

Dear Councilors and Clerk, City of Newburyport;

My name is Peter Caesar. I have lived with my wife Marge Kaczala at 109 State St. since June 1986, making us the longest established direct abutter to the Global Oil Property. Maintenance problems started before the station closed in 2018. The station was stripped of all its pumps, lighting and other hardware, and the landscaping went from seldom to never, being performed by myself and other neighbors at times. During the past two summers, the city sent crews periodically to cut the grass and weeds; the owners continued to leave the site abandoned and unmaintained. As abutters who viewed the old Mobil sign as an example of Pop Art, we'd enjoyed cordial relations with four different operators of the station over the years, and established a sidewalk perennial garden next to the property with their permission. However, we now find that its deterioration invites unwelcome intrusions, with trash and used hypodermic needles left behind, late night parking with headlights shining into our living room, and the danger of vehicles passing through the station to avoid the traffic light. The failure to clear snow and ice in winter creates a hazard for pedestrians trying to clear the busy intersection. A prominent danger to our property are the decrepit spruce trees, which are all infected with Cytospora fungus. It has denuded their branches and weakened the roots. I emphasize this poses not only potential, but actual danger and damage. Last fall, I completed painting my house, and replaced the garage roof. Like the rest of my neighbors, we all conscientiously try to keep things up, though Global evidently believes they are exempt. On February 1st of this year, one of the weakened spruces broke under the strain of the season's first northeaster, and crashed on the new garage roof, which was a total loss. The other spruces lean precariously toward our house, and threaten pedestrians and the powerlines on State St. Three times in the past two months, I've been told by Global representatives they are being removed, but there has been no action to date. I implore the city council to confirm the public nuisance that has existed for these many years, and begin the process of residential development. Newburyport needs housing, not blight, and this willful and defiant neglect must be stopped. Thank you for your attention, Peter Caesar