

LAW DEPARTMENT 2009

In 2009 the office handled over 900 cases in City Court relating to various violations of the City Code ranging from fire and building code violations to violations of the vicious dog ordinance. The office has prosecuted over 20,000 Vehicle and Traffic Law offenses. The prosecution of tickets issued by the New York State Troopers and City Police Officers were efficiently handled with an extremely high conviction rate.

The office continued to oversee the Vacant Building Court initiative; handling cases the third Wednesday of each month. The program brings together City Departments such as Neighborhood Revitalization, Albany Community Development, Planning and Buildings. It also encourages private groups who have a stake in vacant buildings to be involved, such as Historic Albany and Habitat for Humanity. The collective efforts of these groups are brought to the property owner to assist in planning and financing. The focus is to return vacant properties to beneficial use. In 2009 approximately 600 properties were brought to court. These actions were commenced to ensure registration or compliance with the Vacant Building Maintenance Standard.

New Scotland Avenue and Park South are undergoing a renaissance. The Knox Street apartments have been built, and due to our action in Vacant Building Court, a property was transferred to a new owner who has since stabilized it and is now in the process of rehabbing it. There are several Housing Authority projects taking place, which the office has helped to implement.

The office has worked on several Public/Private partnerships to enhance city property and reduce costs. The Law Department headed a municipal cooperation agreement with several other municipalities and groups to reduce the costs of prescription drugs. Thus far Albany, Cohoes, Rensselaer County and Hudson Valley Community College participate. The State of New York awarded the city a grant to repay us for certain costs associated with this program.

The City completed the lease to the College of St. Rose to allow for the development of a section of Hoffman Park for state of the art athletic fields. This shared use facility is being built by St. Rose for an anticipated cost over 4 million dollars and will improve the access and use of the baseball/softball and soccer fields for Albany residents. This will also improve the ascetics of this entire area, as a welcoming gateway to the city from the south. The project will be available for use in spring 2010.

The office has worked with and on behalf of, the Citizens' Police Review Board to help ensure public confidence in our Police force. We assisted the CPRB and Government Law Center to re-develop and employ a mediation program to resolve issues amicably between complainants and Police Officers. We anticipate use of the mediation program in 2010. We have assisted in the development in a public survey on the CPRB and Albany Police.

The Office is also involved in negotiating all the labor contracts within the City of Albany. There are a total of 10 bargaining units within the City of Albany. All Unions have current collective bargaining agreements (CBAs), which are expiring on December 31, 2009. All Unions, have begun negotiations for a successor agreement. Council 82-Patrol Unit's CBA was successfully negotiated and an agreement for 2008 and 2009 was passed by the Common Council and approved by the Mayor.

This Office has been involved in facilitating several other projects, such as the Neighborhood Community Center at 340 First Street (CYO) and the COPS grant. The City of Albany is now permitted to use the gymnasium and office space at the CYO, and the City has begun to provide quality athletic and educational programming. The City of Albany was awarded over \$4 million dollars in conjunction with the COPS grant. The project enables approximately 22 law enforcement agencies from three counties to have real time access to a common dispatch (CAD) and records management system (RMS) hosted by the Albany Police Department as a means to provide regional sharing of data.