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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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February 14, 2017

Ald. Bob Donovan  
(414) 531-2096

Ald. José G. Pérez  
(414) 286-2861

## **City sues to shut down properties linked to drugs, prostitution**

*Landlord allegedly knew widespread illegal activities were taking place*

The City of Milwaukee has filed a lawsuit seeking the closure and sale of 12 near south side rental properties that have been linked to widespread criminal activities, including drug sales and prostitution.

**Alderman Bob Donovan** and **Alderman José G. Pérez** – whose aldermanic districts are home to all 12 of the properties owned by defendant Kenneth D. Churchill III of West Allis – said the properties have been a source of numerous complaints about criminal activities for years.

“It is alleged that Mr. Churchill would take extra cash payments from tenants, to look the other way, if they were selling drugs (at a property),” Alderman Donovan said. “Furthermore, the lawsuit alleges that he (Churchill) may be actively involved in the drug activity at the properties.”

“Ruining neighborhoods was apparently all a part of Mr. Churchill’s ‘business plan’ in running his rental properties,” said Alderman Donovan, chair of the Public Safety Committee. “It is absolutely unconscionable.”

Alderman Pérez, a member of the Public Safety Committee, said the lawsuit was brought forward because of numerous constituent complaints about drug and prostitution activity occurring at the properties, as well as Milwaukee Police Department and Department of Neighborhood Services investigations.

“The lawsuit alleges that at least five, if not more, individuals have been linked to drug and prostitution activity at more than one of Mr. Churchill’s rental properties, and that the properties have received 11 drug house designations since 2011,” Alderman Pérez said.

-More-

## **Landlord lawsuit/ADD ONE**

Alderman Pérez and Alderman Donovan said complaints from neighbors played a large part in helping investigators looking into the allegations attributed to the properties owned by Mr. Churchill. They said the case is a prime example of citizens coming forward and then being taken seriously by police and by investigators, and clear evidence that neighbors and the community have the power to fight back – and take back – their block and their neighborhood.

The lawsuit, filed by **City Attorney Grant F. Langley** yesterday in Milwaukee County Circuit Court, alleges that Mr. Churchill’s mismanagement of the properties interferes substantially with the comfortable enjoyment of life, health and safety of others in the neighborhood and the City. The suit alleges Mr. Churchill’s mismanagement of the properties has also contributed to crime, fear and disorder in the neighborhood and the city, as well as negatively impacted the neighboring property values and impeded lawful business operations in the area.

Reporters looking for additional details about the lawsuit can contact Assistant City Attorney **Heather Hecimovich Hough** at [hhough@milwaukee.gov](mailto:hhough@milwaukee.gov) or **414-286-2601**.