

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK

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COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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Media Release

July 13, 2012

SHIRLEY “SOBER HOME” FOUND TO BE UNINHABITABLE

Tip to Browning Leads to Safety Violations & Removal of 27 Tenants



(Dennis Daugherty, Chief of Shirley Ambulance, Legislator Kate Browning and Councilwoman Connie Kepert standing outside of the condemned home.)

Shirley, NY – A notorious problem home in Shirley was shut down today after a joint inspection by Suffolk County’s Department of Social Services and Brookhaven Town found various health and safety violations that endangered the welfare of the residents. 502 William Floyd Parkway in Shirley has been a target for code violations for years. Legislator Kate Browning’s (WF-Shirley) efforts to regulate sober homes in Suffolk County originated from the problems emanating from this home. All tenants were required to vacate the building by 5PM today. Legislator Browning, Councilwoman Kepert, Councilman Panico, Chief Dennis Daugherty of Shirley Ambulance and community leaders gathered at the home today to announce the violations.

The manager of the home, Adrian Thomas, operates several homes in the area, all of which have negatively impacted the quality of life in the surrounding area. Legislator Browning has aggressively targeted these homes due to her concerns for the health and safety of the tenants residing there and the waste of taxpayer dollars going to unregulated homes. A tenant of 502 William Floyd Parkway contacted Legislator Browning after speaking with the

Chief of Shirley Ambulance Dennis Daugherty, with complaints of bed bugs, inadequate meals and unsafe conditions. A second tenant provided a written statement on Saturday, July 7 and an inspection was conducted on Monday, July 9.

“I have been targeting this rogue home for six years,” stated Legislator Browning. “The need for state regulation of sober homes has been a top priority of mine, and this home proves more than any other why it is needed. Suffolk County is doing its part to see good, safe homes be made available, but without New York State’s help these bad homes are going to persist.”

The first inspection led to the issuance of a 143-b, which is a state statute that allows the county to withhold payments to a landlord when health and safety violations exist. Unfortunately, due to a loophole in the state law, which Legislator Browning has lobbied Albany to remedy, the payments cannot be withheld when tenants receive room and board. A second inspection was conducted this morning and the home was shuttered due to the discovery of bed bugs, roaches, fleas, the absence of smoke detectors, over 33 beds and other violations. All tenants were ordered to leave by 5pm and the Department of Social Services is in the process of locating the residents to emergency housing.

“502 William Floyd Parkway has been an ongoing plague to the community and a source of enormous frustration to my office and our enforcement agencies,” stated Councilwoman Connie Kepert. “Since 2008, my office has been getting complaints regarding the home and I have repeatedly instructed our inspectors to issue violations on the home. I want to praise the Town's Housing and Building inspectors for acting on a tip that the house lacked the required smoke and CO detectors and was infested with bugs and rodents. This tip enabled the Town to acquire a warrant and to condemn and evacuate the house. The landlord will now have to come into compliance with all codes.”

“The condition of this home is deplorable,” stated Legislator Browning. “No one should have to live like this and our tax dollars should not be paying for it. State law needs to change so that the county has the ability to withhold payments, but I am relieved that the joint inspection was able to condemn the home.”

"This action comes as welcome news and I hope it sends a clear message to unscrupulous landlords that the game is over," stated Jeff Reynolds, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcohol and Drug Dependence. “These flophouses disguised as 'sober homes' ruin communities, cost taxpayers money and threaten the recovery of those who have struggled with addiction. Kudos to Legislator Browning for leading Suffolk's efforts against these landlords, and for ensuring that unsafe homes are shuttered."

There was also a parolee in the home, which Legislator Browning is very concerned about. A parole officer must visit the home of a parole and in this case they should have recognized the violations and reported it. The legislator will be forwarding this information to New York State Parole and state elected officials to investigate.

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