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DORCHESTER, ROXBURY

City shuts Roxbury smoke shop that sold alleged crack pipes, drug paraphernalia

Posted by Matt Rocheleau September 28, 2012 02:05 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

City officials shut down a newly-opened smoke shop in Roxbury for building and health code violations and cited the business for illegally displaying and selling alleged crack pipes and other drug paraphernalia, which were confiscated by Boston Police.

The “Daily Routine – One Stop Shop” shop at 163 Blue Hill Ave. near the neighborhood’s border with Dorchester was closed Wednesday night, officials said.

The Mayor’s Neighborhood Response Team visited after receiving complaints from neighbors, said Darryl Smith, an assistant commissioner for the city’s Inspectional Services Department.

The city issued a violation for selling food products without a permit, after inspectors discovered the shop was selling what appeared to be standard Pringles cans, Chips Ahoy packages and Coca-Cola and Pepsi soda bottles, he

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Pringles cans, Chips Ahoy packages and Coca-Cola and Pepsi soda bottles, he said.

The packaging was partially filled with some of the food and drink products on the labels, but the containers also featured hidden, empty compartments on the bottom, according to Smith

“We thought they were really buying soda or Pringles and in reality, it was just a stash can,” he said.

The Boston Public Health Commission also issued a \$200 citation for illegally displaying alleged crack pipes and other restricted paraphernalia and another \$200 citation for illegally selling those products, Smith said. Boston Police wrote a citation for the store’s manager to appear in court.

“You could buy what amounted to be brown paper bag with a Brillo pad and a crack pipe ready to smoke crack out of,” Smith said. “People were just flowing in and out of the place and now we understand why.”

The store’s ground level was vacant. Inspectors believe the first floor was

The city also ordered a vendor to remove a payphone that had been installed with a permit on a city sidewalk just outside the shop. Inspectors had learned the payphone was being used to covertly exchange drugs, Smith said. Dealers would stash drugs in the payphone, often utilizing the coin slot. Customers would later collect the drugs.

He said inspectors believe the smoke shop had only been open for several weeks.

“A store like this, it drops right in under the radar,” he said. “It’s the type of



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Police said the store is in an area that has long had a reputation for prostitution.

"The area is struggling to kind of get back on the rebound because for the past 30 years this area has had its problems with prostitutes, with drug activity, with a whole host of problems," Smith added.

Last fall, Boston Police seized alleged drug paraphernalia and other items from 14 stores in that area, following complaints that they were selling, "crack pipe kits." The kits contained a glass tube and a cut piece of copper scrubber placed in a paper bag.

During "Operation Straight Shooter" carried out by police with help from the Neighborhood Response Team, Smith said some 2,200 alleged crack pipes were confiscated from the shops primarily located along Blue Hill Avenue and Dudley Street.

Smith said inspectors plan to soon move to other streets in the city with similar activity.

"This is a huge problem," he said, referring to how some stores sell allegedly disguised drug pipes and paraphernalia. "It's very clever in how they do some of them. Some crack pipes are just clear pens. You stick the bowl in and smoke crack. You wouldn't even believe it."

On Wednesday night, inspectors also had a utility company cut power to the building at 169 Blue Hill Ave. after electrical violations were found, he said.

When a bed was found in one area of the shop, another citation was issued for the property not being permitted for living space.

And, the city issued a \$50 fine for illegally displaying a sign on city property, the sidewalk, without a permit. That sign identified the business as a smoke shop, Smith said.

The health and police violations and citations were written to the store's manager, Smith said. The building code violations were written to the

owner, said Boston's chief of police, William

property's owner, Boston resident Rebecca Wolfe.

Smith said the business will be allowed to reopen if and when the violations are remedied and pass inspection from city officials, including that the store would not be able to display or sell drug paraphernalia.

A public hearing would be held before the city would consider allowing the shop to reopen, he said.

~~The landlord and business manager could not be reached for comment Friday.~~

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