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Letter to the Editor
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Liquor store failed to secure safety

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In Peter Hermann's Baltimore Crime Beat column "Shopowner's lawsuit may test the city's padlock law" (Sept. 12), Chang K. Yim, the owner of Linden Bar and Liquors, portrays himself as a victim because his store was ordered padlocked as a result of the persistent problem of drug dealing and violence in and around the store.

Any action that damages someone's livelihood has to be taken very seriously, and must be undertaken only as a last resort to end a problem that is hurting many others.

But I believe that most people in the community of Reservoir Hill and surrounding neighborhoods wish Mr. Yim had done more to work with police and the community to resolve the drug dealing and related crime that have plagued the corner of Linden and North avenues for years.

The Reservoir Hill Improvement Council met with Mr. Yim in its offices earlier this year to try to craft some steps Linden Liquors could take to combat the problem. Unfortunately, Mr. Yim did not take the kinds of decisive actions that would have indicated he was making serious efforts to be part of a solution.

In the end, residents should not have to walk through a gantlet of dealers to reach the few shops within walking distance, or be forced to turn back because they are too afraid to walk in that area. And children should not have to go to school within sight of such activity.

Finally, residents took steps to ensure everyone's safety.

Communities that have seen significant divestment do need stores within walking distance of residents, many of whom do not own cars and thus lack easy access to other shopping options.

However, our communities need stores that provide healthy options for residents, and stores that will be good partners in forging and maintaining healthy, vibrant and safe communities.