



CITY OF DANBURY OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE

Shawn Stillman
UNIT Coordinator
s.stillman@danury-ct.gov

203-796-8026

Livable Neighborhoods 2012
“Building a Better Danbury”

October 2012

October 31, 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	Sept. 24 – October 31, 2012
Number of Quality of Life Issues	100
Year to Date	943

The top issues addressed by the UNIT were:

- Properties with debris on it (39)
- Front Lawn Parking (20)
- Miscellaneous (16)
- Unregistered/abandoned cars (6)
- Illegal Apartments/Overcrowding, Un-permitted Construction (6)
- Abandoned/foreclosed and Blighted Properties (4)

The Office of Neighborhood Assistance welcomes back, “Founding Father” Richard Antous. Mr. Antous brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our department and his primary responsibility will be as the Downtown UNIT Coordinator, concentrating within the DRZ and working with residents and business owners. His efforts to improve issues downtown will be an asset to the City of Danbury. Additionally, he will also be available to assist the UNIT in other various areas as needed. I look forward to working with him.

Danbury Citizen's Academy:

On Monday, October 15th, I was fortunate to represent the Office of Neighborhood Assistance in a presentation to residents who are part of the Danbury Citizen's Academy. I was able to share how this office oversees CityLine 311 and the UNIT and what the responsibilities are for each. The participants seemed to enjoy the slideshow of pictures detailing some bizarre and unique stories during my last four years in working for the City of Danbury.

Ordinance 10-99 – 10-106 – Blighted Exterior Properties:

On Thursday, October 25th, a public hearing was held for review of the enhanced Blighted Exterior ordinance. This ordinance, if approved, will provide the UNIT with the ability to fine property owners up to \$100 a day for non-compliance of allowing their property to become blight in the neighborhood. My opinion is that residents look upon this ordinance favorably, as they would not want to have these types of properties in their neighborhood. For the most part, the UNIT is extremely successful with working with property owners, residents and banks to ensure properties are appropriately maintained. Naturally, the UNIT's goal is to seek compliance in order to maintain and improve the quality of life in town, not to issue fines. However, in the rare example where improved efforts fail, this ordinance will be valuable.

Monthly Highlights:

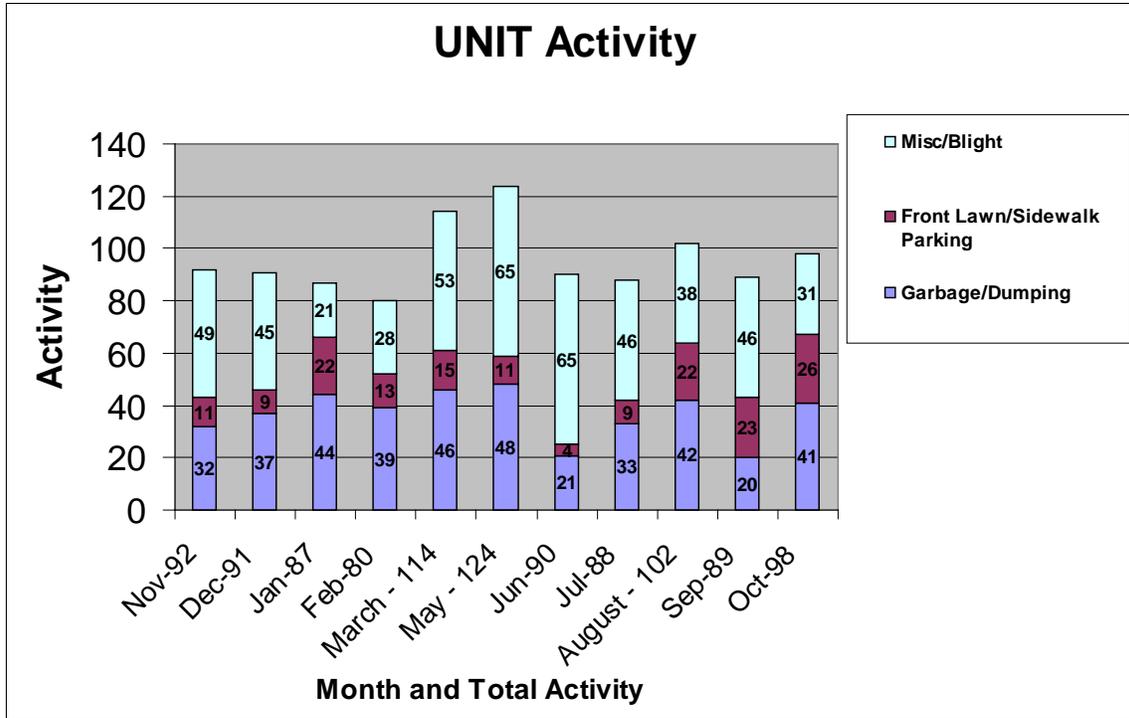
57 Deer Hill Ave: Every resident in and outside of the city knows about this house. It is a vacant, deteriorating structure void of power or water. The UNIT received a complaint of someone possibly living inside of it and when the UNIT met with the homeowner to inspect the interior, we came across two homeless people sleeping inside of it. The house had previously been boarded up and secured; however a piece of plywood had either been removed or come loose. While the property owner did not want to press charges for trespassing, the individuals were referred to the Welfare Dept and were warned to not come back, or they will be arrested. In the meantime, the property owner was advised that he must re-secure the home.

350 Main St: This property has come to the UNIT's attention as a vacant and blighted property. It is setback from the street and fortunately not visible to passing motorists, however, still remains a priority to our department. Windows have been broken, doorways have been knocked in and clearly, this location is an eyesore and conducive towards criminal behavior. The UNIT checked into the ownership status of the property and it had fallen into foreclosure, however, we did learn that the property is expected to change ownership very soon and with that, the owner will be required to complete minimum requirements to the property to make it clean and safe to the public. If the sale falls through, then the UNIT will work with the bank of record to improve the property.

Both of these properties are perfect examples where the improved Blighted Property ordinance 10-99 through 10-106 would provide the UNIT the effective enforcement to ensure that the exterior of these properties are improved and maintained.

70 Topstone Dr. The UNIT received a complaint on this property due to its poor condition and lack of maintenance outside and around the house. The grass was high, a vehicle with flat tires was parked in the front yard near the road and there was rubbish/litter scattered about the front yard. Upon initial inspection, the home appeared to be abandoned, possibly foreclosed. The UNIT left a tag behind and within a couple of days, someone had called back, promising to remedy the issues around the property. A couple of weeks later, myself and Officer Utter were in the neighborhood during the evening and a resident approached us to make a complaint about the same property. Upon our inspection, it was revealed that people were living there without any power. They were having personal family issues, as well as financial problems and did not pay the bill. In the meantime, the interior of the house is in poor condition as well. The next morning, I spoke with Denise at the Welfare Dept and currently she and the resident are working together to find an affordable place for her to live. I continue to stay in touch with the resident and she is hoping to move into a new home within the next week or so. Simultaneously, she coordinated for the exterior of the property to be cleaned up. The car and litter were removed and the grass has been cut.

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: October 2012

The month of October began with relative calm, but the 311 Call Center was suddenly thrown into the tempest of Hurricane Sandy which brought an additional 370 calls, in addition to the previous 520 – bringing the total number of calls to 890 for the month. While City Hall was closed for October 29 and 30, the 311 Call Center remained open to provide the residents of Danbury with the most up-to-date information available and to provide a direct line to report safety issues. The calls for Sandy were split between reports of road closures, downed trees and power lines, and power outages. Following Sandy, phone numbers were the most-calls with 204 placed, followed by 44 calls placed for information on the fall leaf pick-up program. Residents seeking information on where they can dispose of household garbage totaled 16 calls and information on the recycling truck brought another 12 inquiries. Residents seeking information on the coming Household Hazardous Waste Day placed 22 calls while 11 residents placed calls seeking information on the upcoming fall leaf pickup program. Call volume is expected to remain heavy until the cleanup from Sandy is completed and the 311 Call Center will continue to work with all other city departments to ensure that proper information is relayed on a consistent basis to meet the needs of 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, □ HYPERLINK "http://www.ci.danbury.ct.us" □ 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