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THE COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
**JUSTIN BRANNAN**  
COUNCIL MEMBER  
43<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

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PARKS & RECREATION  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
VETERANS  
YOUTH SERVICES

April 1, 2019

Thomas Fariello  
Acting Commissioner  
NYC Buildings Department  
280 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

Ira Gluckman  
Borough Commissioner, Brooklyn  
NYC Buildings Department  
210 Joralemon Street, 8th Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Gentlemen,

We desperately need your attention and immediate action in southern Brooklyn.

For far too long, your agency has either paid lip service or turned a blind eye to illegal conversions in our district. Now, because of your inaction, the situation is spiraling out of control.

Thanks to the hard work of former Councilman Vincent Gentile, Local Law 94 of 2017, also known as the "Aggravated Illegal Conversions" Law, exists. But why have laws at all if they aren't enforced?

We have a list of 44 addresses – mostly in Dyker Heights – where we suspect illegal conversions are either in progress or currently exist. All of these locations have been shared with your agency but we are turning blue waiting for action.

Over the past 5-10 years, our district has seen a surge in illegally converted one and two-family homes. Often a building goes from 2-family to 6-family after unscrupulous investors illegally renovate a house. Our main concern with these illegal conversions is safety – for the vulnerable, low-income and often immigrant tenants renting illegal rooms in substandard and typically dangerous conditions, for their neighbors and for first responders in the event of a fire or other emergency.

We are tired of getting calls, e-mails and photos from residents who witness illegal work – or work far beyond the scope of the issued permits – being performed in front of their eyes with no action taken by the Buildings Department. Why is your agency the only one that seems to require multiple smoking guns before taking action? How long should we wait? Perhaps when a tragedy occurs and people die then your agency will find our district on a map?



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Your Department website talks about a “Quality of Life Unit” that conducts field inspections in response to illegal conversion complaints. This sounds great but we have never seen or heard from this unit. Not once. And we cannot remember the last time we heard about your agency inspecting a premises or issuing vacate orders for non-compliance.

What we do hear, however, is how your inspectors went out, knocked on the door of a suspected illegal conversion and nobody answered or they were refused entry and so the case was closed out. This is a common routine and it is completely unacceptable especially as your website boasts that “if there is No Access, an Access Warrant is obtained, and NYPD is contacted to assist the Department Inspector in the execution of the warrant.” Is that a joke? Because we do not believe this has ever happened in our lifetime.

Furthermore, we must allow Buildings inspectors to use visible evidence to issue fines and this is something we are working hard to fix legislatively. You don’t need an Access Warrant to spot an illegal conversion. If a 2-family house has 7 door bells, multiple gas/electric meters, 15 garbage cans outside and an air conditioner in every window, I think you can safely assume it is an illegal conversion where tenants are living in potentially hazardous conditions.

Below we will list the 44 addresses we have reported to your agency. These addresses have come from multiple complaints made by concerned and frustrated neighbors. We look forward to hearing back from you on what your plan of action is for each and every one of these locations.

Our constituents are fed up and so are we. Enough is enough. It is time for the NYC Buildings Department to open their eyes to the rampant illegal conversion epidemic in southern Brooklyn and to actually do something about it before someone dies.

Urgently,

Councilman Justin Brannan

Congressman Max Rose

Senator Andrew Gounardes

Assemblywoman Mathylde Frontus

1. 7008 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue
2. 7223 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue
3. 7021 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
4. 7023 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue
5. 8018 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue
6. 7301 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue
7. 1238 65<sup>th</sup> Street
8. 1157 69<sup>th</sup> Street
9. 8501 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
10. 1154 70<sup>th</sup> Street
11. 1226 70<sup>th</sup> Street
12. 1357 70<sup>th</sup> Street
13. 25 70<sup>th</sup> Street
14. 1071 71<sup>st</sup> Street
15. 1180 71<sup>st</sup> Street
16. 1241 71<sup>st</sup> Street
17. 860 71<sup>st</sup> Street
18. 862 71<sup>st</sup> Street
19. 884 71<sup>st</sup> Street
20. 1030 72<sup>nd</sup> Street
21. 1268 73<sup>rd</sup> Street
22. 1150 74<sup>th</sup> Street
23. 1232 74<sup>th</sup> Street
24. 1262 74<sup>th</sup> Street
25. 1038 77<sup>th</sup> Street
26. 1269 77<sup>th</sup> Street
27. 1316 77<sup>th</sup> Street
28. 1345 77<sup>th</sup> Street
29. 1150 78<sup>th</sup> Street
30. 465 78<sup>th</sup> Street
31. 1251 79<sup>th</sup> Street
32. 1271 79<sup>th</sup> Street
33. 1326 79<sup>th</sup> Street
34. 1329 79<sup>th</sup> Street
35. 1255 84<sup>th</sup> Street
36. 1023 Bay Ridge Avenue
37. 114 Bay Ridge Avenue
38. 1319 Bay Ridge Avenue
39. 1158 Bay Ridge Parkway
40. 1052 Bay Ridge Avenue
41. 1063 Bay Ridge Parkway
42. 1158 Bay Ridge Parkway
43. 1054 Ovington Avenue