



CITY OF DANBURY
OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Livable Neighborhoods 2010

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January 2010

“Building a Better Danbury”
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Honorable Mayor Boughton and Common Council Members:

From the time period of the previous Common Council report, December 28th, up until January 26th, the UNIT has had activity in 63 new issues. This does not include any follow up re-inspections from previously noted issues that the UNIT continues to follow up on.

The top three issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (20)
- Front Yard parking (20)
- Miscellaneous Issues (11)

In the past month, 20 properties were addressed by the UNIT as a result of needing to clean/remove garbage and debris from their property. Keeping Danbury clean is an essential act to maintain the quality of life for its residents, and very important to the UNIT. As a result, if needed, the UNIT will not hesitate to issue fines to property owners who allow their properties to become a blight in the neighborhood. The UNIT has authority to issue fines up to \$1000. It is a common practice to work with property owners to get the area cleaned up within a reasonable amount of time, and most often this practice is effective. However, if property owners are unresponsive, they will be issued a warning, followed by a summons if no action is taken.

On January 26th, the UNIT will receive training from the Danbury Police Department in enforcing the Sidewalk Parking Ordinance (19-36). By partnering with the DPD, the UNIT will be able to issue summons on vehicles blocking the sidewalks. As mentioned in the previous report, vehicles parking on sidewalks create several problems. The most important is that it compromises the safety of the pedestrians as they are forced to walk in the street around the obstructing vehicle. Additionally, continual parking over the curb on

the sidewalk deteriorates the curbs and forces the Highway Department to invest time and money repairing them.

On January 19th, the UNIT met with members of the Common Council to discuss changes to the Shopping Cart Ordinance 12-33. In an attempt to reduce the number of stray shopping carts left on city sidewalks and streets, our committee is thinking of ways to enhance the ordinance to give more accountability to store/cart owners, which can help motivate them to prevent their carts from being removed from their stores. Good ideas were brought up and our committee will continue in the next few weeks to come up with a good resolution.

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS

While each day on the UNIT has its challenges, there are often many highlights and success stories that go unmentioned and sometimes even unnoticed.

Two major achievements for the month are currently in process and the UNIT is actively working on its resolution. They have to do with properties, one on Bergh St, the other on West Street, where there exists an intolerable amount of garbage and rubbish. Due to the location of the homes, these health and safety hazards would not have easily been noticed. Upon a further inspection by the UNIT, our group revealed that the homeowners of these properties were storing large amounts of garbage either under a large porch of the home or being thrown in an old above ground swimming pool. Both homeowners were advised to obtain a large dumpster and begin the cleanup right away. Any non-compliance to this request would result in a fine up to \$1000. Naturally, both homeowners are immediately taking the steps to rectify the problem and the UNIT will continue to follow up to ensure that not only the mess is cleaned up, but that it never happens again.

Additionally, this is the type of success story that is not often heard and is worth mentioning. In November, the UNIT exposed an illegal and unsafe apartment on Montgomery Street. The ceilings were low, there were no windows for emergency exits and it housed a couple with a small child. In the case of emergency, the probability of a safe escape was doubtful. Naturally, the homeowner was involved and the family needed to move out of this location right away. With the help of Kristy Gray in the Health Department, she immediately involved the CACD (Community Action Committee of Danbury) in assisting this family find a different place to live. The CACD was able to assist with the security deposit of a new place and even further, the mother of this family is now attending a culinary school thanks to the assistance provided by the CACD. Regarding the space that the family vacated on Montgomery Street, the UNIT has randomly checked in to ensure that it remains vacant. Keeping these areas vacant and free of these types of safety hazards is one of the largest challenges of the UNIT.

CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK

Received: 12/30/09

“Thank you for all the great City services. Happy New Year to all. Please relay my appreciation to the Departments that provided assistance.”

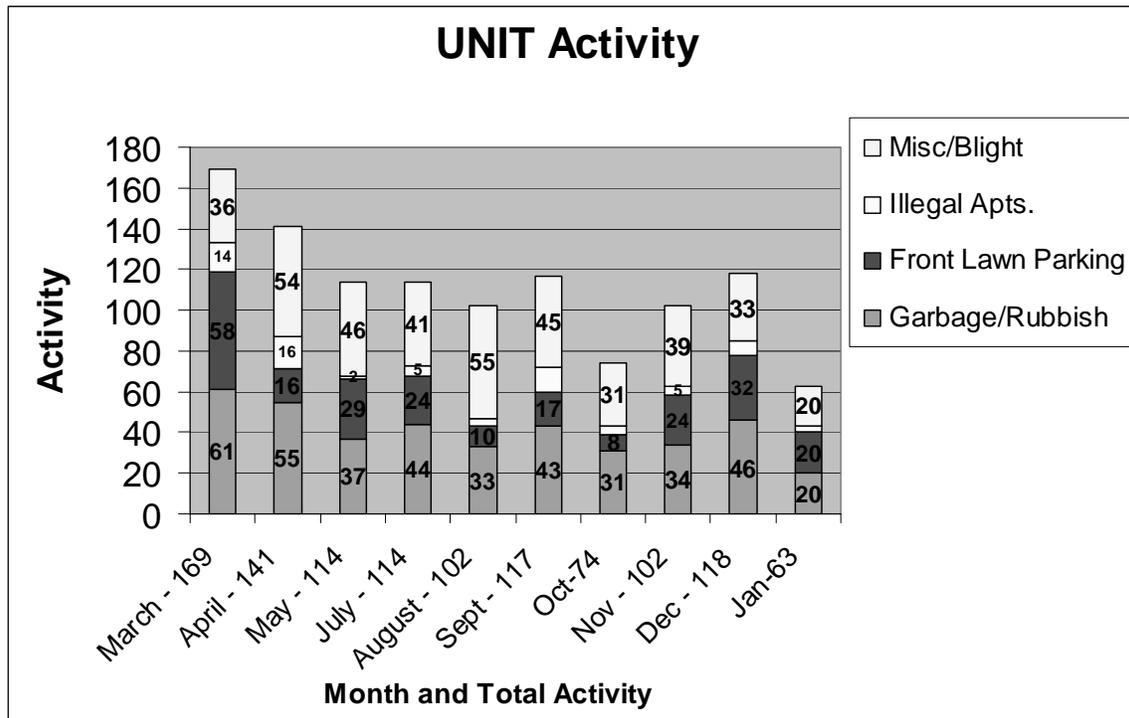
Carol M.

Received 1/25/10

“Thanks to you and your crew. I know if I need to get things done, I can contact the UNIT”

Peter N.

The goal of the UNIT is to improve the quality of life in Danbury and maintain the city as a desirable place to live. The UNIT is committed to addressing and resolving these issues as quickly as possible. Below is a bar graph illustrating the monthly totals of UNIT service requests for various concerns. Front lawn parking and garbage/debris result in the majority of the daily issues faced by the UNIT. Miscellaneous may include homes in disrepair, illegal dumping, blight, etc.



311 Call Center Report: January 2010

The month of January saw the 311 Call Center receive 683 inquiries from residents. The highest percentage of calls came from residents looking for phone numbers, which totaled 309 for the month. Another 79 residents called seeking additional information on the H1N1 flu shot clinic on January 20, 2010 and 62 calls came from residents looking to have their Christmas tree picked up. Residents looking for information on where they can dispose of their household trash totaled 44 calls for the month; this ties in with another 14 residents who called looking for information on Clean City Danbury Day 2010 (to which no date has been announced). Residents are encouraged to continue to call and report dangerous sidewalks, road conditions, trees, and malfunctioning traffic lights as the winter months progress. The 311 Call Center is entering its third full year in operation and has proven to be a valuable resource, not just for residents of Danbury, but also for residents who live out-of-state and are seeking information regarding our City. Many residents call or email looking for a copy of their birth certificate while still others will email looking for pieces of Danbury memorabilia. The 311 Call Center continues to grow and work with all other departments in order to provide the best service possible for all residents.

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. 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