



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

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Livable Neighborhoods 2012  
*“Building a Better Danbury”*

**March 2012**

March 26, 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.

<b>Time Period</b>	Feb 27 – March 26, 2012
<b>Number of Quality of Life Issues</b>	114
<b>One Year Ago</b>	83

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (45)
- Unregistered/abandoned cars (24)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Unpermitted Construction (12)
- Front Lawn Parking (8)
- Abandoned/foreclosed Properties (6)

Spring has certainly sprung as the second half of March treated our community with beautiful weather. Traditionally, the warmer weather is always a busy time for our department and this time of year acts as a spring board into the season. Complaints surrounding garbage on properties continue to trend at the highest volume. As residents come outside from their winter hibernation, they report these visible issues to our department. Statically, the UNIT’s proactive effort of ACTION trends at a little over 40% of all of UNIT activity, however, for the past month, it was only around 33% due to more complaints received by residents. Certainly, the ideal (and unrealistic) goal would be to never have to receive any quality of life complaints from our residents, but on the other hand, our department appreciates the trust that the community bestows upon us to be able to help them with their concerns.

## Monthly Highlights:

### Lake Waubeeka –Unregistered Cars

In an effort to clean up the neighborhood of inoperable unregistered vehicles, the Board of Directors of Lake Waubeeka sent our department a note seeking our assistance in addressing this issue. Earlier in the month, the UNIT visited approximately 8-9 properties, some with vehicles that haven't moved in years, and extended 30 days for vehicle owners to either re-register or remove these vehicles from the property. Follow up inspections are scheduled for early April.

### Fairfield Ridge: ACTION

The UNIT took advantage of a beautiful Spring day to walk the grounds of the Fairfield Ridge housing complex. This is always an effective way to inspect all around the properties, and gain exposure in the community. Residents routinely ask questions and even generate their own issues of how we can assist them. Eight properties were identified with issues, mostly due to garbage. The remaining properties had unregistered vehicles. The UNIT is scheduled to reinspect each of these properties within the next week.

The UNIT routinely assists the Danbury Housing Authority with all of its properties, and works with the staff and its residents to achieve quick resolution to various neighborhood issues.

### Illegal/Unsafe Apartments:

Recently, the UNIT has been receiving a higher number of complaints regarding unsafe occupancy either in basements or attics. **We encourage the continued assistance of the community as this issue is not nearly as tangible as many other quality of life issues that can be easily identified.** As a result of these complaints, illegal/unsafe occupancy was identified and dealt with accordingly at the following locations:

Hakim St. Ext – The complaint focused on an extraordinary high number of vehicles always in the driveway and parked on the street. The UNIT completed an inspection of this two-family home and exposed that the basement was being used as a third apartment. While this is a Zoning violation, it was even worse that the bedrooms were considered unsafe due to the small windows inside each room, preventing residents a second escape from fire. The unsafe nature of the bedrooms became grounds for immediate action and the residents were advised that effectively immediately, they can no longer sleep in those rooms. Additionally, the UNIT coordinated an inspection with a Zoning official and the property owner was served with a notice that the entire basement construction either be brought to code, or removed entirely.

Highland Ave – The UNIT received a complaint of several makeshift bedrooms in the basement of this single family home. The UNIT inspected the home and came across one

bedroom in the basement, which did not have any window in it. Of course, a window large enough for escape is a requirement for a bedroom. Additionally, the pitch of the stairway leading down to the basement was similar to one that you would find on a battleship, which is a completely unsafe stairway if the basement bedroom was even legal to begin with. There were also no working smoke detectors in the home and exposed wiring in the basement. Needless to say, the resident in the bedroom was required to vacate immediately, which he conveniently was able to move to an upper level room, and the UNIT also recommended that smoke detectors be installed and that the wiring issues be mitigated. Upon reinspection, the bedroom was vacated, wiring corrected and detectors installed. In this case, the complaint was a bit exaggerated; however, our inspection did reveal a major safety issue and while there, the UNIT pointed out other concerns (wiring, detectors) and followed up accordingly on the resolution of each item to ensure the safety of everyone.

**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.**

#### **Abandoned home:**

Many times, the UNIT will receive complaints on homes that are empty. Often times, the grass does not get cut and begins to look unsightly. Sometimes, these homes are vandalized and windows are smashed and broken into. Empty homes are often the result of foreclosures, but not all the time....

Coal Pit Hill Road – The UNIT received a complaint on a vacant home in this neighborhood that had essentially every window broken, including the front door and the rear basement door. It was unclear as to whether or not, vagrants were entering the dwelling. Not only was it an eyesore in the area, but nearby residents felt threatened, not to mention the major liability to the property owner. In this case, the structure was owned by a local resident and the UNIT required for the home to be secured right away. The property owner immediately boarded up all of the windows and doorways, thereby ensuring that unwelcome individuals can't get in. The owner had been planning to demolish and re-build the structure, but the economic times have slowed those plans. So for now, while an unattractive, boarded structure remains, at least the building is safer and nearby residents feel less threatened of undesirables in their neighborhood.

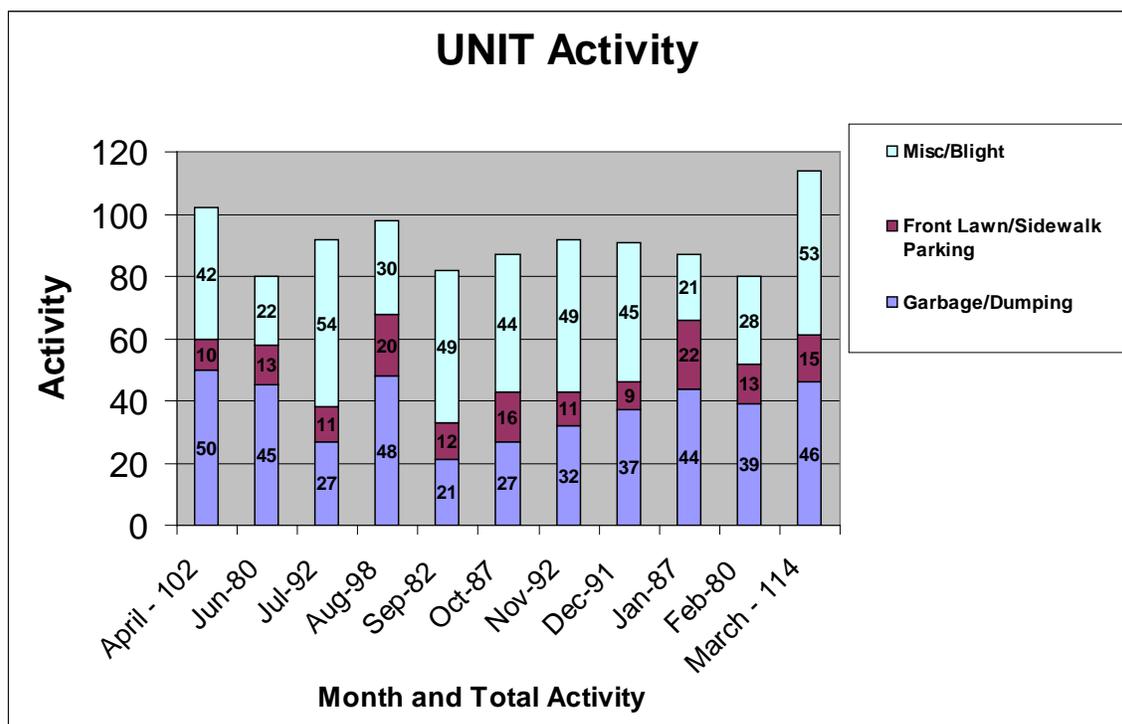
#### **Neighborhood Meeting: Chestnut Street Ext community**

Due to several complaints submitted by residents of the Chestnut Street Extension neighborhood, our department has coordinated a neighborhood meeting, hosted by Mayor Mark Boughton. Complaints have varied of speeding, noise, vandalism and lewd behavior.

**The public meeting will be held in Council Chambers, Monday April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30pm.**

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: March 2012**

The month of March saw the 311 Call Center receive more than 500 inquiries from residents as call volume began to steadily increase with the advent of spring and city-sponsored events. Requests for phone numbers totaled 212 for the month, while 39 calls were placed for information regarding Clean City Danbury Day, 33 calls were placed for information on where residents can dispose of household garbage, and 23 calls were placed for information on the Household Hazardous Waste Day. The spring yard debris pickup program also brought 26 calls while another 14 calls were placed by residents seeking information for the recycling truck. The months of April and May typically see an increase in call volume as more programs and services are announced as residents continue to utilize 311 as a trusted and reliable means of free information. In

order to meet this demand, the 311 Call Center remains in frequent communication with all other city departments to ensure that the message and information is consistent and dependable.

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