



RGB Rejects Rent Freeze; Proposes 2%-7% Increases

By Bennett Baumer

What turns senior citizens into irate hecklers and brings armies of homeless folks out from shelters? A Rent Guidelines Board vote to raise rents, of course. Tenants and homeless advocates maintained the tradition of theatrical RGB meetings at May 3's preliminary vote on the rent increases for 2005-06. A rowdy crowd of about 200 people held signs and shouted slogans as the board passed chairman Marvin Markus's proposed range of rent increases of between 2 and 4.5 percent for a one-year lease renewal and from 4 to 7 percent for two years.

The vote was 5 to 4, with the board's Bloomberg-picked public members all supporting the preliminary guidelines and both the landlord and tenant representatives voting no. The RGB will set the final guidelines on June 21, at Cooper Union. They will affect tenants in the city's million rent-stabilized apartments who renew their leases in the year beginning Oct. 1.

Markus plowed through a blizzard of obscenities and chants of "rent freeze now" with rapid monotone legalese. He only stopped to bang his gavel and reprimand the most surly of protestors, including a middle-aged man with a stringy Afro clad in a fine suit who urged tenants to storm the stage where the board held court. When the man failed to start a march in one aisle, he raced over to another, lurching into rows of indignant tenants to rouse them into militant action. One person was arrested and charged with disorderly conduct after he refused to sit down.

After Markus spoke, RGB landlord representative Harold Lubell pleaded his case that landlords' expenses were rising and they need hefty rent increases. "Let's try to listen to some of those facts, it's for your benefit and the board's benefit," said Lubell. "We're not a welfare agency!"

"Don't speak to us like we're animals!" Lisa Burriss



Tenants and homeless folks refuse to sit during a heated RGB meeting.

shouted back.

Some tenants brought their children. In the midst of the racket, a young child crawled into the aisle pursuing an errant matchbox car. His mother scooped him up and sat him in her lap as an older man a couple rows down belted to the board, "Show us your tax returns, you goddamn crooks."

As the shouting reached a crescendo, both Lubell and Marcus approached tenant representative Adriene Holder and emphatically poked their fingers at her in an apparent plea for her to control her constituency. Lubell's proposal, for increases of 6 and 9 percent and a revival of the "poor tax" surcharge on low-rent apartments,

was voted down 7-2.

The two tenant representatives, Holder and David Pagan, proposed a two-year rent freeze and jeers turned to cheers. "This year, it needs to be about tenants and affordability. Enough is enough," said Holder, noting that one-third of New

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Rent Deregulation Without Representation Is Tyranny

By Steven Wishnia and Kenny Schaeffer

In 1977, when baseball players were first allowed to become free agents, the top signing of the year's crop was Yankees outfielder Reggie Jackson. Jackson, who became the highest-paid player on the Yankees, decided to live in the city, and moved into a luxury two-bedroom apartment at 80th Street and Fifth Avenue.

His rent? \$1,466 a month.

Jackson was making more than \$400,000 a year, so he could afford it. But today, that \$1,466 is a typical rent for a one-bedroom apartment in a middle-class neighborhood. If tenants' incomes had gone up at a comparable pace, the minimum wage would now be around \$23 an hour. And landlords aren't satis-

fied with collecting four-figure sums: At Phipps Plaza West in Manhattan, tenants complain that their landlord is using a buyout from the Mitchell-Lama program to raise their rents from \$1,250 to over \$4,000.

One of the biggest reasons for this is that city voters have no power to control their own destiny. The state Urstadt Law, enacted as part of Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's disastrous vacancy-decontrol program in 1971, makes it illegal for the city to enact rent regulations stricter than the state's.

The result is that the fate of rent controls is in the hands of the state Legislature. This is profoundly undemocratic. Landlords can give money to the

upstate and suburban Republicans who control the state Senate, but city residents can't vote against them.

We saw this in 1997, when the Legislature gutted rent stabilization. Two months before the laws were to expire, Democrats in the state Senate tried to get the laws renewed intact. The city's delegation supported the measure by a margin of 21-3—but it lost by 33-27. Not one Republican from outside the city voted to protect tenants.

State Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno, the most prominent foe of rent controls, represents the small cities and rural areas east of Albany. New York City residents can't vote against him. Former

Senate housing committee chair Vincent Leibell, who boasts of his "historic guiding role" in "reforming" the state's rent regulations in 1997, represents a district centered on Putnam County. New York City residents

can't vote against him. Current housing committee chair John J. Bonacic represents the Catskill Mountains area, from New Paltz to Delhi. New York City residents can't vote

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Walter Thabit, City Planner, Dies at 83

Walter Thabit, a pioneering city planner and a leader in the efforts to stop Robert Moses demolishing a huge chunk of the Lower East Side, died March 15 at the age of 83.

Thabit was a cofounder of the Cooper Square Committee, the Lower East Side community group organized in 1959 to fight Moses' plan to bulldoze 11 blocks of the neighborhood, displacing 3,000 people. In 1964, he helped form Planners for Equal Opportunity, a national planning organization he headed for eight years. Later, he worked for the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. Hired after the 1960s riots to develop a plan for affordable housing in the East New York section of Brooklyn, Thabit used his experiences to write a book, *How East New York Became A Ghetto*, published in 2003. The book described East New York's

transformation from a working-class immigrant neighborhood to a largely black and Puerto Rican neighborhood, and showed how the resulting racially biased policies caused its deterioration.

"Thabit was New York's anti-Moses," wrote Hunter College urban-planning professor Tom Angotti in the *Gotham Gazette*. "He was one of the first in a generation of 'advocacy planners' who worked with community groups fighting official plans that threatened to bulldoze low-income neighborhoods." In contrast with the likes of Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff, lauded for their Moseseque "visions of urban grandeur," Angotti added, Thabit and his colleagues remained lesser-known "because they are immersed in the inglorious, behind-the-scenes tasks that don't wind up as splashy real-estate deals."

Happy Birthday Gloria!



On April 30, community activists, potters, neighbors, dignitaries and family members gathered at Casa Cupcake on Ninth Avenue to cut into five rose-adorned sweet sixteen cakes to celebrate the birthday (guess which one) of Gloria Sukenick. The noisy crowd was celebrating Gloria and her commitment to social justice. The guests, ranging in age from 10 to 90, toasted her for her work with Afford Chelsea, a coalition working to get the rezoning of West Chelsea to reflect the community's need for affordable housing, her work advocating for and advising tenants for decades with Met Council, and her artistic endeavors with the Penn South pottery studio.

The previous month saw the celebration of another and somewhat younger (by about 50 years) Met Council board member, Jackie DelValle. Donations collected at both parties were donated to Met Council. Happy Birthday Gloria and Jackie!

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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

RGB rechaza congelamiento de rentas; propone aumentos de 2 a 7 por ciento

Por Bennett Baumer
Traducido por Lightning Translations

¿Qué convierte a las personas de mayor edad en furibundos altercados y hace salir de los albergues a todo un ejército de gente sin techo? Una votación para aumentar la renta de la Junta de Regulación de Rentas (RGB), por supuesto. Los inquilinos y los partidarios de los sin techo continuaron con la tradición de reuniones histriónicas de la RGB en el voto preliminar sobre los incrementos de renta para el año 2005-06. Una ruidosa multitud de más o menos 200 personas sostuvieron pancartas y gritaron consignas al aprobar la junta la

escala de aumentos propuesta por su presidente, Marvin Markus, de 2 a 4.5 por ciento por una renovación de contrato de un año y de 4 a 7 por ciento por dos años.

El voto fue 5 a 4, con todos los miembros públicos de la junta nombrados por Bloomberg apoyando las pautas preliminares y tanto los representantes de los caseros como los de los inquilinos votando en contra. La RGB establecerá las pautas finales el 21 de junio en Cooper Union. Estas van a afectar a los inquilinos del millón de apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad que re-

nuevan sus contratos en el año que comienza el 1 de octubre.

Markus se hizo escuchar con dificultad en medio de una lluvia de obscenidades y coros de "congelación de rentas ahora" al leer jerga legalista rápida y monótonamente. Sólo se detuvo para golpear con su mazo y regañar a los manifestantes más hoscos, incluido un hombre de mediana edad con el pelo estilo afro atenuado vestido de traje magnífico que instó a los inquilinos a asaltar la plataforma donde la junta hizo sus deliberaciones. Al no poder iniciar una marcha en una de los pasillos,

corrió al otro, tambaleando entre inquilinos indignados para provocarles a una acción combativa. Una persona fue detenida y acusada de desorden público al rehusar a sentarse.

Después de que habló Markus, el representante de los caseros Harold Lubell argumentó que los gastos de los caseros están aumentando y que por eso necesitan grandes incrementos de renta. "Tratemos de escuchar algunos de esos datos, es por su beneficio y el de la junta," dijo Lubell. "No somos una agencia de bienestar

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 36)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2004 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2005.

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 2004. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 2004. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha. No se permite el recargo también conocido como el «impuesto de pobres.»

Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros un recargo muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la "Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta" de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

Exceso de Cobro Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y subvenciones, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus aparta-

mentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre llenar un formulario de queja de exceso de cobro de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El exceso de cobro de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles excesos de cobro. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario, o búsquelo en el sitio www.dhcr.state.ny.us.

La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa Otro tipo de

exceso de cobro sucede frecuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) establece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el "Tope Especial de la Renta de Mercado Justa," el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" (FMRA). Según la Orden 36, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 50% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro de abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada "Renta Legal Inicial Regulada" (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" como de "exceso de cobro." La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una

Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad: Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingresos familiares anuales son de \$24,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el

futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-1000.

Unidades de Desván (Lofts) Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 2.5 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 5.5 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación

No habrá ningún aumento de la renta este año para los apartamentos de hotel de Clase A, casas de habitaciones, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de una sola habitación, y las casas de habitaciones (Clase B, 6-29 cuartos). No se permiten incrementos para apartamentos vacíos.

La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por \$2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan \$2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de \$175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

Para pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o busque el sitio www.housingnyc.com.

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años	
Renovación del Contrato	Si el dueño paga la calefacción	3.5%	6.5%	
	Si el inquilino paga la calefacción	3%	6%	
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17%	
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 17%	
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17% + \$100	20% + \$100
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 17% + \$100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, + 20% + \$100
	Renta de \$300 a \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17% o \$100, lo que sea mayor	20% o \$100, lo que sea mayor
		Incrementos por desocupación no cobrados en los últimos 8 años	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 17%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%, o \$100, lo que sea mayor

RGB rechaza congelamiento

viene de la página 3

social.”

“¡No nos hable como si fuéramos animales!” replicó Lisa Burriss.

Algunos inquilinos llevaron a sus hijos a la reunión. En medio del alboroto, un niño pequeño gateó por el pasillo en pos de un carro de juguete. Su mamá le recogió y le acomodó en su regazo mientras un hombre de edad avanzada dos filas más allá gritó a la junta, “Muéstrénnos sus cuentas, malditos ladrones.”

Al llegar al crescendo la gritería, Lubell y Markus se acercaron a la representante de los inquilinos Adriene Holder y gesticularon enérgicamente a ella con los dedos en una aparente súplica para que ella controlara a sus representados. La propuesta de Lubell, para incrementos de 6 y 9 por ciento y la resucitación del recargo “impuesto de pobres” en los apartamentos de renta baja, fue rechazada por un voto de 7 a 2.

Los dos representantes de los inquilinos, Holder y David Pagan, propusieron una congelación de renta de dos años y los abucheos se convirtieron en vítores. “Este año, tiene que tratar de los inquilinos y la accesibilidad financiera.



por los inquilinos, propuso un “acomodo,” la escala de incrementos posibles que abarca desde un poquito menos hasta un poquito más de las pautas del año pasado, de 3.5 y 6.5 por ciento. La junta lo aprobó sin discusión y entró en receso.

La muchedumbre se calmó arremolinándose y circulando en el vestíbulo. Mujeres judías de edad avanzada, llevando gorras de colores vivos que dijeron “leyes de renta más fuertes ahora,” se mezclaron cómodamente con jóvenes afro-americanos y los sin techo de varias edades y colores.

“Disculpe el tubo nasal,” dijo la activista de muchos años en la East Side Tenants’ Coalition Dawn

Sullivan, quien respira con la ayuda de un tanque de oxígeno. “Hay tanta gente que no puede mantenerse a la par de estos incrementos. Ya ni los artistas pueden venir aquí.”

Después del receso, la junta votó para recomendar que la misma escala de incrementos de renta sea aplicada a los desvanes. Para hoteles y pensiones de apartamentos de una sola habitación, la junta propuso un incremento de 2 por ciento o menos por renovaciones de contrato de un año. El año pasado, la RGB no permitió incrementos para hoteles residenciales, una de las pocas victorias de los inquilinos.

Mount Sinai Retirees Fight to Stay in Affordable Housing

By Cassie Feldman

It was 6:45 a.m. and Sixta Santiago was still fast asleep when a process server knocked on her door with a 72-hour eviction notice. Mount Sinai Hospital, her East Harlem landlord, wanted her out. Santiago, 63, was furious. She knew she had to relinquish the apartment when she retired from the hospital. But a court order had given her until the end of the month. It was only April 14.

“I slammed the door on him, I was so mad,” she said. “I already wanted to move. Why are you going to hand me this?”

Now she and other tenants are asking Mount Sinai to change the way it does business.

The hospital rents roughly 1,500 Manhattan apartments to its employees—and requires that, when they leave their jobs, they move within 30 days. “The reason we ask departing employees to vacate is because we have a waiting list of employees who need housing,” said Mel Granick, Mount Sinai’s director of public affairs. Santiago, he points out, was granted an additional six months when she couldn’t find housing. “We try to provide a reasonable amount of time,” he said. “We’re the good guys here.”

Yet Santiago, who worked at Mount Sinai for 36 years and lives with her elderly mother, said six months didn’t cut it. Her pension from the hospital, combined with her mother’s pension and Social Security, put them over the income limit for public housing, but wasn’t enough to cover market-rate rent. With a one-month court extension, Santiago finally found an affordable apartment in the Bronx, just days before her eviction. The third-floor walk-up is hard on her mother, 80-year-old Juana Martinez, but it’s better than nothing, she says.

Hilda Ortiz hopes to avoid moving entirely. She, her husband, daughter, and two sons all worked for the hospital and lived in Mount Sinai housing—a stately red-brick building on East 97th Street—since 1981. Ortiz, 62, worked in hospital administration for 35

years, before the computer work got too complicated. “Technology is running faster than me,” she said. She retired in January and, like Santiago, was given an extra six months to relocate. But she hasn’t found anything yet. Now living with just her daughter and granddaughter, she plans to move to her son’s basement in New Jersey if she can’t find anything else.

Another former employee, Fernando Varella, has spent the last year couch-surfing while he looks for a new place. Varella, 53, was an air-conditioner mechanic at Mount Sinai for 16 years; then he was injured on the job. When he and the hospital differed on just how injured he was, he lost both his job and his apartment. “Mount Sinai hasn’t shown any compassion towards me,” he said.

Peter Santiago, political director of ACORN Bronx/Manhattan, is organizing Mount Sinai’s employee residents to fight for more time and relocation assistance or, better yet, leases that aren’t tied to employment. “We worked really hard to get that little piece of turf called El Barrio,” he said. “It’s not easy to find an apartment. Where are low-income people supposed to go?”

Kenneth Rosenfeld, director of legal services at Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation, said he’s seen similar cases among employees of Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in Washington Heights. The larger question, he said, is whether staff housing serves the city at large. “I can’t blame a hospital from wanting secure housing for their workers, but they’re contributing to the problem as well,” he said. “They are actively removing rent-regulated affordable housing from the general population in areas that can ill afford to lose it.”

Research assistance by Bennett Baumer. Reprinted with permission from City Limits Weekly.

Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE)

¿Tiene Ud. 62 años o más? ¿Paga Ud. un tercio o más en renta, y suman los ingresos de todos en su hogar \$24,000 o menos después de pagar impuestos? Solicite ahora una Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad y vea si llena los requisitos de este beneficio, que congela la renta.

SCRIE exenta de la mayoría de los incrementos de renta a los inquilinos de renta controlada o estabilizada, Mitchell-Lama y hoteles con rentas reguladas. (Si vive en un Mitchell-Lama, consulte con la gerencia del edificio. Otras urbanizaciones de equidad limitada como Penn South están cubiertas también.) No hay ningún límite de bienes, y al medir los ingresos de todos que viven en su hogar, Ud. sólo tiene que informar sobre la cantidad que los compañeros de cuarto contribuyen para la renta, no la que ganan.

Como solicitar

Ud. puede solicitar la exención de incrementos de renta del New York State Department for the Aging llamando al 311 (pregunte por los servicios para las personas mayores de edad, o pida una solicitud de SCRIE); visitando la agencia, escribiéndoles o visitando un centro local para personas mayores. También puede utilizar el sitio Web de la agencia para ver los beneficios, incluida la SCRIE, para los que Ud. tiene derecho. Vaya a www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/bqc_jump.html#spanish, haga clic en el botón de QuickCheck y después baje a la sección SCRIE.

NYC Department for the Aging
SCRIE
2 Lafayette Street, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10007

State's Highest Court Hears Westgate Mitchell-Lama Appeal

By Sue Susman

About 40 tenants from four beleaguered Mitchell-Lama complexes—Westgate, Central Park Gardens, and Town House West Apartments in Manhattan, and Undercliff House in the Bronx—filled the spectator section at the May 4 Court of Appeals hearing in Albany in the Westgate/KSLM case. They were joined by representatives from the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) and City Council candidate Felipe Luciano.

The hearing focused on the main issue for Westgate and other pre-1969 buildings taken out of the Mitchell-Lama program: Whether the law that applies is the 1969 Rent Stabilization Law, which allows extra rent increases solely for landlord hardship or major capital improvements, or the 1974 Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA), which permits extra

increases under “unique and peculiar circumstances.” DHCR was the main appellant, asserting it should have control over determining which law applies. The Westgate Tenants’ Association, which had intervened in the case, was the second appellant.

Westgate’s landlord, Koepfel & Taylor Management Company, LLC, took the complex out of Mitchell-Lama in 1998, and has since asked for rent increases ranging from three to seven times what tenants currently pay. Though the buildings were built before 1969 and are therefore covered by rent stabilization, the owners claim that simply taking a building out of the Mitchell-Lama program is a “unique and peculiar circumstance” under the ETPA and thus allows massive increases. In February 2004, the Appellate Division overturned a lower-court ruling and took the landlords’ side.

Two other landlords that have taken buildings out of Mitchell-Lama—Stellar Management at Central Park Gardens and Grenadier Management at New Amsterdam House—are also trying to use the “unique and peculiar circumstance” claim to get massive rent increases.

At the May 4 hearing, Judge Robert Smith, a recent Pataki appointee, asserted that the court didn’t even have the question of whether taking a building out of Mitchell-Lama was a “unique and peculiar circumstance” before it—although he obviously didn’t speak for the whole court, which had accepted the amicus brief from 31 tenants organizations raising that particular question. In general, the Pataki-appointed judges asked how much money was really involved, and whether DHCR couldn’t mitigate the landlord’s requests if it

wanted to. The Cuomo-appointed judges indicated some concern for the tenants.

Serge Joseph of Himmelstein, McConnell, Gribben, Donoghue & Joseph, attorneys for the Westgate tenants, emphasized the human costs, and reminded the judges that the 1971 vacancy-decontrol law did not affect apartments that had become vacant while still under Mitchell-Lama.

“The ETPA was intended to recapture housing that was being deregulated. Mitchell-Lama housing was never in that category,” says Westgate Tenants Association chair Jean Dorsey, the main plaintiff in the lawsuit, noting that when the state’s vacancy-decontrol law was in effect, from 1971 to

Landlords claim that taking buildings out of Mitchell-Lama is a ‘unique and peculiar circumstance’ that entitles them to more than triple rents.

1974, it was not applied to Mitchell-Lama apartments. “The idea that some housing, which became vacant while in the Mitchell-Lama program, might be subject to the ETPA is a tortured construct that should not be allowed.”

If the landlords get the rent increases they want, the tenants’ briefs argued, tens of thousands of tenants will be forced out of their homes and thousands of apartments will be deregulated. In response, the landlords’ lawyer suggested that the owners didn’t really expect that they’d get all they asked for, at least all at once! Having conceded that point, he then backed off it a bit: The landlord would be delighted, he said, with a gradual increase so that tenants would be paying the full rent requested after a few years. (This, of course, assumes that as tenants age, we get richer!) After all, he noted, it’s not as if the landlords really want all the tenants to leave. (We should read into that “just yet.”)

His assertion is belied by the actual rents in Westgate apartments that have become vacant since the building entered rent stabilization: some of those are renting for exactly those high rents he claims the landlord didn’t really want.

“We know of several apartments that have been empty for years which carry price tags of \$3,000 or more,” says Dorsey. “We also know of families, currently living in Westgate, who need those apartments and could pay an affordable rent. An empty apartment which carries a high value on the books is just another example of Enron accounting and should not be encouraged. That there was ‘never any intent to evict us’ is contrary to direct statements made to many of us.”

Rosenberg & Estis—the firm representing the landlords of Westgate, Central Park Gardens,

and New Amsterdam House in their applications for “unique and peculiar circumstances” rent increases—unintentionally highlighted the problem caused by state, rather than city, control of rent regulations. Attorney Gary Rosenberg argued that if the Court of Appeals had to choose between the city’s rent-stabilization law and the state’s ETPA, it had to go with the state law. After all, he asserted, the state Urstadt Law of 1971 indicated that the state did not trust the city to regulate its own rents, and barred the city from regulating rents any more favorably to tenants than does the state. (Moral: If state control is good for the landlords, tenants have to fight for home rule of rent regulation!)

The court decision should come down either before the summer recess or some time before the end of October.

If the court turns the matter back to DHCR, tenants plan to argue that each apartment does not present “unique and peculiar circumstances,” and therefore no rent increase is appropriate. An amicus brief written by Matt Brinckerhoff and Katherine Rosenfeld of Emery, Celli, Brinckerhoff & Abady (available on-line at www.save-ml.org) em-

phasizes that buildings taken out of Mitchell-Lama are not “unique and peculiar” for three reasons:

First, that nearly 20,000 apartments are too many to be “unique and peculiar”; that phrase is reserved for the few exceptions to the rule. Second, the exception shouldn’t swallow the rule: The ETPA was enacted to put more buildings into rent stabilization, not to take them out. And third, the phrase “unique and peculiar” applies to situations that didn’t work as the statute intended. But the Mitchell-Lama program worked just right, keeping rents affordable for thousands of apartments and reviving neighborhoods.

If the Court of Appeals rules that the apartments do present “unique and peculiar circumstances,” tenants will present data about comparable rents in other Mitchell-Lamas and rent-stabilized apartments. In either case, tenants need to coordinate their efforts and present a united front.

Sue Susman is president of the Central Park Gardens Tenants’ Association.

New York’s Poor Fear Rent More than Terror

Almost two-thirds of the city’s 300,000 working-age poor families are paying more than half their income for rent, according to “Housing Hardship and Rent Burdens Among Poor New Yorkers,” a study released by the Community Service Society April 12. Forty-three percent of survey respondents reported that they had fallen behind in their rent, had their phone or electricity turned off, had to move in with others, or wound up homeless during 2004.

Even extending the income cutoff to 25 percent above the federal poverty guidelines, the study found that 56 percent of poor and “near-poor” households, about 232,000 families, were spending more than half their income on rent. The current poverty guidelines are \$9,570 a year for a single person and \$16,090 for a family of three.

The problem was especially acute outside of subsidized housing. In rent-stabilized apartments, the study found, half of poor families were spending more than 62 percent of their income on rent—even at a median rent of around \$600 a month. That left them with less than \$30 a week per person for all other expenses.

The city’s poor also had fewer resources to avoid homelessness in hard times: The CSS survey found one-third of the respondents reporting that they had less than

\$100 in savings, and 53 percent had less than \$500.

“If these figures are striking, they are no doubt worse at present,” the report concluded, noting that rents have gone up significantly since 2001, when the rent data it used was collected.

The report also included a poll in which 1,300 New York City residents were asked which of five problems they worried about the most. Twenty-eight percent of the poor New Yorkers in the survey said “housing,” putting it ahead of finding or keeping a job (25 percent) and health care (16 percent). Among the more middle-class respondents, 15 percent rated housing their top problem, in third place behind crime/drugs/gangs (27 percent) and fear of a terrorist attack (18 percent). Only 3 percent of the poor people listed fear of terror as their biggest worry.

—Steven Wishnia

Complaint Numbers

To reach the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development’s Central Complaints hotline, call 311.

Also call 311 to reach the Department of Buildings and other city agencies.

Battery Park Bonanza: \$130 Million for Affordable Housing

By Alyssa Katz

"Hallelujah!" exclaimed the man in the red ACORN T-shirt, with passion not normally heard at Mayor Bloomberg's staid City Hall press conferences. But this was a special occasion. Bloomberg and Comptroller William Thompson announced April 19 that they had agreed to take \$130 million in revenues from Battery Park City and put it in a trust fund dedicated to building and preserving affordable housing. Their proposal would begin to fulfill a 1989 agreement by the Koch administration and Battery Park City Authority to devote \$600 million in authority revenues to affordable housing development.

For now, the trust fund remains a proposal. The Battery Park City Authority must agree to the mayor and comptroller's plan, and the authority is controlled by Governor Pataki. Thompson declared he was confident that Pataki would sign off

on an agreement.

Affordable housing advocates hailed the proposal as a breakthrough. "It's a bold move, it's a practical move, and it is a move that's badly needed," said Bertha Lewis, executive director of the New York chapter of ACORN and a leading organizer of demonstrations calling for the creation of a trust fund.

The new dollars would be spent at the city's discretion, allowing housing officials to combine the dollars with other subsidies to make new housing available for homeless and other poor. Currently, the affordable housing under the mayor's affordable housing initiatives is targeted at households earning up to about \$31,000 for a family of four; some of the new housing would be for households earning less than \$18,000.

Also on the agenda, said Housing Preservation and Development commissioner Shaun Donovan, is a land acquisition fund,

giving the city the capacity to buy up underdeveloped real estate for future affordable housing development. He is keen to use some of the money to finance the acquisition and rehabilitation of buildings that are receiving government subsidies but falling into disrepair; already, HPD has helped responsible new owners take over four that have gone through federal auction, and Donovan expressed confidence that the city can work with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to help New York groups purchase more.

The deal leaves some Battery Park City revenues untapped. It's also not a permanent commitment—for now, the deal would be on for the next four years. "I don't know that we can bind future administrations," said Bloomberg. That leaves advocates to hold the city and Battery Park City Authority accountable.

"We'll have to be all over it," said ACORN's Jon Kest. "There's no magic. We'll have to keep doing what we've been doing." What ACORN and other groups in the Housing Here & Now! coalition have been doing is meeting with the comptroller since last November to press the issue, then mounting demonstrations to put the heat on the mayor, including a large march on City Hall and an action where tenants "moved in" to Battery Park City, carrying suitcases.

April 19 was no day off. Members of ACORN, Asian Americans for Equality, Mothers on the Move,

and other groups greeted the mayor with cheers in front of City Hall steps. "You kept the promise—keep it up!" they chanted. "We are going to keep this promise," vowed the mayor. But Candidate Bloomberg clearly also wanted something back from the diverse agglomeration of neighborhood activists. "I like this kind of crowd," said Bloomberg. "Come back!"

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Attention All On-line!

If you have an e-mail address, join the **Met Council "ACTIVE! list."** We'll send you alerts about demonstrations, hearings and other activities.

Simply send us a message, subject heading "subscribe", to:

active@metcouncil.net

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 36)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2004 through Sept. 30, 2005

This rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2004. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 2004. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date. There is no low rent supplement, a.k.a. poor tax, allowed.

Sublease Allowance

Landlords can charge a 10 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

Rent Overcharges

Tenants should be aware that many landlords will exploit the complexities of these guidelines and bonuses, and the tenant's unfamiliarity with the apartment's rent history, to charge an illegal rent. The tenant can choose be-

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent	One-year Lease	Two-year Lease	
Renewal Leases	Landlord pays heat	3.5%	6.5%	
	Tenant pays heat	3%	6%	
Vacancy leases	More than \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	17%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 17%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than \$300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	17% plus \$100	20% plus \$100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 17% plus \$100	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20% plus \$100
	Rent \$300 to \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	17% or \$100, whichever is greater	20% or \$100, whichever is greater
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 17%, or \$100, whichever is greater	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater

tween filing an overcharge complaint with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form or go to: www.dhcr.state.ny.us

Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apartment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board an-

nually sets what they call the "Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 36, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 50% above the maximum base rent., whichever is higher. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$24,000 or less and who pay (or face a rent increase that would cause them to pay) one-third or more of that income in rent may be eligible for a Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be avoided. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 2.5 percent for a one-year lease and 5.5 percent for two years. No va-

cancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

The board voted to freeze rents for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms). No vacancy allowance is permitted. Landlords cannot collect an increase over the rent charged on September 30, 2004 between October 1, 2004 and September 30, 2005.

High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds \$175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

For previous guidelines call the RGB at 212-385-2934 or go to www.housingnyc.com.



Notorious SRO Slumlord Tries to Oust Tenants

By Bennett Baumer

Convicted slumlord Jay Wartski has made a career of dodging court orders, harassing tenants and illegally converting single-room occupancy residential hotels (SROs) into regular transient hotels. Wartski cut his teeth by illegally evicting SRO tenants at the Sahara and Bond hotels by using junkies, drug dealers, hookers, and even dogs to harass folks. Wartski ended up spending a month in Rikers Island for his antics.

These days, he's the owner of the Dexter House on West 88th Street on the Upper West Side, and employing the same tactics of illegal SRO conversions past. Brazilian immigrant Manuel Guerrero has been living at the Dexter House for five years, but management claims he is an illegal subtenant and is attempting to evict him. Management has also tried to oust former opera singer Lisa Beth MacKinlay, though she was able to stay by fighting in court.

Outside MacKinlay's room, a plywood-floored hallway leads into a shared bathroom and water damage from past rains is visible. Other floors have much better infrastructure, but usually these contain tourist rooms.

Tenants are fighting back and gotten the support of elected leaders like City Councilmember

Gale Brewer and Congressman Jerry Nadler, who've spoken at rallies with tenants. The Dexter House Tenant Association is hoping to use the politicians to push the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development to take action against the hotel's management.

Calling Wartski "fair," building manager Robert Goicochea said, "He doesn't push people around." If tenants say he has, then, "let them come forward."

"It's not like I'm converting this place into a hostel," Goicochea added.

That's exactly what he's doing, tenants say, and the building is advertised as a hostel on several Web sites and in the phone book. Paying as little as \$30 a night, tourists from around the world are packed into six-bed hostel rooms. These violate both the city's zoning resolution and the Multiple Dwelling Law, according to Tenant Association president Vicki Labosky. "Rooms can not be rented for less than a week," she said.

If Wartski's past actions are any indication, he will continue to flout the law, and jail may be no deterrent. "The building used to be residential, now they are catering to the tourist trade. It's impossible to know how long you can be there," said Jack Berger, 88, a resident of Dexter for 25 years.

SRO Disappearance Continues

The situation at Dexter House is typical of what's been happening at the city's single-room occupancy hotels over the last 50 years. Once a widespread, cheap, and easily obtainable source of housing, their numbers have declined dramatically, as landlords find it more profitable to rent rooms to tourists, students, or homeless people whose rent is paid by the city.

"We used to have a list of SROs, but we don't give it out any more," says Terry Poe of the West Side SRO Law Project. "Outside of rooming houses, they're not renting to permanent tenants any more."

The number of SRO rooms in the city has fallen from 200,000 in the late 1950s to less than 40,000 today, according to Poe. Most of that decline came in the 1970s and 1980s—not coincidentally, the era when homelessness emerged as a major problem—but it continues today.

"In the last seven or eight years,

there's been a tremendous loss of rooming houses in Harlem," Poe says. In 1986, he continues, there were 32 on one two-block stretch of West 121st Street; last year, there was one. The group is also seeing signs of SRO and rooming-house conversion in Brooklyn, mainly Crown Heights and Park Slope, and in the Rockaways.

The city Rent Guidelines Board has been more sympathetic to SRO tenants than to regular tenants over the past few years, freezing their rents in 2002 and 2004. This is partially because many SRO tenants would become homeless if they lost their rooms, and part because their landlords are a small and often corrupt sector of the real-estate business.

"They're all known as bottom-feeders," says Poe. Also, he adds, SRO landlords rarely show up to testify at RGB hearings, while SRO tenants turn out at a higher rate than regular tenants.

—Steven Wishnia

Hotline Volunteers Needed!

Our phones are ringing off the hook! Met Council is looking for people to counsel tenants on our hotline. We will train you! The hotline runs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:30-5 p.m. If you can give one afternoon a week for this crucial service to the tenant community, call Jenny at (212) 979-6238 x3.

Home Rule

continued from page 1

against him.

That doesn't stop these politicians from taking money from New York landlords. According to a report published by Common Cause in 2003, New York City landlords and landlord organizations contributed at least \$2.7 million to state elected officials and parties between 1999 and 2003. Of that \$2.7 million, 98 percent went to Republican candidates, especially Bruno and Governor Pataki, or to the state Republican and Conservative parties. In the 2004 state elections, according to NYPIRG, 61 percent of the \$202,000 in contributions from the leading city landlord group, the Rent Stabilization Association, went to Republican state Senate candidates, and another 13 percent went to the state Republican party.

As the Rent Stabilization Law of 1969 recognizes, without regulation, landlords engage in speculation and other disruptive practices constituting "threats to the public health, safety and general welfare." Under rent regulation, the majority of owners enjoy huge profits, with net operating income averaging around 40 percent in recent years. Even fully occupied rent-regulated buildings are considered a prime investment opportunity, notes *Crain's New York Business* magazine.

It is owners' insatiable greed for even higher profits, regardless of the human cost, that requires our elected government to be able to protect us. New York City now has no power to limit the steep vacancy increases imposed after 1997, no power to toughen the state's lax enforcement against illegal rent overcharges, no power to repeal the high-rent decontrol

law that invites illegal overcharges or the 1997 rent-deposit law that accelerates evictions. Albany control over rent and evictions since 1971 has been a dismal failure, just as it was intended to be.

The social costs of astronomical housing prices are profound. For all the urban ills the city experienced in the 1970s, homelessness was

not one of them. For working- and middle-class New Yorkers, exorbitant rents mean that families can't move to a bigger place if they have another child. Couples can't move to a bigger apartment when they get together, or find decent housing if they split up. Young adults are forced to live with their parents for

years. Communities crumble as longtime residents are priced out. That situation is lucrative for a few, but it is not the kind of city most New Yorkers want to live in.

Last month, New Yorkers filed their IT-200 and IT-200 forms, paying taxes to the state government in Albany. Yet that government denies city residents the right to determine the most basic conditions of our lives, where we can afford to live.

Taxation without representation is tyranny.

What You Can Do:

The City Council will be holding a vote on State Legislation Resolution 36, which urges the state Legislature to pass the Krueger/Lopez bill repealing the Urstadt Law, in the coming weeks. Demand that Mayor Bloomberg take a stand one way or the other on this issue! For information on the ongoing home-rule campaign, contact Met Council organizer Bennett Baumer at (212) 979-6238, ext. 2, e-mail Bennett@metcouncil.net, or visit www.metcouncil.net.

Top State Court Puts Stake in Heart of Lead-Law Challenge

On April 28, the state Court of Appeals dismissed a landlord challenge to the New York City Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Act. The decision, denying any further review, is the final blow against the real-estate lobby's legal efforts to scuttle the law, which the City Council passed last year over Mayor Bloomberg's veto.

The Rent Stabilization Association, the city's leading landlord lobbying group, and other real-estate organizations filed the suit before the new law went into effect, alleging that it would actually increase the number of children with lead poisoning and cause landlords to abandon property because of liability concerns. A coalition of tenant, environmental, and community organizations, headed by NYCCELP and including Met Council, intervened as de-

fendants in the suit alongside the City Council to defend the law.

State Supreme Court Justice Louis York dismissed the lawsuit last August. The Appellate Division affirmed his decision in February, calling the landlords' arguments against the law "speculative and insufficient." The Court of Appeals ruling should put an end to further legal challenges to the law, NYCCELP lawyer Matthew Chachère said in a statement.

"This law is saving children's lives every day," added Councilmember Bill Perkins, the prime sponsor of the law. "Now that the court has thrown out the landlords' case, I hope the Mayor's office, the landlords and all of us will work together to stand for the children of New York and enforce the law."

—Steven Wishnia



RGB

continued from page 1

York City renters pay at least half their income for housing. As usual, it was summarily voted down 7-2 as well.

"It's terrible, we're just going through the same thing as last year and nothing has changed," said Madelin Camporeate, a member of Tenants and Neighbors.

Markus, who tenants often call "Marvin Markup," then proposed a "compromise," a range of possible increases stretching

from somewhat less to slightly more than last year's guidelines of 3.5 and 6.5 percent. The board approved it without debate and then took a recess.

The crowd calmed itself by milling around and socializing in the lobby. Older Jewish women in

brightly colored caps that read "stronger rent laws now" mixed easily with younger African-Americans and homeless people of various ages and colors.

"Excuse the nasal piece," said longtime East Side Tenants' Coalition activist Dawn Sullivan, who breathes with the aid of an oxygen tank. "We have so many people who can't keep up with these increases. Even people in the arts can't come here anymore."

After the recess, the board voted to recommend that the same range of rent

increases apply to lofts. For SROs, hotels, and rooming houses, it proposed an increase of 2 percent or less for one-year lease renewals.

Last year, the RGB did not allow increases for residential hotels, one of tenants' few victories.



STEVEN WISHNIA



'Hey Mike, No Rent Hike'



STEVEN WISHNIA

About 400 people spent the gorgeous spring afternoon of May 1 protesting Mayor Bloomberg's housing policies, on a tree-shaded sidewalk around the corner from the mayor's East 79th Street townhouse. The crowd, a mix of rent-stabilized tenants, Mitchell-Lama tenants, and homeless people, carried signs reading "Don't Price Us Out of New York" and chanted "We Don't Need No Stadium."

**NYC Rent Guidelines Board
2005 Schedule of Meetings and Hearings**

Thursday, June 2
Public Meeting
Department of City Planning
Spector Hall, 22 Reade St.,
Manhattan
9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 14
Public Hearing
(Public Testimony)
NYC College of Technology,
Kiltgord Auditorium
285 Jay St., Brooklyn
4:00 p.m.—10:00 p.m.



Thursday, June 16
Public Hearing
(Public Testimony)
Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 E. 7th St. (at 3rd Ave.), Man-
hattan
10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 21
Final Vote
The Great Hall
at Cooper Union
7 E. 7th St. (at 3rd Ave.),
Manhattan
5:30 p.m.—9:30 p.m.

To register to testify call the
New York City Rent Guidelines
Board at (212) 385-2934

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at
Cooper Square Committee
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2nd Ave. & Bowery)
Tuesdays 6:30 pm

CHELSEA COALITION
ON HOUSING
Covers 14th St. to 30th St., 5th Ave. to the
Hudson River.
322 W. 17th St. (basement), CH3-0544
Thursdays 7:30 pm

GOLES (Good Old Lower East
Side)
525 E. 6th St. (btwn. Aves. A & B) Lower
East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.

HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA
Covers 135th St. to 165th St. from Riverside
Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave.,
544 W. 157th St. (basement entrance).
Thursdays 8 pm

LOWER MANHATTAN
LOFT TENANTS
St. Margaret's House, Pearl & Fulton Sts.,
212-539-3538
Wednesdays 6 pm-7 pm

VILLAGE INDEPENDENT
DEMOCRATS
26 Perry St. (basement), 212-741-2994
Wednesdays 6 pm

WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION
4 W. 76 St.; 212-595-1274
Tuesday & Wednesday 6-7 pm



**METROPOLITAN
COUNCIL
ON HOUSING**

Met Council is a citywide tenant union.

Our phones are open to the public
Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays from 1:30 to 5 p.m.

We can briefly answer your questions, help you
with organizing or refer you to other help.

212-979-0611

Join Met Council

Membership: Individual, \$25 per year; Low-income, \$15 per year; family (voluntary: 2 sharing an apartment), \$30 per year. Supporting, \$40 per year. Sustaining, min. of \$100 per year (indicate amount of pledge). For affiliation of community or tenant organizations, large buildings, trade unions, etc. call 212-979-6238.

My apartment controlled stabilized unregulated other _____
 I am interested in volunteering my time to Met Council. Please call me to schedule times and duties. I can counsel tenants, do office work, lobby public officials, attend rallies/protests.

Name _____

Address _____ Apt. No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone Number _____ Email _____

Send your check or money order with this form to:
Metropolitan Council on Housing, 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012