



CITY OF DANBURY
OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

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Livable Neighborhoods 2012
“Building a Better Danbury”

February 2012

February 27, 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	Jan 30 – Feb 27, 2012
Number of Quality of Life Issues	80
One Year Ago	48

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (39)
- Front Lawn Parking (11)
- Unregistered/abandoned cars (10)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (5)
- Miscellaneous (9)

A.C.T.I.O.N (Active Commitment Toward Improving Our Neighborhood):

February was a busy month during a time of year where typically, it is seasonably slow. 51% of UNIT activity this last month has been the result of ACTION. Our department prides itself on pro-actively addressing the quality of life issues in town. Often times, ACTION results in cleaning trash from properties, addressing un-registered vehicles, zoning issues, etc, however, it also includes cleaning up areas around town, including litter and larger dumpings alongside city streets and embankments.

Monthly Highlights:

Basement Apartment – Unsafe and Illegal:

Earlier in the month, a fire on Balmforth Ave exposed at least one illegal apartment. Illegal and unsafe apartments are obviously more difficult to spot, as they don't stand out like trash or cars, etc. As a result, the UNIT continues to encourage residents to contact our department if they suspect any of these issues in their neighborhood. Working off of a tip from a resident, the UNIT visited a home on Stevens Street, with concerns of overcrowding and possibly an illegal attic apartment. Upon speaking with a tenant who lives in the home, she was able to provide the UNIT with the contact info of the homeowner. I scheduled an inspection appointment for later that afternoon. Upon inspection, the UNIT revealed a small basement apartment with windows no larger than an average computer screen. Furniture was covered with sheets and the bed was taken apart as if to disguise the fact that someone was living there. Upon further questioning, the homeowner admitted that he was not being truthful. Needless to say, the apartment was illegal and unsafe. Safety is obviously priority number one. If an illegal apartment is unsafe, it is required to be vacated immediately. That was the case with this dwelling. If safety is not an issue, but the apartment is considered illegal by the Zoning or Building Department, then the UNIT will coordinate these departments to get involved and enforce what needs to be done. Further inspection of the home revealed occupancy in the attic, however, safety concerns did not play a major factor. As a result, the next steps shared with the property owner were that the Zoning Department would need to inspect the area to ensure compliance, as well as possibly a building inspector in case unpermitted work was completed in the attic. The Fire Marshal provided the homeowner a list of fire safety enhancements to this multi-family dwelling (ie: smoke detectors, fire rated doors, etc) and the UNIT will coordinate Zoning to inspect and work with the homeowner to ensure compliance and safety in the home.

Overcrowding and Unsafe occupancy is certainly an issue in Danbury, most notably in the multi-family neighborhoods. However, it is not often easy for the UNIT to spot or recognize. WE NEED YOUR HELP! Contact the UNIT office by calling 311, or you can submit the complaint on-line by clicking on the 311 banner on the City's homepage. Anonymous complaints are welcome! If you choose to leave your contact information, the UNIT will gladly be touch with you to follow up on the inspection results.

A Day with The Patch:

On Feb 16th, Mark Langlois, the reporter from the Danbury Patch joined the UNIT for a few hours to get a brief taste of the variety of tasks that occur on a daily basis. The morning consisted with the response of several different complaints ranging from properties with garbage, unregistered vehicles, a nuisance complaint involving a resident's dog, and an illegal apartment. In between all of these inspections, included an

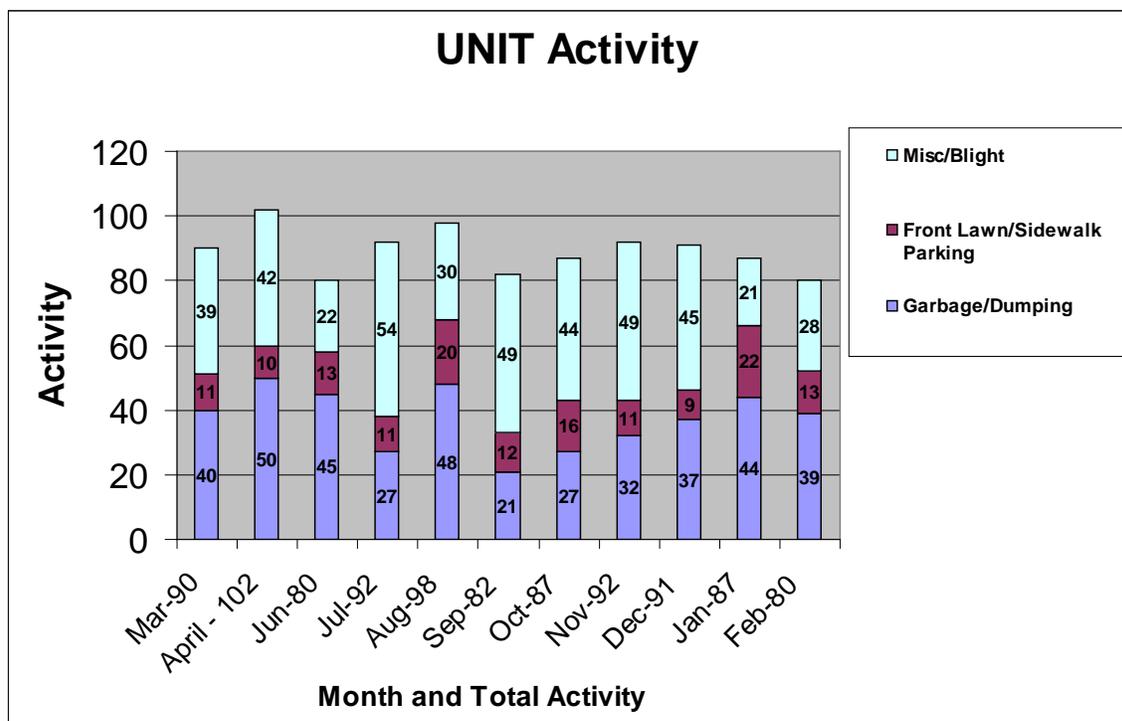
impromptu discussion with a resident who pulled over when he saw us to thank the UNIT for assistance he received in the past, as well as asking more questions on where to get assistance with some other item. Additionally, in the same neighborhood, was a discussion with another resident who provided some concerns about a neighboring property and was hoping that the UNIT could assist. I think Mr. Langlois was able to experience how effective our team can be and the variety of different issues our team deals with. Of course, there are also many challenges. Many of these issues are difficult to resolve right away and take time. Often, it is a recurring problem that leads to frustration for everyone. Thank you to Mr. Langlois for joining the team for the day, and we appreciate your encouragement to your readers to utilize the UNIT for any concerns in their neighborhood.

Cleaning up Danbury:

The UNIT continues to partner with FCI on a weekly basis. The women recently completed a large filing task for the Tax Assessors Office, which will greater assist in the department's efficiency for assisting residents. Additionally, the UNIT continues to clean various parts of the city. The areas cleaned over the last few weeks were Mill Plain Road, Wildman Street, Exit 2 commuter lot, and the Candlewood Boat Launch area. Sadly, residents were dumping large items down an embankment. The women pulled everything to the top and the Highway Department was able to haul everything away. Upcoming tasks include painting over areas with graffiti, as well as the usual litter cleanup.

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: February 2012

The month of February saw the 311 Call Center receive approximately 400 inquiries from residents as call volume remained slow due to the mild winter. Requests for phone numbers totaled 162 for the month, while 22 calls were placed for information regarding Clean City Danbury Day, 21 calls were placed for information on where residents can dispose of household garbage, and 17 calls were placed by residents seeking information for the recycling truck. As long as the mild weather continues, call volume is expected to remain low through the beginning of spring. However, as the weather can change on a moment's notice, we must not be lured into a state of complacency as call volume will suddenly increase with the onset of any emergency. This continued state of preparedness allows the 311 Call Center the opportunity to remain in its primary position as the most efficient means of free and dependable information for the residents of Danbury.

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