



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bell proposes Task Force to prosecute “deadbeat owners” of neglected neighborhood properties

Mike Bell today announced five low cost but high impact initiatives that he will implement as Mayor to help stabilize Toledo’s neighborhoods and protect home values.

“I believe Toledo can restore vitality to its neighborhoods by focusing on practical, workable solutions and enforcing a commitment that the City will deliver services taxpayers deserve and pay for,” Mr. Bell said.

The centerpiece of the Bell strategy is the formation of a multi-department City Task Force that will enforce accountability by owners to keep up their properties. It will be comprised of City Prosecutors and staff from the Law, Police, Fire, Utility and Neighborhoods departments. They will force compliance and prosecute when necessary “deadbeat owners” of neglected properties. The Task Force will concentrate on absentee owners, but will also include properties in foreclosure by banks and mortgage companies.

Since the Task Force will re-assign employees from existing departments, it will add no additional cost to the City budget.

When elected, Mr. Bell will also:

- Promote and streamline the existing city Land Bank to make it easier for neighbors or community organizations to improve eyesore properties.
- Re-assign an employee of the Utilities Department to serve as the City’s “Street Light Watchdog” to force replacement or repair of street and alley lighting by Toledo Edison. Citizens are assessed for this lighting, but it is often not working properly in some neighborhoods.

- Make sure that alley maintenance is a high priority in the – Department – to clean up grass, trees and refuse; remove abandoned vehicles and appliances; and report broken lights.
- Re-direct police resources to targeted enforcement in neighborhoods, and one again fully staff and fund the Block Watch program.

“One of Toledo’s great strengths has always been the diversity and character of its neighborhoods,” Mr. Bell said. “I am making a commitment to Toledo residents that stabilizing neighborhoods will be a top priority of the Bell Administration.

The press conference was held at the corner of Greenwood and St. Louis on the east side of Toledo – the site of a house scheduled for demolition and a property that served as an example of the neighborhood improvement proposals Mr. Bell is advocating.

Toledo’s former fire chief and former State Fire Marshal, Mr. Bell is running for Mayor as an Independent. He grew up in North Toledo and his parents still live there. One of the main reasons he returned from his job in Columbus to enter the Mayor’s race was to help turn around Toledo’s once proud neighborhoods.

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