



GRAND TRAVERSE



SHERIFF'S OFFICE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2022

CONTACTS

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**BLIGHT ENFORCEMENT IN EAST BAY TOWNSHIP UNCOVERS ANIMAL NEGLECT**

**PRESS RELEASE - UPDATED INFORMATION**

**Original Release Friday, January 28, 2022 (attached)**

On Friday, January 28, 2022, a multi-agency coordinated effort was conducted to clean up blight in violation of Junk Ordinance No. 2005-4 on a Supply Road property in East Bay Township. This effort followed a Grand Traverse County 86th District Court Order, File No. 20-G218096-ON-1, allowing the clean up to be done by the township, or its authorized agents, if the property owner did not comply with the ordinance. The coordinating agencies included East Bay Township and the following Grand Traverse County entities: the Sheriff's Office, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, and the Health Department, which involved Animal Control, Environmental Health, and Construction Code.

While this effort focused on blight, it uncovered animals in unsafe conditions resulting in a mass removal of canines, leaving 163 dogs to be assessed, treated, and cared for by Grand Traverse County Animal Control with the assistance of Cherryland Humane Society staff and volunteers. The operational planning for blight removal prepared for a wide variety of scenarios based on the previous interactions of the property owner with the agencies involved. Extensive planning to this extent across the multiple agencies requires persistence and adherence to due process which balances personal property rights and the community's health, safety, and welfare. Regardless of the extensive preparation, a rescue effort of this level was not predicted nor could have been anticipated by any agency. Individuals involved in this effort, and their agencies, wish to extend heartfelt appreciation to supporting organizations and the community. With Grand Traverse County Animal Control calling upon fellow departments, Animal Control Departments from Clare, Charlevoix, Kalkaska, Otsego, Roscommon, and Wexford Counties, along with the Humane Societies of Cherryland and Little Traverse Bay, responded with logistical support, care, and resources. Cherryland Humane Society and Grand Traverse Animal Control are experiencing a wave of support for these animals from the community and region, with donations exceeding \$20,000 in funds through its Facebook page and generous supplies pouring in.

As this is an ongoing investigation, it is unknown how long the dogs will be in the care of local agencies. In anticipation of possible lengthy care, continuing donations and supplies are appreciated. Regionally, Kalkaska County Animal Control and Huntington Bank in Charlevoix are graciously accepting donations for the specific care of these animals. Supplies donated may be dropped off to Cherryland Humane Society (1750 Ahlberg Road), Grand Traverse Animal Control (2650 LaFranier Road), and East Bay Township Hall (1965 N Three Mile Road).

The status of the operation is also ongoing as East Bay Township continues the blight cleanup with its contractors, Grand Traverse County Environmental Health and Construction Code evaluates the safety and integrity of the building structure, and Grand Traverse Animal Control continues to facilitate the care of dogs while investigating the cause of death of any deceased canines found. Grand Traverse County Prosecuting Attorney's Office is working with the Grand Traverse Sheriff's Office in case investigation and appropriate further action may be taken based upon evidence obtained.

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January 28, 2022

### **BLIGHT ENFORCEMENT IN EAST BAY TOWNSHIP UNCOVERS ANIMAL NEGLECT**

The 86th District Court for the County of Grand Traverse issued a court order holding a property owner in civil contempt, assessing fines, and directing the property owner to clean up all blight in violation of the East Bay Township Junk Ordinance.

The Court Order, File No. 20-G218096-ON-1, further states that if "all junk....is not removed from the property to the satisfaction of the Grand Traverse County Sheriff and/or the Sheriff's Deputy Enforcement Officer(s) assigned to East Bay Charter Township for Ordinance No. 2005-4, then East Bay Township shall have the right to enter upon Defendant's property by and through its employees, agents, contractors and/or servants to clean up the property so it complies with Ordinance No. 2005-4..."

As the owner has not addressed the issues outlined in the Court Order within the time established by the Court and is in violation of the Ordinance, on Friday, January 28, 2022, in an operation to bring the property into compliance, East Bay Township, its contractor and Community Police Officer, with support from Grand Traverse County Health Department's Animal Control, and the Grand Traverse Sheriff's Office, entered the site and took measures to clean up the property as allowed.

Upon arriving at the property, located on Supply Road in East Bay Township, while removing unlicensed and unregistered vehicles contributing to the blight, approximately 20 canines were discovered in the elements without proper food and water, with initially one deceased canine found. Upon entering the home with consent of a resident, approximately 100 canines were found inside the roughly 1150 sq ft home. Appropriate veterinarians are onsite.

Please refer to East Bay Township Ordinance No. 2005-4, known as the Junk Ordinance, which is attached and can be found at [eastbaytwp.org](http://eastbaytwp.org). For further comment, please contact the above contacts. The following staff were instrumental in conducting this operation: East Bay Township Zoning Administrator Preston Taylor ([ptaylor@eastbaytwp.org](mailto:ptaylor@eastbaytwp.org) 231.947.3631, ext.3) and Animal Control Supervisor Jaime Croel.

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