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Corner Store Crimeby Jennifer Jefcoat

It's between Indianola and Warren Avenues; a familiar stretch to Youngstown police. At a meeting Wednesday night, members of the Idora Neighborhood Block Watch pleaded with city officials for help. Part of the problems they claim, are five corner stores, whose owners have little regard for the neighborhood.

Residents on Youngstown's south side are tired of all the crime happening on a stretch of Glenwood Avenue, from the Park and Shop to Party Pantry corner store and they're coming together with city officials to do something about it. Jim London believes that his neighborhood watch group is a testament of what a group of ordinary citizens can do to help combat crime and clean up their area.

He started the Idora Neighborhood Block Watch back in November and today there are one hundred and eighty-eight homeowners all working to take their neighborhood back one block at a time.

"We ourself are not going to let a bunch of people come into our community and just drain us. Drain the economics out of the community and not put nothing back in."--James London Block Watch Captain

On their agenda: five corner stores along a corridor on Glenwood Avenue that London says are draining their neighborhood, with unsightly storefronts and criminal activity.

"There's a lot of people who are scared to go to the convenience stores here. The drive thrus and I really can't blame them and so we end up going to Boardman and Canfield supporting their stores and they lose the money"--James London, Block Watch Captain.

Along this stretch of road on Glenwood Avenue right here from the Park n Shop, down about 7/10ths of a mile to the Party Pantry police have been called out to this area some one hundred times over the past four years for everything from simple assault to murder and residents here say enough is enough

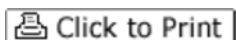
"Some of those corner stores I wouldn't even go into. I wouldn't even step into because some of them are so bad"--Betty Garhammer, Youngstown Resident.

"The outside of the buildings need to be cleaned up and we'll work with them because you can't put a man out of business I mean they need to eat like we do but we need to clean them up"--Cindy Jackson, Youngstown Resident.

Block watch members would like city officials to look at everything from the condition of the structures and parking lots to the possible sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors. City officials have agreed to conduct the inspections over the next month and will report their findings to the Idora Neighborhood Block Watch at their September meeting.

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