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KHALIF J. RAINEY
ALDERMAN, 7TH DISTRICT

City needs to do more with checking vacant city-owned properties

**Statement of Alderman Khalif J. Rainey
December 8, 2017**

No matter what neighborhood they are located in, vacant houses in the City of Milwaukee have the potential to be broken into and used for criminal purposes. Once compromised, these homes can pose a very real threat to the safety of the neighborhood and citizens living nearby.

City-owned vacant homes are among the properties targeted by those with criminal intent. Very recently, a 12-year-old girl was taken into one of these vacant city-owned homes – located in my 7th Aldermanic District – and was sexually assaulted.

Scattered across nearly every part of the City of Milwaukee, these vacant city-owned houses are being marketed for sale but are not routinely checked on by city staff in the Department of City Development (DCD). Additionally, it is questionable whether DCD is following up on or ensuring that building orders and basic repairs are being completed at these properties.

This needs to change, and soon.

I have proposed mandatory quarterly checks on vacant city-owned homes (DCD now only does one required check each year on these properties) to make sure they are not compromised or being used for criminal purposes. This would also help ensure that contractors are completing work in a timely matter at these homes.

I have also proposed leafletting of blocks where city-owned homes are located, so neighbors are aware and can keep an eye on them for any suspicious activity.

The city owes taxpayers the secure knowledge that the city is protecting its stock of city-owned properties. It also owes peace of mind to citizens living near these homes that it is doing its due diligence to make sure individuals aren't using them to commit crimes in the neighborhood.

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