

Brookhaven Wins Court Victory Against Stony Brook Landlord

posted on 4/25/2014 4:29:16 PM

April 25, 2014

Owner of 150 Christian Ave. Found Guilty on 15 Charges, Faces up to \$51,000 in Fines

Farmingville, NY - Brookhaven Town has secured convictions on 15 charges against the landlord of a house in Stony Brook which had housed over a dozen college students in violation of the Town Code. The absentee landlord faces up to \$51,000 in fines when he is sentenced on May 1.

"This is a victory for our residents, our Town Housing Code, and the people of the Stony Brook community," said Supervisor Ed Romaine. "This sends a clear message to problem landlords - if you create problem rental houses like this in the communities our families live in, we will come after you, and prosecute to the fullest extent of the law. If you and your tenants are not good neighbors, and do not follow our local laws, expect to find yourself in court."

Sixth District Court Judge David A. Morris found the owner of 150 Christian Avenue, North Shore Design, guilty on 15 convictions, 13 of which were misdemeanor building violations, including:

- Four counts of building and making alterations without a permit;
- Eight counts of illegal occupancy (converting common space into bedrooms);
- Two violations for creating conditions detrimental to health & safety; and
- One violation of not providing adequate sanitary facilities

"I commend the work of the Law Department, particularly Deputy Town Attorney David Moran, for their efforts towards bringing this home into compliance with the Town Code," commented Councilwoman Cartright. "I also thank the community, the investigators, and other Town employees who worked so hard to bring this case through trial. This verdict makes an unequivocal statement to landlords. The Town raises no objection to the lawful renting of your home. However, we have no tolerance for willful violators of our Code and will continue to vigorously enforce our Code and prosecute the violators. My office is diligently working on ways to strengthen our Code and Town policies in an effort to prevent this unlawful behavior. This is a quality of life issue and will not be ignored."

Brookhaven Town has cracked down on landlords who illegally convert single family homes in order to rent rooms for off-campus housing. As a result of the crackdown, over 120 homes are now the subject of Law Department investigations. Many of the landlords have already been issued appearance tickets for various Town Code violations, or have cases currently pending in District Court. In response to this growing problem, the Supervisor has also worked with the Law and Building Departments to craft new legislation aimed at increasing fines and penalties for those who violate the law and empower the Town to more aggressively enforce the law and attack quality of life issues town wide.

The new legislation that the Town Board approved last year addressing these problems include:

- Amendment to Section 85 that increases maximum fines by 150% for first time offenders, making a maximum fine amount for building code violations \$5,000 per offense up from \$2,000. For second time offenders, the maximum fine increases from \$3,000 to \$10,000.
- Amendment to Section 82 that increases the fines to correspond with Chapter 85 and provide the Town with more power to combat new issues related to illegal student rental housing.
- Amendment to Section 85 aimed at attacking the issue of landlords who pave their front yards to more resemble parking lots than driveways.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258