



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Tony Avella

## Senator Avella and Flushing Residents Call on NYC to Address Neglected House

TONY AVELLA January 29, 2018

**Queens, NY** – Today, State Senator Tony Avella and Flushing residents stood in front of an abandoned property on 167<sup>th</sup> Street to call on the City of New York to finally do something about the house that has been neglected for decades. Neighbors say the eyesore has not been maintained for over 25 years.

The City of New York claims that the property does not meet the standards required for a demolition. Senator Avella and the neighbors, however, disagreed and demanded that the City reevaluate their standards and take action.

“A lot of these situations are abandoned properties for one reason or another but the fact that the owner of this property lives only a few blocks away and refuses—for years—to do something about it is absolutely disgraceful. I think the owner is going to find that my patience is wearing out very quickly on behalf of the neighbors of this block,” **said Senator Avella.**

“Everybody in this neighborhood pays some of the highest property taxes in the country. They want a safe neighborhood, they want to have city services, and they certainly don’t want to live next to an eyesore like this which, at any time, can be broken into and is certainly a fire hazard. In my opinion, the Department of Buildings has enough authority to

declare this an unsafe building and level it. At least then you'd have a vacant lot which can be fenced in instead of this eyesore," **added Senator Avella.**

"Not only is this an eyesore, it has become much more than that. It is a quality of life issue for this neighborhood. We see on a regular basis homeless people going in there doing drugs and obscene acts in daylight right here in the front yard, children going in the backyard smoking and drinking. This is an attractive nuisance that invites all these activities. They don't care what happens here. Something is going to happen and then these authorities who are not doing anything about it now before something serious happens will have questions to answer. We shouldn't have to live like this," **said Joseph Vitulli** whose family lives next door.

Despite a growing number of violations, the Department of Buildings (DOB) refused to declare the house unsafe and demolish it. DOB even claims that the house has passed its most recent inspection.

Following the announcement that neighbors planned to hold a press conference, DOB sent staff members out again who told neighbors that they would only demolish the back part of the house which had already collapsed.

Additionally, the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) informed the Senator that they planned on performing another inspection soon.