

The Park West Tenant

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Park West Village Tenants' Association

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June 2016

Rent Guidelines Board Decision Due

Each spring the New York City Rent Guidelines Board meets to set the maximum allowable rent increases in rent-stabilized apartments for one and two-year lease renewals. Tenants and advocates have lobbied for a rent rollback, citing decreased operating costs due to a mild winter and lower oil costs.

The Manhattan public hearing will be held Thursday May 26 at the Landmarks Preservation Commission Conference Room, 1 Centre Street, 9th floor at 9:30am. The final vote on the increases takes place on June 27 at the Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7 East 7th Street, corner of Third Avenue, at 6:30pm.

Lead in Dust in PWV Buildings

Construction in the Columbus Avenue buildings 792 and 788 was reported, and the NYC Department of Health "Healthy Homes Program" came to inspect. Samples taken at 792 Columbus revealed a lead concentration of micrograms that exceeds the current EPA standard. The sampling at 788 Columbus revealed the same measure. The sampling at 784 Columbus is pending. The landlord was issued violations at 788 Columbus and clean-up remediation ordered. The landlord will then have to hire a third-party vendor to collect and submit samples for retesting.

New Machines for Columbus Ave Buildings

Tenants in the three PWV Columbus Avenue buildings recently welcomed new washing machines and dryers. However, the new machines will not accommodate the old payment cards.

To recover funds on your old card, you must return the card to Hi-Rise Laundry for a refund. The following information must be sent with the card: Name, address including your apartment number, phone number and the monetary amount remaining on the card. Mail all information to: Hi-Rise Laundry, 69-61 78th Street, Middle Village, NY 11379. The phone number is 1-800-278-1633.

We suggest identifying your card by affixing a mailing label with your name on the back of the card (not the side with the chip) as the company will be receiving many such cards and will need to easily match cards to customers.

STOP THE "STRYKER PARK" PLAN!

Over the past three years, the Park West Village Tenants' Association, Community Board 7, and many community residents have spoken against the plan of the Friends of Stryker Park to create a "pedestrian plaza" on the north side of West 97th Street between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. Our PWVTA Executive Board voted unanimously to oppose their plan.

The so-called "Friends", who wish to rename the space, are working with a NYC DOT program that seeks to give all New Yorkers access to community open space. The PWVTA does not view this as our neighborhood's problem since we are close to two of the city's great parks, Central and Riverside, and we have much convenient open space around our PWV buildings.

The Friends will be out seeking support on 97th Street on June 11, 18, and 25 from 10am to 3pm. We urge you and all our real friends to join us for a while each Saturday to protest and protect our neighborhood!

West 97th Street is threatened with the construction of a busy 20-story nursing home. PS 163 students use the wide sidewalk, especially during fire drills, when extra street furniture would get in the way. We also need uncluttered space for our spacious Friday Greenmarket.

Finally, we already have a rat problem with the 808 Columbus garbage deposited for pick-up on the eastern end of the street, and so do not wish to have additional garbage generated by increased street activity.

PWVTA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 31 7:30pm Ryan Center 110 W 97 St.

PWVTA MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, June 21 7:30pm Ryan Center 110 W 97 St.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP COUNTS!

2016 is moving along -- please REMEMBER to join your Park West Village Tenants' Association or renew your membership now! *The Association is the membership.* Note that membership is per calendar year.

The more members we have, the greater our impact on the issues we have. Please get involved; get to know your neighbors; be part of your community.

USE COUPON ON BACK -- DON'T FORGET!

NEWSLETTER BY Patricia Loftman, Dean Heitner, Emily Margolis, Miriamne Spector, Chuck & Pam Tice

JHL Nursing Home Update from the PWV Working Group

The past month has brought increased media attention to the players in the controversial nursing home development plan that seeks to build a 20-story tower in the former parking lot between 784 Columbus and PS 163.

Earlier this year, the NYS Supreme Court upheld the opponents' position that the environmental review by the state health department was insufficient. Despite this, the Mayor's Office supported the JHL appeal to this decision. There is also an active zoning case challenging whether JHL has sufficient space for the proposed building.

Both the Daily News and The Real Deal have recently reported links between the JHL's lobbyist law firm, Kramer Levin, and the Mayor whom the firm is representing in the campaign financing probe. The nursing home is also represented by SIEU 1199, a union that contributed \$250,000 to the Mayor's Campaign for One New York, which recently was suspended. Further, JHL's development partner, Chetrit, is under court-appointed monitoring for money-laundering allegations.

Follow the work of the Working Group at www.NoJHLatPWV.com Contact the Working Group at NoJHLatPWV@gmail.com.

NEW YORK STATE HOMES AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL

(HCR) Rent-regulated tenants enjoy numerous rights, especially with respect to rents, leases and services. To exercise these rights a tenant must file the appropriate HCR application or complaint forms.

What Information and Services Are Available?

1. Access to Your Apartment's Rent History

Apartment rents are registered annually by building owners with HCR's Office of Rent Administration.

Under the law, rent information provided is confidential and can only be released to the apartment's legal renter, the building owner, or authorized representative.

A rent history of your apartment can be accessed by email to rentinfo@nyshcr.org, or by calling the Rent Infoline at 718-739-6400. The rent history will be printed and mailed directly to the apartment/building address.

Just this past year, three PWV market-rate apartments were rolled back to Rent Stabilization as a result of examination of rent histories.

2. Overcharge Refunds for Rent-Stabilized Tenants

If a tenant files a rent overcharge complaint with HCR and HCR issues a written order finding the complaint valid, the legal rent will be reduced and the owner will be directed to refund the overcharged amount to the tenant.

3. Rent Reduction - Owner Fails to Provide Services

Rents may be reduced if the owner fails to provide required or essential services, or fails to make necessary repairs for an individual apartment or building-wide. Examples include lack of heat/hot water, unsanitary common areas (halls, lobby) and broken door locks.

If a tenant files a Decrease in Service Complaint with HCR and the complaint is found valid, a written order will be issued that reduces the rent and the reduction will remain in effect until services are found to be restored. Tenants in 788 and 792 Columbus Avenue received such rent reductions in 2015 and 2016.

4. Option to Renew Lease

Tenants must be given an opportunity to renew their lease for one or two years on the current terms and conditions. The renewal is to be offered 120 days in advance of the expiration of the existing lease and at the rates set by The Rent Guidelines Board. Tenants have the right to file written release complaints with HCR.

5. Complaints for Harassment

One example of harassment is not cashing a tenant's check offered for the monthly rent.

Despite these rights, newly-released housing documents citywide reveal only 7,864 tenant complaints filed in fiscal year 2014-15, although 839,797 apartments were registered as subject to Rent Stabilization in 2014.

PLEASE RETURN 2016 MEMBERSHIP COUPON TO YOUR PWVTA BUILDING REP
or MAIL to: Park West Village Tenants' Association, P.O. Box 20339, Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025-0339
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!

Name: Building: Apt: Phone:

Email:

Check for 2016 membership dues enclosed, payable to PWVTA \$50 Other*: \$

[Condo owner] Check for 2016 associate membership dues enclosed, payable to PWVTA \$35

Check includes additional contribution to Legal Fund. Amount: \$

★ If you cannot make full \$50 payment of your annual dues, please just pay what you can.
Your status: rent-stabilized tenant market-rate tenant condo owner **Your membership card will be delivered to you.**

I want to be more involved. These are my special interests:
