



CITY OF DANBURY
OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

Shawn Stillman
UNIT Coordinator
s.stillman@ci.danbury.ct.us

203-796-8026

Livable Neighborhoods 2011
“Building a Better Danbury”

January 2012

January 30, 2012

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	Dec 26 – Jan 30, 2012
Number of Quality of Life Issues	87
One Year Ago	66

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (43)
- Front Lawn Parking (20)
- Unregistered/abandoned cars (8)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (6)
- Miscellaneous (5)

The mild winter weather has been an asset to UNIT activity thus far. This last month, almost 50% of UNIT activity has been the result of ACTION (Active Commitment Toward Improving Our Neighborhood). It is typical during this time of year for resident complaints to decline, so the UNIT takes this opportunity to follow up and close out active service requests.

Monthly Highlights:

Basement Apartment – Unsafe and Illegal:

Working off of a referral from Police Officer Sonny Usher, the UNIT was advised of a basement apartment on Moss Avenue that may be unsafe. Officer Usher was there earlier in the week to complete an arrest and he noticed that the window in the bedroom looked too small. He then immediately contacted the UNIT and an inspection was completed right away. At the time of the inspection, the tenant was home and Officer Usher's concerns were validated. A basement apartment had been constructed without a permit, with sheetrock walls built within inches of the furnace and the window in the bedroom being too small to escape from in case of fire emergency. Additionally, the timing of our inspection was critical as the tenant had been operating a space heater in the bathroom and the wall in that room was extremely hot! The Fire Marshal instantly required that the tenant was no longer allowed to sleep there and had to look for a new place to live. Conveniently, he was planning on moving within a week or two, so for now he will live with a friend. In the meantime, the UNIT contacted the homeowner and coordinated an inspection for Zoning and the Building Departments. The property owner will be required to remove all traces of the apartment and restore the area back to an unfinished basement.

Officer Usher's actions undoubtedly saved a potential disaster from happening. The combination of un-permitted construction with walls placed inches from a furnace, a bedroom containing a small window and a space heater creating a major fire hazard, was the recipe for something tragic to happen.

Abandoned Car – Chambers Road:

A few weeks ago, a resident inquired about what appeared to be an abandoned car in the woods, approximately 200 yards off of Chambers Road. The UNIT responded and came across the shell of an automobile that easily could have been there for 3-4 years. It was stripped down with even the roof missing. It was hard to determine how the car even ended up in this dense wooded area; it was as if it had been dropped from the sky. Not knowing the most effective way to remove it from the area, the UNIT contacted the Highway Department for some assistance. Within 3 hours, they were able to provide some crew members and a backhoe to help remove the vehicle. It took some time and some small trees needed to be knocked down, but the vehicle was pushed to the street where a flatbed tow truck was able to haul it away.

Upon tracing the VIN # on the vehicle and even talking to the last owner of record, it turns out that the vehicle had been stolen almost a decade ago and the insurance case was already settled and closed. As a result, no one had actual ownership of the vehicle and if it wasn't for the action of our team, the vehicle would not have been moved anytime soon.

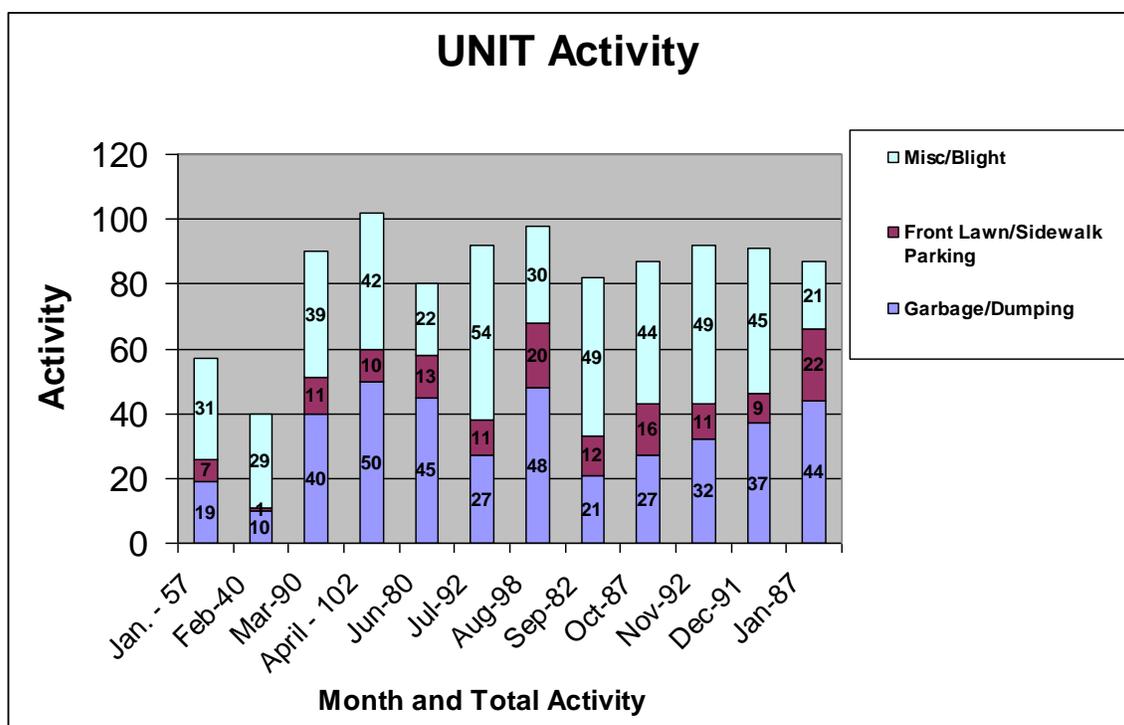


Thank you to the individual that brought it to our attention. We rely on our residents to alert our department with their concerns and we make every effort to resolve it right away.

These two highlights are great examples of working together as a team to accomplish our goals. Not one department could have completed these tasks without the other.

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 and continues to be the department where residents can come to register their complaint and get the quality service that they expect. We will continue to proudly serve and follow up on complaints as best as we can. Our office seeks quick resolution to the quality of life complaints we receive.

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 2012

The month of January saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 600 calls from residents as call volume slowed considerably as the mild winter continues in what is becoming a complete reversal of the 2011 winter season. Requests for phone numbers totaled 184 for the month, while 59 calls were placed for Christmas tree pickup, 37 calls were placed for the recycling truck, and 24 were placed for information on where residents can dispose of household garbage. If the mild winter season continues, it is expected that call volume will continue to hold at about 600-700 calls per month, as history has proven that residents most utilize the Call Center during times of emergency, tempests, and for information on city-sponsored events. However, regardless of what the weather and seasons bring, the 311 Call Center is committed to providing the residents of Danbury with the most efficient means of free and dependable information with the help and assistance of all other city departments.

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