



**CITY OF DANBURY**  
**OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE**

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Livable Neighborhoods 2014  
*“Building a Better Danbury”*

**March 2014**

March 24, 2014

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.

<b>Time Period</b>	Feb 24 – Mar 24, 2014
<b>Number of Quality of Life Issues</b>	68
<b>Year to Date</b>	172

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Garbage/Debris on property (21)
- Exterior Blight Order (11)
- Miscellaneous (11)
- Abandoned or unregistered vehicles (10)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (7)

With the responsibility of maintaining and improving the quality of life within our community, there is never a shortage of work to be done. I’m proud to announce that over the last four years, the number of complaints continue to decrease each year. Additionally, our department continues to proactively address issues at a rate of over one third of our annual activity. The focus on the last few weeks has been on reinspecting previous locations visited within the last year or two, ensuring that past issues have been resolved and continue to remain compliant. As a result, a few Exterior Blight Orders were written because some issues that were addressed in the past have not improved or have returned. It is very easy in the day to day activity as new issues come in, for the old issues to get buried and replaced. Our department has made good use of these last few weeks to

ensure that any back log is eliminated and will continue to make progress on this initiative.

### **EXTERIOR BLIGHT CITATIONS:**

This month has been the busiest month yet in regards to issuing blight orders. In the last four weeks, the UNIT has issued eleven (11) Exterior Blight Warnings to property owners. Several of the orders were sent to property owners where the UNIT has had issues in the past, but either the problem was never remediated, or it continues to come back. **The enhanced enforcement authority of this blight order is the strongest, most effective enforcement tool of our department.** While our department is not motivated by issuing fines, clearly this penalty is an obvious incentive for property owners to seek a quick remedy to these blight concerns.

Thirty days (30) 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.

### **Orders written by UNIT (YTD): 16**

Below is a review of the warnings sent this past month:

- **11 Midfield Road:** Issued order to Danbury Housing Authority for tenant to remove unregistered, most likely inoperable vehicle from property. Vehicle has been at the location, unmoved for approx. 4 years, and previous warnings to vehicle owner have been ignored. *I am pleased to announce that within ten days of receipt of the order, the vehicle was permanently removed from the property.*
- **58 Balmforth Avenue:** Issued order for the removal of three unregistered vehicles, one of them clearly being inoperable. This has been another property where previous warnings had been issued to the property owner, but they have either been ignored, or upon compliance, the issue would just return again with different vehicles. The order has been received and the property owner is currently working on immediate compliance within 30 days.
- **85 Garfield Avenue:** Issued order for the removal of unregistered vehicle that warnings in the past have been challenged and ignored. Upon receipt of the Exterior Blight Order, the property/vehicle owner has contacted the UNIT and has initiated plans for compliance.
- **29 Osborne Street:** Issued order for the immediate clean up of garbage/debris scattered across the entire front lawn. Additionally, for the elimination of front yard parking. Despite previous warnings over the years, vehicles have recently been pulling over the sidewalk curb and parking on the front lawn. As a result, the property is being destroyed and muddy tire tracks are being made in the front lawn. The order is requiring the property owner to install preventative measures to ensure that the front yard parking is eliminated.

- **3 Roger Avenue:** Issued order to property owner, as they have been using the back of their pickup truck to store dozens of bags of household kitchen garbage. The truck bed is now overflowing and bags are lying besides the truck, prompting obvious concerns of rodents, bad smells, and additionally, its unsightliness. Follow up inspection scheduled this week, as owner claims to have cleaned everything up.
- **24 Irving Place:** Issued order to property owner for the removal of garbage spread out around the side and rear of property. Most of garbage is limited to bags of household, kitchen rubbish, as well as old TV's and some furniture/junk. The back decks of this multifamily dwelling also contain a large amount of rubbish. Additionally, there is a canvas carport in disrepair that will need to be removed and re-installation will require a permit. The UNIT has already discussed this with the property owner and tenant and most of the garbage has been cleaned up.
- **26 Irving Place:** Issued order for the removal of unregistered vehicle. Previous warnings have been ignored.
- **35 Chestnut Street:** Issued order for the removal of unregistered vehicle. Previous warnings have been ignored.
- **3 Ridgeside Road:** Issued order for the removal of unregistered vehicle. Previous warnings have been issued to property owner throughout the years and the trend continues, but with different vehicles. The intent of issuing the order will be that this behavior is discontinued.
- **23 Hickory Street:** Issued order for the removal of three unregistered vehicles, one of them clearly being inoperable. A previous warning had been issued over a year ago with little changes. One or more of these vehicles appear to have not moved in a long time. The expectation of the order will be to have the vehicles registered and/or removed from the property.
- **24 William Street:** Issued order for the removal of two unregistered vehicles. Previous warnings have been issued to property owner throughout the years and the trend continues, but with different vehicles. The intent of issuing the order will be that this behavior is discontinued.

#### UPDATES:

- **83 Mill Plain Road:** The property has been cleaned up and kept clean as a result of UNIT intervention. Previously, the dumpsters were always overflowing and were not maintained. Needless to say, being that the dumpsters were in the front of the property, the mess presented as an overwhelming eyesore for the area. It is much improved now.

- **169 South Street:** This vacant house has been cleaned up significantly as a result of the UNIT's blight order. The property owner may even have been jump started with motivation to entertain selling the property because of it. The property is now scheduled to close on 3/21 and an agreement of a \$500 fine was settled as a result of months of inactivity. The agreement also states that the new property owner must finish an improvement project for the front stairs.

The Exterior Blight Ordinance and our department's enforcement of it WORKS. The results have been very noticeable around our city. Our department continues to work on the remaining open orders and is prepared to continue issuing them, as this has become a valuable enforcement tool for our department.

### **311 Call Center Report: March 2014**

The month of March saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 530 calls, as requests for phone numbers were the most-requested item at 136 inquiries. Fortunately, forecasted snowstorms did not have the impact they were expected to have which greatly assisted the Public Works Department and allowed residents to report damage to curbing or their lawns that had previously been unseen. However, the severe freeze-thaw cycle over the past few weeks helped to create numerous dangerous potholes, as 65 were reported to the 311 Call Center over the past month. Residents have been pleased to hear the official date of Clean City Danbury Day – May 3 – and placed 34 calls with questions regarding its operation. Calls regarding the recycling truck, and its subsequent locations, brought 17 calls while residents seeking information on where they dispose of household garbage brought 27 calls. Twelve additional calls were received for the Spring Yard Debris Pickup Program, which is yet to be announced. Historically, the early spring brings many calls for potholes and drainage, as well as for the many services provided by the city; keeping in constant communication with all city departments will allow for the same consistent message to be relayed to the public by the 311 Call Center.

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](http://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