety, RV removed and grass/weeds maintained.
- **241 White Street:** This is property is a gas station and the owner also owns the residential, multi family home behind it on Meadow Street. The order requires the property owner to relocate the dumpster to a fenced in location. This area has been a common location of people, unrelated to the property, illegally dumping large trash items and by relocating the dumpster, the UNIT feels this will remediate the problem with dumping. Additionally, the gas station building has graffiti written along the exterior walls and needs to be removed. Finally, there is garbage that needs to be cleaned up.
- **31 James Street:** An order was sent to the property owner as a result of an accumulation of garbage/debris littered about the property. Large items of

furniture and a discarded hot tub need to be removed. Additionally, there is a wood platform in the rear that was built without permits and is failing. It needs to be removed or legalized. The owner had been previously asked to take care of these issues, but after nearly a month, nothing was done. Thus, the order was sent.

- **16 and 21 Spring Street:** In a concerted effort to improve this area on Spring Street, the UNIT is doing what it can to address some issues. These two properties are vacant and are continually used by unwanted individuals as places to rest, sleep, eat or engage in criminal activity. Both properties have been repeatedly broken into and damaged. There is garbage strewn about these properties, as well as clothes and human feces. It's disgusting. Our orders are requiring for the properties to be cleaned up and secured. In the case of #16, the UNIT recommended that the property owner enclose the property with a fence. The owner of #21 is an out of state bank and this property is critical. Windows and doors are broken into and people continue to have their way with the house. The UNIT and DPD continually check in and remove people. Last week, we issued a trespassing fine to someone. Securing this property is a priority. We don't want to see the house continue to deteriorate and more importantly, we don't want anyone to get hurt.

Naturally, our department will follow up on all of these issues and more to ensure that compliance is met and that the quality of life in our neighborhoods are restored and maintained.

311 Call Center Report: June 2013

The month of June saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 630 calls, with requests for phone numbers bringing the highest total at 136 inquiries. The spring yard debris pickup program, and its subsequent conclusion, brought 34 calls while 26 residents called for information on the recycling truck, and its new location at the War Memorial. Twenty-two residents called asking where they can dispose of household garbage while 13 additional calls were placed regarding Household Hazardous Waste Day (September 28 in Danbury) and 11 residents called looking for information on upcoming summer events. Residents are encouraged to remain vigilant and proactive in reporting overgrown trees and bushes that may be considered a potential road hazard. Summer is typically a busy time for road repairs, drainage work, and other large-scale projects; by keeping in close contact with respective city departments, the 311 Call Center is well-prepared to provide the most accurate information available for residents seeking updates and information.

The UNIT continues to encourage the participation of Danbury's residents to report any concerns in their neighborhood by utilizing the City Line 311 system. Residents of Danbury can simply dial 311 from their home phones, or 203-744-4311 from out of town or cell phones. Additionally, residents can log on to the City's webpage, www.ci.danbury.ct.us, and click on the City Line 311 link and register their complaint at their convenience, and now, residents can utilize the Danbury Direct app from their iPhone to submit a concern or question. Residents can choose to provide their contact information, so the UNIT can follow up and provide an update on the situation. By

visiting the Neighborhood Assistance Department on the City's website, residents will also be able to view the UNIT's monthly activity.

If we can be of any assistance to you or residents in your ward please contact us at 796-8026 or 311.

Sincerely,

Shawn Stillman
Coordinator, Office of Neighborhood Assistance