



City of New Bedford
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

City Prepares to Enforce Problem Properties Ordinance Sends Notices to Nearly Two Dozen Property Owners

New Bedford, Massachusetts –In April of 2015, New Bedford enacted an ordinance proposed by Mayor Jon Mitchell designed to offset the heavy burden that certain residential properties impose on New Bedford police resources and to encourage absentee landlords to manage their properties responsibly.

Today, in an effort to give fair notice, the New Bedford Police Department sent notices to property owners who would have been assessed police response calls if they had been subject to the ordinance from March 2014 through March 2015.

The new ordinance allows the City to declare a residential property a “problem property” once there have been eight “valid complaints” concerning criminal activity linked with the property in the previous twelve month period. Once a property is declared a “problem property” the City has the authority to seek reimbursement for the cost of any future police responses to that property.

The notices were also sent to the presidents of the banks that hold the mortgages on those properties, so as to alert the banks to the risks the properties are causing in their neighborhoods. It is the City’s hope that the banks will become more closely involved with those properties and take steps to prevent future violations.

“As part of our ongoing efforts to provide ample notice to landlords so that they may take action to prevent their properties from being designated as problem properties, the New Bedford Police Department has conducted a review of police responses during the year prior to the enactment of the ordinance (March 2014 to March 2015). After reviewing the information, I have sent letters to the owners of nearly two dozen properties whose property was visited at least sixteen times by the New Bedford Police Department for valid complaints of criminal activity during that period,” said New Bedford Police Chief David Provencher.

“Though our Neighborhood Task Force has been successful in dealing with code violations across the city over the last few years, we still have work to do. There are a relatively small number of the properties in the city that account for a disproportionate amount of crime, in part because landlords fail in their duty to manage their properties. That’s why I pushed hard for the

passage of the Problem Property Ordinance, which will force those landlords to pay more attention to their properties,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

Although valid complaints in this period would not count toward the designation of a problem property, they may be a predictor of future criminal activity at the property.

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