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Contact: Soojin Choi | 347-556-6335 | press@johnliusenate.com

AFTER SHOOTING, COMMUNITY RALLIES AGAINST ILLEGAL AIRBNB

Bayside, NY – After a shooting outside a Bayside house on Saturday, March 19th that left one person injured and sent stray bullets into the surrounding community, piercing cars and a nearby child’s car seat, residents, community leaders and elected officials rallied to call on Airbnb to permanently ban listings at this address, and for the city to issue a vacate order on the home.

For the last two years, the property, located at 208-16 38th Avenue, Bayside, has been in the early stages of foreclosure and occupied by squatters who have illegally rented it out through Airbnb. Residents report that the illegal rentals have given rise to a constant barrage of late-night parties causing excessive noise, litter, as well as harassment and confrontations with area residents. Concerns culminated this past weekend when a party-goer was shot in the torso. The victim is in stable condition, but no arrests have been made. As the investigation continues, the community is calling for the city to finally put an end to the neighborhood nightmare. Elected officials wrote letters to the Department of Buildings calling for a vacate order, and to Airbnb calling for the company to permanently ban listings at this address.

NYS Senator John Liu said, “We are calling on the city to stop giving our community the run around and issue a vacate order on this property before anyone else gets hurt. We also call on Airbnb to stop illegally allowing this property to be listed on their website. Two years is too long for our community to have one home hold an entire block hostage. These are not just simple quality of life issues, but serious public safety hazards that need to be addressed immediately.”

Community leaders called on the city to redouble its efforts so it can gain access and properly inspect the home.

Liu said, “There are several problems at this location that are preventing a satisfying resolution for our community. From Airbnb allowing its illegal rental to the squatters taking advantage of the situation. At the end of the day, the city needs to be the one to step up and recognize the dangers here as reason enough to vacate the premises and keep our community safe.”

U.S. Rep. Grace Meng said, “This recent shooting in Bayside has shaken our community and has made me deeply concerned about public safety in the area. Airbnb needs to immediately step up and permanently stop this vacant property from being listed on its website. Allowing it to continuously be posted is unacceptable. Neighborhood residents must not have their safety put at risk and their quality of life disrupted. This problem must be addressed at once, and my colleagues and I stand shoulder to shoulder with the community as we push Airbnb for answers.”

Assemblyman Edward Braunstein said, “The pattern of disregard and disrespect shown by the individuals squatting at the single-family residence on 38th Avenue escalated to violence last week when illegal Airbnb guests brazenly opened fire on the surrounding streets, putting neighbors in danger and their nerves on edge. For the last two years, an absentee property owner has emboldened these squatters to not only illegally list this property on Airbnb, but openly advertise rooms for rent within the single-family home. Enough is enough. Several times in the past, my office has worked with residents to get Airbnb listings at the property shut down,

only for it to appear again under another account. While authorities continue their investigation to apprehend the individuals responsible for the shooting, Airbnb must permanently ban listings at this location. As we plan next courses of action, I will continue close collaboration with fellow elected officials, the Mayor's Office, the 111th Precinct, City agencies and local residents. We must use every tool at our disposal to address this serious matter once and for all."

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager of Community Board 11, said, "For five years, this problematic property has plagued our neighbors, first as a zombie home, then as an alleged squatter's den, and now as an illegal Airbnb with a shooting spilling over into the streets. We are urging Mayor Adams' administration to issue a vacate order to restore peace to our community."

Roseann Foley Henry, President of the Bellcourt Civic Association, said, "What makes Bellcourt so special is the powerful sense of community here. We are appalled by this incident and will do everything in our power to root out the bad actors and restore our quiet streets to the safe, welcoming neighborhood that we know and love."

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