



Tenant Inquilino

Housing for people, not profit

Vol 37, No. 7
July 2007

Metropolitan Council on Housing
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012

PERIODICAL



Tenants Ask for Zero, Give Mayor an F Bloomberg's RGB Votes 3%, 5.75% Rent increases

By Steven Wishnia

The tenants demonstrating outside the Rent Guidelines Board final meeting at Cooper Union June 26 held up mock report cards grading Mayor Bloomberg's performance on 20 housing issues. He got an A on increasing the supply of market-rate housing, a C on stopping the conversion of Mitchell-Lama buildings to market-rate housing—and ten Fs, including four out of six in the area of rent regulations.

Inside, the RGB demonstrated why the mayor had earned those grades. With the five public members appointed by Bloomberg voting as a bloc, the board allowed increases of 3 percent on a one-year lease renewal and 5.75 percent on a two-year lease. As usual, there was no debate after RGB chair Marvin Markus proposed those guidelines.

"You don't know how they agree on a number. It happens behind the scenes. It's all a mystery," says tenant representative Ronald S. Languedoc, serving his first year on the board. Markus and the other public members, he says, formed a consensus "so they don't need to reach out to tenants and landlords and there doesn't need to be a lot of public debate about the increases." He suspects their strategy is to give increases big enough to "keep landlords content" so they won't push for the repeal of rent regulations.

The board also froze rents on SRO hotels by a 6-3 vote, with Markus joining the landlord representatives in dissent. It set the guidelines for lofts at 2.5 percent for a one-year lease and 5.25 percent for two years. The sublet surcharge will remain at 10 percent, and the "supplemental guideline"—what is considered a reasonable rent for vacant rent-controlled apartments going into stabilization—will be either the federal "fair market

rent" or 50 percent over the maximum base rent, whichever is greater.

As usual, the RGB rejected the rent freeze proposed by tenant representatives, 7-2, and turned down slightly larger increases proposed by the landlord representatives, also by 7-2.

Tenants, as usual, were irate, chanting "ZERO! ZERO!" the minute Markus finished reading the opening boilerplate. As landlord representative Steven Schleider adopted liberal-sounding rhetoric to justify his call for higher rents—"yes, housing should be affordable" and "we need to raise incomes"—the crowd, now swelled to more than 200 people, drowned him out with "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH." "A rent-stabilized apartment lease is not a birthright," Schleider declared.

"These board people don't understand any-



West Side tenants prepare for the RGB meeting.

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thing," said a boiling Maria Gonzalez, president of the tenant association at Janel Towers, a Bronx Mitchell-Lama building where landlord Laurence Gluck is seeking massive "unique and peculiar" rent increases. "Once you could find an apartment in the Bronx. You can't any more. It's sickening that they want to do what they did to Manhattan to the other boroughs. Get the

poor out."

Two of her four grown sons have moved back in with her because they couldn't afford rent, she added, including one with his wife and three children.

The protests, however, were less rowdy than they were last year, when loud chants and homemade percussion instruments forced

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It's Unanimous: Landlords Must Keep Section 8 Tenants

By Kenny Schaeffer

New York State's highest court ruled unanimously July 2 that landlords of rent-stabilized apartments with Section 8 tenants cannot refuse to accept the subsidy when the lease is renewed. In the case *Sonia Rosario v. Diagonal Realty, LLC*, the Court of Appeals found that Section 8 is a "term and condition" of the lease guaranteed by law to continue for the duration of the tenancy.

At stake are the homes of approximately 67,000 low-income families in the state who participate in the federal Section 8 program, which lets them pay no more than 30 percent of their income in rent and pays the landlord the difference between that figure and the apartment's actual rent, up to the federally

determined "fair market rent." But with the escalation of rents reaching many of the city's poorer neighborhoods, landlords are increasingly trying to opt out of the program, believing that they can get more than the federal maximum rent if the apartment were vacated.

The lead tenant in the case, Sonia Rosario, has resided in her apartment at 530 West 174th St. in Washington Heights for over 30 years, and has been receiving a Section 8 subsidy for the last 19 years. She is responsible for paying \$366 per month in rent, which is 30 percent of the income she and her daughter receive in SSI benefits. In 2003, her landlord, Diagonal Realty, informed her that it would no longer accept her

Section 8 subsidy, and that Rosario would be required to pay the full rent, then about \$770. When she was unable to pay that the following month, Diagonal started a nonpayment eviction case. Justice Joan Madden of State Supreme Court issued an order stopping the eviction proceeding, and in 2005, she ruled that Diagonal had to continue accepting Section 8, an order affirmed last year by the state Appellate Division.

Diagonal Realty relied unsuccessfully on a 1998 federal law providing that Section 8 agreements do not create an "endless lease," but which also acknowledged that local and state laws provide additional protections.

The Court of Appeals recognized that rent-sta-

bilized tenants are entitled to renew their leases exactly as they are except for lawful rent increases, noting "that every renewal 'shall be on the same terms and conditions as the expired lease,'" citing section 2522.5[b][1] of the Rent

Stabilization Code. "The first question before us is therefore whether a landlord's prior acceptance of a Section 8 subsidy is a term of the lease that must

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Harlem Tenants Sue Pinnacle as Racketeer

By Steven Wishnia

A Harlem tenants organization has filed a federal lawsuit against “corporate slumlords” The Pinnacle Group and its CEO, Joel Wiener. The suit charges that Pinnacle and Wiener’s efforts to evict tenants and raise rents have been so massive, illegal, and systematic that their real-estate enterprises qualify as a criminal organization under the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

Pinnacle and Wiener, who together own over 420 buildings in New York City that contain more than 21,000 apartments and are home to more than 60,000 people, have attracted notoriety in the last few years for trying to evict more than 5,000 people—a quarter of their tenants. In January, a survey of 12 neighborhoods by Tenants United, a coalition shepherded by the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, named Pinnacle the worst landlord in both Harlem and Washington Heights. Pinnacle’s strategy, the group said, was to “buy buildings

in very bad condition and then aggressively carry out strategies to displace current families by increasing rents, overcharging, and attempting to evict as a means of intimidation.”

Pinnacle calls its business strategy “value enhancement.”

Buyers and Renters United to Save Harlem, Inc., which filed the suit July 12 along with nine Pinnacle tenants, accuses Pinnacle of engaging in “reckless and intentional systematic acts and business practices of demanding and collecting rents in amounts beyond those permitted under the law” and “an overall pattern and practice of tenant harassment.” That harassment, it says, includes failing to make repairs or provide services and then trying to evict tenants who go on rent strike, “commencing unfounded eviction actions to demand rent that already has been paid,” “unjustifiably refusing to accept tenants’ rent checks and then claiming non-payment of rent and commencing eviction actions,” failing to offer

tenants lease renewals or lease renewals on proper terms, failing to pay tenants state-ordered awards for rent overcharges and rent reductions, and “issuing false notices and documents regarding tenants’ activities or conduct.”

A Pinnacle spokesperson dismissed the suit as “nonsense,” telling the *New York Post* it was “instigated by a woman whose mother was arrested for vandalizing an elevator.”

“They have acquired thousands of affordable, rent-controlled and rent-stabilized units in New York City, and have systematically victimized tenants by illegally inflating rents while at the same time

reducing the quality of repairs and services” BRUSH president Kim Powell said in a statement. “What’s Pinnacle’s goal? To push out long-term tenants, drive up rents until apartments are deregulated, and shove through condo conversions that replace affordable rentals with million-dollar condos.”



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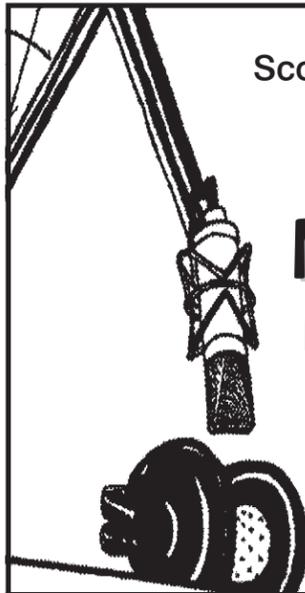
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is published monthly except August by Metropolitan Council on Housing (Met Council, Inc.), 339 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10012 (212) 979-6238

Tenant/Inquilino is distributed to members and to affiliated organizations of Met Council as part of their membership. Subscriptions are \$5 per year for individuals, \$10 for institutions per year.

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Articles, letters, artwork and photographs are welcome.

*Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY
Postmaster: Send address changes to:
TENANT/INQUILINO
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012*

Metropolitan Council on Housing, founded in 1958, is incorporated as Met Council, Inc., a membership organization dedicated to decent, affordable, integrated housing.

ISSN-1536-1322 ©2007

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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

Inquilinos piden cero, dan al alcalde una F La RGB de Bloomberg aprueba aumentos de 3%, 5.75%

Por Steven Wishnia

Traducido por Lightning Translations

Los inquilinos que protestaron fuera de la reunión final de la Junta de Renta Regulada (RGB) en Cooper Union el 26 de junio enarbolaron libretas de notas simuladas donde calificaron el desempeño del alcalde en torno a 20 cuestiones de vivienda. Recibió una A por aumentar el suministro de vivienda a la tasa del mercado, una C en evitar la conversión de edificios Mitchell-Lama en vivienda a la tasa del mercado y diez calificaciones de F, incluidas cuatro de seis en el área de regulaciones de renta.

Adentro, la RGB mostró porqué el alcalde se había ganado estas calificaciones. Con los cinco miembros públicos nombrados por Bloomberg votando en filas cerradas, la junta permitió aumentos de un 3 por ciento por una renovación de contrato de un año y un 5.75 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. Como siempre, no hubo ningún debate después de que el presidente de

la RGB, Marvin Markus, propuso las pautas.

“Uno no sabe cómo se las arreglan entre sí para llegar a la cantidad. Esto sucede entre bastidores. Es todo un misterio”, dice Ronald S. Languedoc, quien cumple su primer año en la junta. Markus y los otros miembros públicos, dice, hicieron un consenso “para no tener que comunicarse con los inquilinos y caseros y para que no se necesite mucho debate sobre los aumentos”. El sospecha que la estrategia de ellos es dar aumentos bastante grandes para “mantener contentos a los caseros”, para que estos no presionen por la revocación de las regulaciones de renta.

La junta también congeló las rentas en hoteles con unidades de una sola habitación (SRO) con una votación de 6 a 3, con Markus uniéndose a los representantes de caseros en disidencia. Fijó las pautas para desvanes en un 2.5 por ciento por un contrato de un

año y un 5.25 por ciento por dos años. El recargo de subarriendo seguirá siendo un 10 por ciento y la “pauta suplementaria”—lo que se considera una renta razonable por apartamentos desocupados de renta controlada que pasan a la renta estabilizada—será o “la renta justa del mercado” federal o un 50 por ciento por encima de la renta de base máxima, lo que sea mayor.

Como siempre, la RGB rechazó la congelación de renta propuesta por los representantes de inquilinos, 7 a 2, y rechazó aumentos un poco más altos propuestas por los representantes de caseros, también por 7 a 2.

Los inquilinos, como siempre, estaban furibundos; gritaron “¡CERO! ¡CERO!” al instante que Markus terminó de leer el lenguaje estereotipado al empezar. Mientras el representante Steven Schleider adoptó una retórica parecida a la liberal para justificar su llamado por rentas más

altas—“Sí, la vivienda debe ser asequible” y “necesitamos elevar los ingresos”—la multitud, ahora aumentada a más de 200 personas, le ahogó con “BLA, BLA, BLA, BLA”. “Un apartamento de renta estabilizada no es patrimonio de nadie”, pronunció Schleider.

“Esta gente en la junta no entiende nada”, dijo al punto de reventar de ira María Gonzalez, presidenta de la asociación de inquilinos en Janel Towers, un edificio Mitchell-Lama en el Bronx, donde el casero Laurence Gluck busca aumentos de renta masivos por “circunstancias únicas y peculiares”. “Alguna vez uno podía encontrar un apartamento en el Bronx. Ya no. Da asco que quieran hacer lo que hicieron a Manhattan en los otros condados. Botar a los pobres”.

Dos de sus hijos ya grandes se han mudado con ella otra vez porque no pueden pagar renta,

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la “Junta de Regulación de Renta” de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 39)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2007 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2008.

Renovación de Contrato

Los caseros tienen que ofrecer a los inquilinos de renta estabilizada una renovación de contrato dentro de 90 a 120 días antes de que venza su contrato actual. La renovación de contrato tiene que mantener los mismos términos y condiciones que el contrato que vencerá, excepto cuando refleje un cambio en la ley. Una vez que se haya recibido el ofrecimiento de renovación, los inquilinos tienen 60 días para aceptarlo y escoger si van a renovar el contrato por uno o dos años. El propietario tiene que devolver la copia firmada y fechada al inquilino dentro de 30 días. La nueva renta no entrará en vigencia hasta que empiece el nuevo contrato, o cuando el propietario devuelva la copia firmada (lo que suceda después). Ofrecimientos retrasados: si el casero ofrece la renovación tarde (menos de 90 días antes de que venza el contrato actual), el contrato puede empezar, a la opción del inquilino, o en la fecha que hubiera empezado si se hubiera hecho un ofrecimiento a tiempo, o en el primer pago de renta fechada 90 días después de la fecha del ofrecimiento del contrato. Las pautas de renta usadas para la renovación no pueden ser mayores que los incrementos de la RGB vigentes en la fecha en que el contrato debía empezar (si se lo hubiera ofrecido a tiempo). El inquilino no tiene que pagar el nuevo aumento de renta hasta 90 días después de que se haya hecho el ofrecimiento.

Asignación de Subarriendo

Los caseros podrán cobrar un aumento de 10 por ciento durante el término de subarriendo que comience durante este período de las pautas. Programa de Exención de Incrementos

de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad Las personas de mayor edad con renta estabilizada (y los que viven en apartamentos de renta controlada, Mitchell-Lama y cooperativas de dividendos limitados), con 62 años o más, y cuyos ingresos familiares disponibles al año sean de \$27,000 o menos (para 2006) y que paguen (o enfrenten un aumento de renta que les haría pagar) un tercio o más de aquel ingreso en renta pueden ser elegibles para una congelación de renta. Solicite a: NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10007 o llame al 311 o visite su sitio Web, nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie_sp/scrie_sp.shtml.

Programa de Exención de Incrementos de Renta para Minusválidos Inquilinos con renta regulada que re-

ciben ayuda económica elegible relacionada con discapacidad, que tengan ingresos de \$17,580 o menos para individuales y \$25,212 o menos para una pareja y enfrenten rentas iguales o más de un tercio de sus ingresos pueden ser elegibles para un congelamiento de renta. Solicite a: NYC Dept. of Finance, DRIE Exemptions, 59 Maiden Lane - 20th floor, New York, NY 10038. Llame al 311 para una solicitud o vaya al sitio Web en www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_drie.shtml

Las unidades desvanes

Los aumentos legalizados para unidades de desván son un 2.5 por ciento por un contrato de un año y 5.25 por ciento por dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y SROs

El aumento es un 0 por ciento de la renta cobrada el 30 de septiembre de 2007 para los apartamentos de hotel de clase A, casas de alojamiento, hoteles de clase B (30 o más habitaciones), hoteles de una sola habitación y pensiones (clase B, 6-29 habitaciones).

Exceso de cobro

Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros se aprovecharán de las complejidades de estas pautas y concesiones adicionales, además del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apartamentos, para cobrar una renta ilegal. Los inquilinos pueden impugnar los aumentos de renta sin autorización en las cortes o al presentar una impugnación con la agencia estatal de vivienda, la División de Vivienda

y Renovación Comunitaria (Division of Housing and Community Renewal, DHCR). El primer paso en el proceso es ponerse en contacto con la DHCR para ver el registro oficial del historial de renta. Vaya a www.dhcr.state.ny.us o llame al 718-739-6400 y pida un historial de renta detallado. Luego, hable con un abogado o defensor experto antes de seguir.

Para las pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o vaya al www.housingnyc.com

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años	
Renovación del Contrato	Todos	4.25%	7.25%	
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17.25%	20%
		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 17.25%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, más el 20%
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17.25% + \$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, + 175% + \$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	17.25% 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 17.25%, 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



al alcalde una F

viene de la página 3

añadió, incluido uno con su esposa y tres hijos.

Sin embargo, las protestas no estuvieron tan bulliciosas como en el año pasado, cuando coros ruidosos e instrumentos de percusión hechos en casa forzaron a Markus a suspender la reunión. Este año, los asistentes tuvieron que pasar por un detector de metales y dejar que se revisaran sus bolsas. “Para que nadie introduzca armas”, explicó un guardia de seguridad. Se le dijo que no ha ocurrido un incidente en el que alguien trató de llevar un arma adentro por al menos 15 años. “Siempre hay una primera vez”, contestó.

El presagio más importante para el futuro puede haber surgido cuando la representante de inquilinos Adriene Holder propuso dos restricciones que hubieran negado a los caseros aumentos de renta en un edificio si la mitad o menos de los apartamentos están ocupados por inquilinos con renta estabilizada o si el edificio tiene más de cinco importantes infracciones del código de vivienda en cada unidad.

“Todos estamos de acuerdo que la proposición de ‘una sola medida para todos’ tiene que cambiar”, dijo. “Todos los datos relevantes muestran que los caseros están prosperando”.

Los representantes de caseros se opusieron, con Magda Cruz sosteniendo que el Asesor Corporativo municipal había dicho que tales restricciones estaban fuera de la jurisdicción de la RGB. En un memorando del 8 de mayo, el departamento legal del gobierno de Bloomberg afirmó que vetar aumentos de renta a causa de infracciones del código sería un intento no permisible a usar las pautas para hacer respetar el código de vivienda y que limitar los aumentos de renta porque otros apartamentos en el edificio eran desregulados sería una toma de propiedad privada inconstitucional y negaría a los caseros su

derecho legal a desregular apartamentos. El 19 de junio, la abogada de Legal Aid Judith Goldiner contestó que tales restricciones sí serían legales, al decir que se hallan dentro del mandato de la junta para proteger a los neoyorquinos en una emergencia de vivienda, tomar en cuenta las posibilidades de los caseros para realizar ganancias en sus inversiones al fijar las pautas y asegurar que los caseros que reciben aumentos de renta justificados por el costo de mantener los apartamentos están realmente manteniendo tales apartamentos.

De todos modos, la junta rechazó las restricciones, 7 a 2. Sin embargo, Markus se entusiasmó con el concepto. “Necesitamos una precisión mucho más allá de lo que funcionó en 1969”, dijo. Aunque se ha elevado el precio de muchos apartamentos a causa de los aumentos de desocupación y desregulación, explicó, “es difícil hacer caso omiso del hecho que solamente algunos caseros se benefician”.

Sugirió que la ciudad adopte “una proposición basada en in-

gresos” para fijar las rentas, siempre y cuando administrarla no sea una carga demasiado pesada para la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunitaria (DHCR), porque “no tiene sentido” que un millonario puede pagar \$900 al mes por un apartamento. A los inquilinos que pagan menos del valor medio de renta estabilizada de \$844, se les debe elevar la renta hasta un 30 por ciento de sus ingresos, sostuvo Markus, para evitar una situación en la que “el propietario individual se ve forzado a subvencionar a los inquilinos”.

Si se pudiera arreglar la cuestión de cómo administrar disposiciones más específicas en las pautas anuales—y esta es una cuestión importante, ya que la DHCR casi no ha protegido a los inquilinos en absoluto de aumentos de renta ilegales—es probable que veamos tales propuestas surgiendo de la RGB, dice Languedoc. Estas pueden incluir límites en aumentos para



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caseros que violan la garantía de habitabilidad o no registran sus rentas con la DHCR, pero también pueden incluir aumentos de longevidad, un “impuesto de pobres” restablecido en apartamentos de bajas rentas o una evaluación financiera de inquilinos que pagan rentas más bajas.

“Parece que hay un consenso de que es saludable tener este tipo de debate”, dice Languedoc. “Mi enfoque principal es seguir haciendo énfasis en la escasez de vivienda asequible”.

Nassau y Westchester reciben aumentos de renta más bajos

Un día después que la Junta de Renta Regulada en la Ciudad de Nueva York (RGB) aprobó permitir aumentos de renta hasta un 5.75 por ciento para los inquilinos de la ciudad, ambas RGB en los condados de Nassau y Westchester fijaron pautas más bajas.

El 27 de junio la RGB de Nassau votó 5 a 3 para permitir aumentos de un 2 por ciento por una renovación de contrato por un año y un 4 por ciento por dos años, menos en la población de Hempstead, donde los aumentos se limitarán a un 0.5 por ciento y 1 por ciento, respectivamente. El miembro público Adam Mahoney, con el voto clave en la junta, dijo

que la mayoría de los edificios en Hempstead están en condiciones deplorables; la representante de inquilinos Cathryn Harris señaló que no se había quejado ningún casero en Hempstead por ser limitado a aumentos igualmente bajos el año pasado.

Mientras tanto, la RGB de Westchester fijó sus pautas en un 2.5 por ciento por un año y 3.5 por ciento por dos años.

La junta de Nassau también votó para negar aumentos a caseros que no entregan información sobre sus ingresos y gastos a la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunitaria (DHCR) estatal.

“Los miembros de la junta se

enfrascaron en una discusión sustancial por primera vez en la historia”, dijo Michael McKee de Tenants PAC sobre la RGB de Nassau. Específicamente, señaló, los dos nuevos miembros públicos de la junta sostuvieron que ésta debe tomar en cuenta los crecientes valores de bienes raíces al fijar los aumentos de renta. Entre litigios exitosos y los inquilinos que siguen haciendo presión, dijo, “hemos sacudido a fondo el proceso de la Junta de Renta Regulada en los suburbios”.

— Steven Wishnia (Traducido por Lightning Translations)

Inquilinos de mayor edad y minusválidos

Las personas mayores de 62 años o más, en vivienda de renta regulada, Mitchell-Lama y algunos otros programas, con ingresos disponibles anuales de familia de \$27,000 o menos (para 2006) y quienes pagan (o enfrentan un aumento de renta que les obligaría a pagar) un tercio o más de estos ingresos en renta pueden llenar los requisitos para una Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad (Senior Citizen Rent Exemption, SCRIE). Solicítela a:

The NYC Dept. of the Aging
SCRIE Unit
2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007

Los inquilinos minusválidos que reciben ayuda financiera relacionada con invalidez y tienen ingresos de \$17,580 o menos para individuos y \$25,323 o menos para una pareja y quienes enfrentan rentas iguales a o más de un tercio de sus ingresos pueden llenar los requisitos para la Exención de Incrementos de Renta para Minusválidos (Disability Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE). Solicítela a:

NYC Dept. of Finance
DRIE Exemptions
59 Maiden Lane – 20th Floor
New York, NY 10038

La información sobre DRIE y SCRIE está disponible en el sitio Web de la ciudad, www.nyc.gov, o llame a 311.

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RGB

continued from page 1

Markus to suspend the meeting. This year, attendees had to pass through a metal detector and have their bags searched. "So nobody brings in weapons," explained a security guard. There hasn't been an incident of someone bringing in a weapon in at least 15 years, he was told. "There's always a first time," he responded.

The most significant portent for the future may have come when tenant representative Adriene Holder proposed two provisos that would have denied landlords rent increases in a building if half or less of the apartments are occupied by rent-stabilized tenants, or if the building has more than five significant housing-code violations per unit.

"We all agree that the one-size-fits-all approach has to change," she said. "All of the relevant data shows us that landlords are doing really well."

The landlord representatives objected, with Magda Cruz arguing that the city Corporation Counsel had said that such provisos were beyond the RGB's jurisdiction. In a May 8 memo, the Bloomberg administration's legal department stated that barring rent increases for code violations would be an impermissible attempt to use the guidelines to enforce the housing code, and that limiting rent increases because other apartments in the building were deregulated would be an unconstitutional taking of private property and would deny landlords their legal right to decontrol apartments. On June 19, Legal Aid lawyer Judith Goldiner countered that such provisos

would be legal, saying that they fall within the board's mandate to protect New Yorkers in a housing emergency, to consider landlords' abilities to obtain a return on their investment when setting guidelines, and to ensure that owners who are getting rent increases justified by the cost of maintaining apartments are actually maintaining those apartments.

In any case, the board rejected those provisos, 7-2. Markus, however, ran with the concept. "We need precision well beyond what worked in 1969," he said. Though many apartments have gone up from vacancy increases and deregulation, he explained, "it's hard



"Prof" Jeff Gold gives Bloomberg an F. Kenny "Mayor Mike" Schaeffer and "head teacher" Anderson Fils-Aimé.

to ignore the fact that only certain owners are benefiting."

He suggested that the city adopt "an income-based approach" to setting rents, as long as administering it would not be too much of a burden on the state Division of

Housing and Community Renewal—because "it makes no sense" that a millionaire can pay \$900 a month for an apartment. Tenants paying less than the rent-stabilized median of \$844 should have their rents raised to 30 percent of their income, Markus argued, to avoid a situation where "the individual owner is forced to subsidize tenants."

If the issue of how to administer more specific provisions in the annual guidelines could be settled—and that is a major issue, as the DHCR has almost completely failed to protect tenants from illegal rent increases—it's likely that we'll see such proposals coming from the RGB, says Languedoc. They could include limits on increases for landlords who violate warranty of habitability or don't register their rents with the DHCR—but they could also include longevity increases, a revived "poor tax" surcharge on low-rent apartments, or a means test for tenants who pay lower rents.

"There seems to be a consensus that it's healthy to have this kind of debate," Languedoc says. "My main focus is to keep pushing the issue of the lack of affordable housing."

Nassau, Westchester Get Lower Rent Increases

The day after the New York City Rent Guidelines Board voted to allow rent increases of up to 5.75 percent for city tenants, RGBs in Nassau and Westchester counties both set lower guidelines.

On June 27, the Nassau RGB voted 5-3 to allow rent increases of 2 percent for a one-year lease renewal and 4 percent for two years, except in the village of Hempstead, where the increases will be limited to 0.5 percent and 1 percent, respectively. Public member Adam Mahoney, the swing vote on the board, said most buildings in Hempstead are in deplorable shape, and tenant representative Cathryn Harris noted that no Hempstead landlords had complained about being restricted to similarly low increases last year.

Meanwhile, the Westchester RGB set its guidelines at 2.5 per-

cent for one year and 3.5 percent for two years.

The Nassau board also voted to deny increases to owners who fail to furnish information about their income and expenses to the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

"The board members engaged in substantive discussion—for the first time ever," Michael McKee of Tenants PAC said of the Nassau RGB. In particular, he noted, the board's two new public members both argued that it should consider rising real-estate values in determining rent increases. Between successful litigation and tenants keeping up the pressure, he said, "we have completely shaken up the suburban Rent Guidelines Board process."

—Steven Wishnia

Artists and Empire

The Suburbanization of New York

By Joe Catron

An anthology of 14 essays by authors with varying degrees of talent and insight, *The Suburbanization of New York: Is the World's Greatest City Becoming Just Another Town?* is simultaneously a paean to New York as "the quintessential city" and a lamentation that "the city is becoming more private, more predictable, and more homogenized." Dynamic and equivocal, the collection, like the city itself, draws much of its appeal from its own internal contradictions.

Depictions of empire and colonialism, for example, clash as forcefully as City Council candidates in an open primary. "In the 1970s and even 1980s," Lucy R. Lippard notes, "[Lower Manhattan] was a 'frontier'; artists moving in were considered 'urban pioneers,' as though no one had ever lived there before middle-class whites 'discovered' it." Meanwhile, Ka-

trina Lencek-Inagaki states that "[a]lthough not part of this illegal wave of colonizers, my artist parents were pioneers when they moved into TriBeCa in 1982"—apparently without a trace of irony or introspection.

Lippard argues that "artists set off the gentrification of SoHo," but Maggie Wrigley conflates them, rather unconvincingly, with pregentrification neighborhood cultures. "[T]he outer boroughs continue the tradition of the famed melting pot of immigrants of ethnic, religious, and racial diversity," she writes. "Artists,

moving outward, are founding new communities in Brooklyn and the Bronx." One cannot help but wonder how recently Wrigley has visited Williamsburg, what changes she might have observed in its "ethnic, religious, and racial diversity," or what she might have considered it before its recent "founding" as

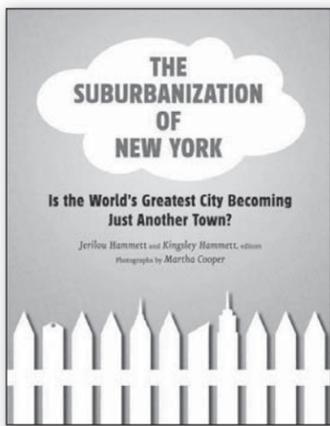
a "new community."

Unfortunately, crime and poverty are romanticized, if not outright celebrated, throughout much of the text, including otherwise admirable essays. "In the 1960s," reminisces Lippard, "when I took [her son] Ethan to the playground [at Tompkins Square], I had to sift broken glass and hypodermic needles out of the sandbox." Lencek-Inagaki favorably contrasts "the pain of getting splinters from the rough wooden playground equipment" at Washington Market Park with today's "sophisticated new playground with its 'airy, minimalist' playship, the beige and gray safety surface decorated with yellow circles." Few of the authors seem willing to concede that some forms of urban renewal, such as the renovation of unsafe playgrounds, might actually be good.

The selection also suffers from the pre-1898 syndrome common in discussions of New York as a city. Eight essays exclusively concern Manhattan or its neighborhoods, while only one—Susan S. Fainstein's "Global Transformations and the Malling of the South

Bronx"—targets any of the other four boroughs. Robert Neuwirth notes that in the 1990s, "[t]he real story was off the island of Manhattan. Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and Staten Island all grew more than twice as fast as the city's fanciest borough." Unfortunately, their inclusion of this observation did not encourage the editors to include essays more representative of the 80 percent of New Yorkers who, at last count, lived outside Manhattan.

Ultimately, though, *The Suburbanization of New York*, edited by Jerilou Hammett and Kingsley Hammett, deserves to be read simply for the richness of the tapestry it weaves. Each of the authors clearly presents a vision of the city rooted in deep understanding and affection. The diversity of their experiences—and the occasional incompatibility of their conclusions—present readers with a challenge akin to that of navigating life in what the subtitle claims is "the world's greatest city." The book, like the city, offers no easy answers; each is whatever we make of it.



Legislature Passes 421-a “Reform,” But Last-Minute Changes Stall Support

By Steven Wishnia

At the last minute before the state Legislature’s session closed on June 22, the Assembly and state Senate both passed bills renewing and partially reforming the 421-a tax-abatement program. But because the two versions are different, the legislation could not go to Gov. Eliot Spitzer, and last-minute changes—particularly a provision that would let the proposed Atlantic Yards development in Brooklyn charge higher rents for “affordable” apartments—caused many supporters of the bills to turn against them.

As it stood on the eve of the Legislature’s special session that opened July 16, the Senate needed to vote on two amendments contained in the Assembly version before the bill could go to Spitzer. Spitzer has not indicated whether he will sign the bill, but both Mayor Michael Bloomberg and City Council Speaker Christine Quinn have come out against it.

The bills emerged out of increasing pressure to reform the 421-a program, which originally gave tax breaks to anyone who built housing in New York City. Since the ‘80s, developers in the Midtown Manhattan area have had to include affordable housing to get the abatements, and last December the City Council extended that requirement to all of Manhattan south of Harlem and to most of northwest Brooklyn.

Critics charged that the city legislation still allowed owners to get tax breaks for building luxury housing in areas such as the Queens waterfront and Forest Hills. They put their hopes on the Legislature, which has to renew the program by Dec. 31 for it to remain in effect.

On June 21, the two houses passed measures sponsored by Assemblymember Vito Lopez (D-Brooklyn) and Senator

Martin Golden (R-Brooklyn). The bills would add 12 new “exclusionary zones,” the areas where developers have to include affordable housing to qualify for the tax breaks, to the one in central Manhattan and the eight established by the city in December. The new zones cover much of Crown Heights, Prospect Heights, and East New York in Brooklyn; Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and the Astoria/Long Island City waterfronts in Queens; part of the north shore of Staten Island; and East Tremont/West Farms and Grand Concourse/Crotona Park West in the Bronx. But they do not include several areas with hot real-estate markets, such as Riverdale in the Bronx and Flushing and Forest Hills in Queens.

The bills would also eliminate the “certificate” program, in which developers getting the tax break can build the lower-rent apartments in a different place than the luxury apartments, and would reserve half the affordable units for current residents of the community board district where the development is being built. And they would lower the income level used to set rents for “affordable” housing from 80 percent to 60 percent of the \$70,900 “area median income” (AMI) for the metropolitan area—which would reduce the rent that can qualify as “affordable” from \$1,418 a month to \$1,063.50. But at the last minute, Lopez added an amendment letting Atlantic Yards set rents for “affordable” units based on 70 percent of AMI.

That provision and one extending the certificate program for six months are widely believed to be the result of negotiations between Lopez and the Real Estate Board of New York. But they caused both city officials and housing advocates who had been pushing for 421-a reforms to oppose the bills.

A spokesperson for Council Speaker Christine Quinn told *City Limits* Weekly that the 421-a program would continue “to subsidize luxury homes in expensive neighborhoods, with nearly 80 percent of the benefits going in Manhattan. It subsidizes buildings that would have been built anyway, at an annual cost to the City of \$300 million and rising fast.

And it creates very little affordable housing.” And state Sen. Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan) complained to *City Limits* that where the original legislation would have raised the proportion of units required to be affordable to 30 percent and made them permanently affordable, the modified version leaves the affordable proportion at 20 percent and lets owners opt out after 40 years. She added that the six-month cer-

tificate extension “allows the real-estate industry to continue to operate under old, flawed rules during that time.”

Meanwhile, the Bloomberg administration is opposing the bills for slightly different reasons. It wants the bills changed to extend the abatement to government-supported middle-income housing, such as the proposed Queens West development; shrink the proposed exclusion zones;

and rescind the tax break for Atlantic Yards. “We are negotiating to try to get a better bill before it goes to the governor’s desk,” Neill Coleman, a spokesperson for the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development, told the *New York Observer*. “Then we are looking for a veto. Right now there isn’t a bill before the Governor to veto.”

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 39)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2007 through Sept. 30, 2008

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent	One-year Lease	Two-year Lease	
Renewal Leases	All	3%	5.75%	
Vacancy leases	More than \$500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	17.25%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 17.25%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than \$300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	17.25% plus \$100	20% plus \$100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 17.25% 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	17.25% 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 17.25%, or \$100, whichever	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%, or \$100, whichever is greater

Renewal Leases

Landlords must offer rent-stabilized tenants a renewal lease 90 to 120 days before the expiration of their current lease. The renewal lease must keep the same terms and conditions as the expiring lease, except when reflecting a change in the law. Once the renewal offer is received, tenants have 60 days to accept it and choose whether to renew the lease for one or two years. The owner must return the signed and dated copy to the tenant in 30 days. The new rent does not go into effect until the start of the new lease term, or when the owner returns the signed copy (whichever is later). Late offers: If the owner offers the renewal late (fewer than 90 days before the expiration of the current lease), the lease term can begin, at the tenant’s option, either on the date it would have begun had a timely offer been made, or on the first rent payment date 90 days after the date of the lease offer. The rent guidelines used for the renewal can be no greater than the RGB increases in effect on the date the lease should have begun (if timely offered). The tenant does not have to pay the new rent increase until 90 days after the offer was made.

Sublease Allowance

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

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program

Rent-stabilized seniors (and those living in rent-controlled, Mitchell-Lama, and limited equity coop apartments), 62 or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$27,000 or less (for 2006) 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 rent freeze. Apply to: NYC Dept. for the Aging, SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette St., NY, NY 10007 or call 311 or visit their Web site, www.nyc.gov/html/dfta/html/scrie/scrie.shtml.

Disability Rent Increase Exemption Program

Rent-regulated tenants receiving eligible disability-related financial assistance who have incomes of \$17,580 or less for individuals and \$25,212 or less for a couple and are facing rents equal to more than one-third of their income may be eligible for a rent freeze. Apply to: NYC Dept. of Finance, DRIE Exemptions, 59 Maiden Lane, 20th floor, New York, NY 10038. Call 311 for an application or go to the Web site at www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_drie.shtml.

Loft Units

Legalized loft-unit increases are 2.5 percent for a one-year lease and 5.25 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

There is no increase on rent charged September 30, 2007 for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SRO) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms).

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. Tenants can challenge unauthorized rent increases through the courts or by filing a challenge with the state housing agency, the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). The first step in the process is to contact the DHCR to see the official record of the rent history. Go to www.dhcr.state.ny.us or call (718) 739-6400 and ask for a detailed rent history. Then speak to a knowledgeable advocate or a lawyer before proceeding.

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



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.

Tenants and Allies Converge at First U.S. Social Forum

By Joe Catron

Ten thousand people from every U.S. state plus Washington, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and 68 other countries descended on Atlanta between June 27 and July 1 for the first U.S. Social Forum. The event drew inspiration from the World Social Forum, an annual gathering of social movements intended to counteract the simultaneous World Economic Forum, an annual gathering of the planet's thousand wealthiest corporations and their guests from academia, government, and the media.

Since its January 2001 launch in Porto Alegre, Brazil, the WSF has been held in Mumbai, India; Caracas, Venezuela; Bamako, Mali; Karachi, Pakistan; and Nairobi, Kenya. In 2008, it will return to Brazil, this time to Belém. The February 15, 2003 day of demonstrations against the Iraq war, which mobilized hundreds of thousands of protesters in New York and tens of millions worldwide, was proposed at the European Social Forum and facilitated globally by the WSF.

The U.S. Social Forum was conceived in June 2003, when the WSF International Coordinating Council asked Grassroots Global Justice, a coalition of tenant, labor, and other community organizations that had organized national delegations to the WSF, to consider planning it. The coalition assembled

a network that was up to the task: Over a thousand organizations attended, from national behemoths like Jobs with Justice and the Rainforest Action Network to hundreds of local groups. Among the New Yorkers there were representatives of Good Old Lower East Side, the Harlem Tenants Council, Make the Road by Walking, UPROSE, the Urban Justice Center, and West Harlem Environmental Action.

Housing Themes

Housing proved a recurring theme over the USSF's five long,



hot days. The following evening, the first plenary session featured nine Gulf Coast residents discussing the post-Katrina reconstruction of their region. At least 250 others from the Gulf Coast, including evacuees, traveled to Atlanta in the People's Freedom Caravan, organized by the New Orleans-based Advocates for Environmental Human Rights.

Many of the hundreds of workshops focused on housing issues. New York's Community Voices Heard and Chicago's Coalition to Protect Public Housing organized a series of presentations on public housing, with plans for a national campaign targeting the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. And three New York

the USSF.

"I learned a lot in Atlanta from people from a lot of different places," said Mary Baker, a leader of RTTC's Chicago affiliate Southside Together Organizing for Power (STOP) and president of the Washington Scene Tenants Association. "What I learned from the Brazilians we went to dinner with that was so amazing was how they formed their own union and they get the youth involved, they build their own cooperative houses, it

aren't limiting their land grabs to Chicago, so we can't limit our network of resistance to one city.

"Displacement doesn't just happen because of greedy landlords

Other tenant groups from across the country launched Right to the City, a national effort against gentrification, poverty, and repression.

who want to cash in on condo conversions," Ginsberg-Jaeckle continued. "It happens because of neo-liberal policies that treat land as a commodity instead of a

space for community. It happens because of the closure of services in our neighborhoods. It happens because of the lack of living-wage jobs that would allow families to meet rent burdens. It happens because of the racist criminalization of youth of color, used to help developers create excuses to demolish our homes. It happens because of the increased demand on urban space as cities become the command centers for global capital. It happens because the housing budget is being squandered on an endless war. It happens because war profiteers and developers have more influence than the majority of people on politics in this country. But most of all, it happens because we let it happen by focusing narrowly on local issues and not broadening our perspective and action to attack root causes and systems."

On October 2, says Baker, RTTC will "mobilize all over the nation for our human right to housing. What I intend to do, coming back from Atlanta, is to alert the people in my building to come together and stick together more, and to fight for what we want and what we need."

The next USSF is tentatively scheduled for 2010. In the meantime, regional forums around the country are likely, and the connections forged under the Atlanta sun, among organizations, issues, individuals, and ideas, will grow and strengthen. The USSF slogan held that "Another world is possible. Another U.S. is necessary." Perhaps the event itself, and the expectation of the next one, can help us push forward to both.



Courtesy of U.S. Social Forum

Before the massive opening march on June 27, the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless held a rally outside City Hall opposing the Atlanta Housing Authority's threatened eviction of 9,600 public-housing residents.

organizations—the African Services Committee, the Community HIV/AIDS Mobilization Project, and the New York City AIDS Housing Network—joined with Philadelphia's AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power to lead a workshop on the HIV/AIDS Services Administration.

Other tenant groups from across the country launched Right to the City, a national

was just amazing to me. I also learned from one of the ladies from Washington, D.C., how they all came together and formed a tenants association, and then they went from block to block forming tenants associations, and all of them came together and took over their own block."

'Network of Resistance'

"STOP went to the USSF because we all felt it was time to take aim at some of the root causes of the issues we've been fighting on," said organizer Matt Ginsberg-Jaeckle. "To do this, we needed to build with other groups going through the same things we are. Displacement isn't just happening in Chicago. Clinics aren't just being closed in Chicago. The rich

effort against gentrification, poverty, and repression, with eight workshops examining these urban social dynamics and their effects. RTTC's members include CAAAV: Organizing Asian Communities, the gay-rights organization FIERCE (Fabulous Independent Educated Radicals for Community Empowerment), and Families United for Racial and Economic Equality, all New York groups represented at

HPD CODE VIOLATIONS ON LINE

Look up your building!

The HPD violations terminal is available on-line. If you go to the HPD Website listed below and follow the instructions, you should be able to get an up-to-date list of violations on a building.

www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/data/hpd-online-portal.html

Rosario Decision

continued from page 1

be continued on a renewal lease. We hold that it is," the court declared.

The court also rejected the owners' claim that the 1998 federal amendment "preempted" the state rent-stabilization law in letting owners of unregulated apartments stop accepting Section 8 at the end of the lease, and to evict tenants without cause or charge whatever rent they want. Prior to 1998, under the so-called "endless lease" rule, all Section 8 tenants across the country had the right to the continuation of their subsidy for the duration of their tenancy so long as they remain qualified, once their landlord had entered into a contract agreeing to accept the "fair market" Section 8 rents for them. The court examined the intent of Congress in 1998, and observed that Congress stated then "that it did 'not anticipate that the repeal of [the "endless lease" rule] will adversely affect assisted households because protections will be continued under State, and local tenant laws'." In rejecting Diagonal's claim that the federal law negated the "same terms and conditions" guarantee provided by the state rent-stabilization law, the court also noted that "federal law does not so occupy the field of housing that there

is no room for state regulation.... In this area, federal and state law depend on each other; neither excludes the other."

The tenants in *Rosario v. Diagonal Realty* were represented by Judith Goldiner of the Legal Aid Society, with an "amicus curiae" (friend of the court) brief filed for state Division of Housing and Community Renewal Commissioner Deborah VanAmerongen and state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo. "Complicating matters was the Pataki administration's determination in 2002 that Section 8 benefits are not part of the terms and conditions of a rent-stabilized tenancy," DHCR said in a July 3 press release. "However, under... Governor Eliot Spitzer and Commissioner VanAmerongen, the DHCR reversed its position in an April 30, 2007 joint brief with the Attorney General's office." Additional amicus briefs were filed by Pratt Center for Community Development, the New York City Council, and the American Association of Retired Persons.

The owners were represented by Horing Welikson and Rosen, a Nassau County firm which is also representing Cosmopolitan Associates, a Queens landlord which has similarly refused to offer rent-stabilized Section 8 tenants the

option of continuing their subsidy when leases come up for renewal. The Rent Stabilization Association, the owners lobby, filed an amicus brief urging the court to let owners evict Section 8 tenants by refusing to continue accept the subsidy.

Turning Point for DHCR

This ruling underscores the necessity of preserving and strengthening rent-stabilization protections so that New York City's supply of remaining affordable housing stock does not continue to disappear. The reversal in DHCR policy by the Spitzer/VanAmerongen administration on this important case reflects a significant turning point. In January, the Spitzer administration killed a Pataki proposal to further weaken the protections of the rent-stabilization code—although it has not yet acted to restore the protections removed administratively in 2000 and 2004, nor worked to reverse the tremendous weakening of rent and evictions imposed by the state Legislature in 1997 and 2003.

DHCR has also signaled its intention to reverse the Pataki administration's interpretation of landlords' and tenants' rights in leases with a "preferential rent,"

when the owner claims the agreed rent being paid is less than the legal regulated rent. Prior to the Pataki changes, DHCR considered a preferential rent to be a "term and condition" of the tenancy just like the Section 8 benefit recognized in *Rosario v. Diagonal Realty*, but thousands of tenants are now being told by their landlords that their preferential rent has ended and they must pay substantially higher rents or move.

The agency has also announced that it will close the "unique and peculiar" loophole which could have allowed the loss of thousands of affordable apartments as they left the Mitchell-Lama program.

Met Council will continue to work to ensure that the Spitzer administration fights to preserve and strengthen rent and eviction laws. To join this campaign, go to www.metcouncil.org or call us at (212) 979-6238.



Have a question about your rights?

*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

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
Closed in August; reopens Tuesday, September 4.

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)
171 Avenue B (between 10 and 11 St.); and by appointments only except for emergencies. 212-533-2541.

HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA
Covers 135th St. to 165th St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave., 537 W. 156th St.
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



Senior and Disabled Tenants

Seniors, 62 or older, in rent-regulated, Mitchell-Lama and some other housing programs whose disposable annual household income is \$27,000 or less (for 2006) 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). Apply to:
The NYC Dept of the Aging
SCRIE Unit
2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007.

Disabled tenants receiving eligible disability-related financial assistance with incomes of \$17,580 or less for individuals and \$25,212 or less for a couple facing rents equal to or more than one-third of their income may be eligible for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). Apply to:
NYC Dept. of Finance
DRIE Exemptions
59 Maiden Lane - 20th floor
New York, NY 10038

DRIE and SCRIE info is available on the city's website, www.nyc.gov, or call 311.

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