



Affordable-Housing Programs 'Designed to Fail'

By Mario Mazzoni

Many programs that promise “affordable housing” fail to deliver, claimed speakers at a March 27 conference at Hunter College. Invitations to the event, “No More ‘Affordable’ Housing Scams,” contended that many such programs “benefit developers more than communities,” are too expensive for most of the residents in the neighborhoods where they’re built, and “were designed to fail” by having built-in expiration dates when units can revert to market-rate prices.

Many organizers and advocates who attended the event are working to prevent the housing stock created from such programs in earlier decades from being converted to market-rate. This pattern is set to repeat itself, panelists argued, if underlying problems are not addressed.

Provisions written decades ago to permit Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 developments to leave those programs are now widely criticized. But similar expiration dates are still features of nearly all of the most commonly used affordable-housing initiatives, such as the 80/20, 421-a, and the Low Income Housing Tax Credit programs.

The hype over new units, panelists noted, also distracts from the loss of far greater amounts of existing subsidized and regulated apartments.

“The myth of affordable housing,” said Peter Marcuse, professor of urban planning at Columbia University, is “the idea that if we accept the term ‘affordable’ as our goal, and then have programs that give us affordable housing, that we’ve solved the housing problem. I think that’s nonsense... most of the housing that’s called affordable isn’t affordable to most people, it’s time-limited, it’s much more a decoy [for] providing

funding for private enterprises.”

A common thread among the speakers was a belief that the profit motive is the culprit for failed housing policies.

Sam Imperatrice, one of the conference organizers, argued that strategies of achieving permanent affordability must be premised on the “decommodification of land.” Peter Marcuse urged listeners to reject “the myth that the market is the right way to produce and distribute housing.”

How Much Is ‘Affordable’?

Criticisms begin at the very definition of “affordable.” The formulas used in government-subsidized or supported developments are based on percentages of the federally defined “area median income. In New York City, a family of four that makes less than \$61,920 a year is officially

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considered low-income—because it’s below 80 percent of the AMI for the metropolitan area, which includes several wealthier suburban counties.

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Survey Finds Street Homeless Up by One-Third

By Jenny Laurie

It was a not terribly cold night in January when over 100 people gathered in a school cafeteria on the West Side of Manhattan at about 10 p.m. We were the canvassers for New York City’s annual street homeless count. In my team we had eight people, including a physical therapist, a journalist, an education official, and a social worker from one of the city’s largest settlement houses. Some members of the team believed in the Bloomberg administration’s approach reducing homelessness and some of us were deeply critical. We all felt that it was important to find out how many homeless adults were living or sleeping on the streets at night—mostly because we felt that there was something deeply wrong about a society that permitted people to sleep on the streets.

My team was assigned the West 125th Street

area to canvas, and we broke into small groups of two or three to cover our streets. The system used by the annual count is to cover the same area every year. We were to start at one corner and to walk every side of every street in about an eight-block area. We also had the assignment of searching the subway stations on the west end of 125th Street—all platforms, all stairs and entrances and all passageways open to the public.

In our second subway station, we found our decoy. Decoys were used to make sure that the volunteers covered the areas assigned. Our task was to approach everyone we met on the street or in the station and ask them a number of questions designed to elucidate their homelessness status. We were also able to offer information to the people we found about the services

that the city offered, or, if needed, we could call for help from a van that would come to the spot and encourage the person to come in for the night. Since the night was not very cold by January standards, we got no takers on the offers.

In mid-March, the Bloomberg administration released the findings of the count (at a press conference at 5 p.m. on a Friday, timed to bury the news as deep as possible): The number of single people living on the streets was the highest since 2005. The survey had counted 3,111 street homeless—783 more than in 2009, a startling 34 percent increase.

The count found both chronically homeless people and newcomers. One team counted a group of Polish day laborers living on the street in Brooklyn. Every borough showed increases from the 2009

survey, with Manhattan and Brooklyn showing the steepest increases. The subways, a count kept separate from the boroughs, also showed an increase. The only street homeless our team found, by the way, were in the subway stations on 125th Street.

While the Bloomberg administration, in its press release about the count’s results, blamed the recession for the rise, it failed to criticize its own recent reduction of services to

the homeless.

Homeless adults in the city either enter the congregate shelter system, which men enter via the center at Bellevue (known as the 30th Street Men’s Shelter), or they go to the smaller drop-in centers.

The city has been working on plans, delayed more than once, to close the Bellevue center and require single men to go to one intake center in

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Weak Rent-Control Bill Draws Far-Right Ire in Colorado

An attempt to modify Colorado's statewide ban on rent control has drawn fire from far-right opponents.

The state House has approved a bill that would let local governments make deals with developers that require affordable housing in new buildings. In 2000, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled that such agreements were illegal, as they violated the state's ban on rent control. That ban was enacted in 1981, the year after Boulder residents approved an initiative to limit rents in existing buildings.

However, state Rep. Daniel Kagan, a Denver Democrat who is one of the bill's two sponsors, insists that it will not bring "New York style rent control" to Colorado. In an op-ed article in the Denver *Daily News*, he said that the 1981 law was right, because "it would be a disaster to have

public officials, rather than the free market, set Boulder rents."

He wrote that his bill is intended merely to let local governments negotiate land-use deals with developers. The 2000 state Supreme Court decision, he said, has "made it difficult for cities like Aspen to provide any workforce housing in new developments, or to protect the workforce housing they already have" and allowed speculators to buy buildings in Colorado and challenge longstanding land-use agreements.

Owners oppose any restrictions, claiming they violate property rights. "If this bill passes, rent controls will be imposed by local governments," Nancy Burke of the Colorado Apartment Association told the *Daily News*. And a Boulder landlord is trying to get an initiative on the state ballot that would declare any kind of rent regulations unconstitutional.

The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, however, dropped its opposition after the bill was

amended to make rent-control agreements voluntary. That change would prohibit cities and counties from denying building-permit applications merely because the developer won't agree to limit rents.

State Sen. Dave Schultheis (R-Colorado Springs), meanwhile, tried to amend the bill to prohibit

leasing rent-controlled housing to illegal immigrants.

According to a state housing division survey released April 8, Colorado has a severe shortage of housing for people who make less than \$25,000 a year. The shortage was worst in the Denver and Colorado Springs areas.

—Steven Wishnia

Pakistani Businessmen Back Commercial Rent Control

Businessmen in Pakistan are urging the government to enact rent controls for shopkeepers and vendors.

Zahid Maqbool, president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry, said that the current law was too weak to protect traders and is the main reason for rising rent disputes between tenants and landlords. A more balanced law, he argued, would promote a healthy business environment in

Islamabad.

Rab Nawaz, president of the Traders Welfare Association of Jinnah Super Market, said that traders had been trying for a fair rent control act for years.

The sprawling Jinnah Super Market is one of Islamabad's prime shopping areas. It rents space to shops and vendors who sell clothing, books, jewelry, and more. Last October, the traders threatened to shut it down if the government did not enforce an "unbiased" rental law.

BECOME A WRITING TENANT

Met Council wants to profile you and your neighbors' struggle to obtain affordable quality housing. We want you to write for *Tenant/Inquilino*.

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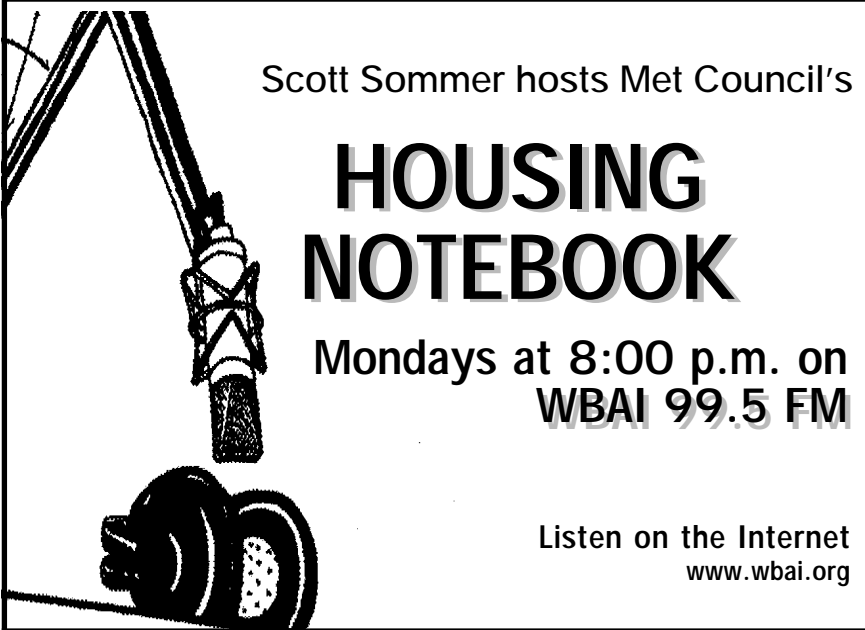
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Complaint Numbers

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



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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

Programas de vivienda asequible están 'diseñados para fracasar'

Por Mario Mazzoni
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Muchos programas que prometen "vivienda asequible" no cumplen esta promesa, aseveraron los conferenciantes en un congreso el 27 de marzo en Hunter College. Las invitaciones al evento, "No Más Estafas de Vivienda 'Asequible'" (No More "Affordable" Housing Scams), afirmaron que muchos de tales programas "benefician a los especuladores más que a las comunidades", son demasiado caros para la mayoría de los residentes de los vecindarios donde se construyen y están "diseñados para fracasar" al tener incorporadas en ellos fechas de vencimiento cuando las unidades pueden volver a los precios de la tasa del mercado.

Muchos organizadores y defensores de vivienda que acudieron al evento están trabajando para impedir que la reserva de vivienda creada dentro de tales programas en previas décadas sea vuelta a la tasa del mercado. Este patrón está al punto de repetirse, según los conferenciantes, si no se enfrentan los problemas de fondo.

Ahora se critican mucho las disposiciones escritas décadas atrás para permitir que urbanizaciones Mitchell-Lama y de Sección 8 salieran de estos programas. Sin embargo, fechas de vencimiento similares todavía son parte de casi todas las iniciativas de vivienda asequible más comúnmente empleadas, como las de 80/20, 421-a y los programas de créditos impositivos en viviendas destinadas a personas con bajos ingresos (Low Income Housing Tax Credit).

La publicidad exagerada sobre nuevas unidades, señalaron los conferenciantes, también sirve para distraer la atención de la pérdida de cantidades mucho más grandes de viviendas subvencionadas y reguladas ya existentes.

"El mito de la vivienda asequible", dijo Peter Marcuse, profesor de planificación urbana en Columbia University, es "la idea que si aceptamos el término 'asequible' como nuestra meta y después tenemos programas que nos dan más vivienda asequible, entonces habremos solucionado

el problema de vivienda. Creo que esto es un disparate: la mayoría de la susodicha vivienda asequible no lo es para la mayoría de la gente, tiene una limitación temporal y parece mucho más un señuelo [para] poder entregar fondos a empresas privadas".

Un hilo común entre los conferenciantes era la opinión que el afán de lucro es culpable de las políticas de vivienda fracasadas.

Sam Imperatrice, uno de los organizadores de la conferencia, sostuvo que estrategias para lograr accesibilidad financiera permanente tienen que basarse en la premisa de "sacar la tierra del mercado". Peter Marcuse instó a sus oyentes a rechazar "el mito que el mercado es la manera más apta de producir y distribuir vivienda".

¿Cuánto resulta ser 'asequible'?

Las críticas empiezan con la propia definición de "asequible". Las formulas usadas para las urbanizaciones subvencionadas o

apoyadas por el gobierno se basan en porcentajes del "ingreso medio del área" (area median income, AMI), como lo define el gobierno federal. En la Ciudad de Nueva York, una familia de cuatro personas que gana menos de \$61,920 al año se considera oficialmente de bajos ingresos, porque su ingreso está debajo de un 80 por ciento del AMI del área metropolitana, que incluye varios condados más acaudalados fuera de la ciudad.

El AMI metropolitano, ahora \$77,400, es más del doble del ingreso medio de las familias de inquilinos dentro de la ciudad. Así, en las comunidades más pobres de la ciudad, donde las urbanizaciones subvencionadas se ubican con frecuencia, las familias tienen que ganar dos o tres veces el ingreso medio de su vecindario para poder llenar los requisitos para una unidad de "bajos ingresos" subvencionada. Algunos programas subvencionan a los constructores para que creen unidades

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Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 41)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2009 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2010.

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 periodo de las pautas.

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años	
Renovación del Contrato	Todos	casero abastece la calefacción	3%	6%
		inquilino paga la calefacción	2.5%	5%
	Salvo donde el último contrato del apartamento vacío se firmó 6 o más años atrás y la renta es menos de \$1,000	casero abastece la calefacción	30	60
		inquilino paga la calefacción	25	50
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17%	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 un 17%	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% + \$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

Las unidades desvanes
Los aumentos legalizados para unidades de desván son un 3 por ciento por un contrato de un año y 6 por ciento por dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

Hoteles y SROs
4.5% para todas categorías, sin embargo, 0% cuando menos de un 85% de las unidades sean ocupadas por inquilinos permanentes de renta regulada.

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

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 tal 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 reciben 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

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

programas de vivienda asequibles

viene de la página 3

para personas que ganan más del AMI; de esa manera, se construyen apartamentos “asequibles” para familias con ingresos de cientos de miles de dólares.

Edificios abandonados, programas renunciados

La epidemia de abandono de vivienda en los años 1970 y 1980 llevó a la Ciudad de Nueva York a adueñarse de decenas de miles de edificios, muchos de ellos todavía ocupados por inquilinos de bajos ingresos. Eventualmente, la ciudad vendió la mayoría de las propiedades a propietarios privados con fines de lucro, pero grupos comunitarios la presionaron a volver varias de ellas urbanizaciones asequibles, mediante iniciativas como el programa Contrato Interino de Inquilinos (Tenant Interim Lease, TIL).

En TIL, se renuevan los edificios a costa de la ciudad y se venden a los residentes al precio de \$250 por cada unidad, si los inquilinos

pueden organizarse y mostrar que pueden mantener el edificio por sí mismos. Los edificios se convierten en cooperativas llamadas HDFCs.

Marina Metalios, una organizadora en la Junta de Ayuda para Tomar Posesión de Propiedades (Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, UHAB) sin fines de lucro, habló de las lecciones aprendidas de los esfuerzos para crear estas cooperativas, que UHAB ayudó a iniciar a fines de los años 70.

“Permitir a los inquilinos de edificios abandonados por sus propietarios hacerse los dueños era una innovación”, dijo, pero ella cree que la ciudad apoyó tales programas porque el mercado privado no estaba interesado en invertir en estas comunidades y “quería devolver las propiedades a la lista de bienes imponibles”.

El mismo móvil influyó en la de-

misión de la ciudad de imponer restricciones de reventa débiles y maleables. Las HDFC típicamente limitan un poco los ingresos de nuevos accionistas, pero los precios de reventa frecuentemente no se restringen en lo más mínimo, así que las unidades se venden ahora por cientos de miles de dólares.

Metalios dijo que de por sí hay “un problema con la relación entre una entidad controlada por inquilinos (...) y la circunstancia capitalista en la que está colocada. Es como arrojar una gota de agua dulce en el mar”. Las tentaciones para los inquilinos que pueden conseguir ganancias enormes por un golpe de suerte al revender, dice ella, son “muy, muy fuertes”.

Tom Angotti, profesor de planificación urbana en Hunter College, señaló que ninguno de los edificios abandonados que la ciudad adquirió en los años 70 y 80 jamás fue “puesto en programas que los hubieran hecho asequibles permanentemente para personas con bajos ingresos”, ni siquiera el pequeño porcentaje entregado a iniciativas de vivienda sin fines de lucro.

“Nos usaron como las niñeras de estos edificios”, aseveró Angotti, mientras la ciudad tenía la “idea estratégica que en el largo plazo, los terrenos de ellos se necesitarían otra vez. Podíamos instalar a la gente de la comunidad en ellos por el momento, pero tarde o temprano el mercado necesitaría estos vecindarios”.

La Ciudad de Nueva York actualmente evita tomar posesión de propiedades con impuestos atrasados. En vez de esto, las entrega directamente a propietarios privados. En algunos de los edificios, UHAB trabaja con los inquilinos para crear cooperativas de capital limitado. UHAB impone restricciones de reventa más estrictas que las impuestas por la ciudad en los edificios TIL.

Uno de estos programas existe en alrededor de 10 edificios anteriormente ocupados ilegalmente en el Loisaida, en los cuales los residentes se unieron con UHAB

para hacerlos cooperativas legales a través de este proceso. Sin embargo, aun entre personas que provienen de un movimiento frecuentemente descrito como anti-capitalista, las restricciones de reventa son claves, como señaló la residente Jessica Hall.

“Si no tenemos estas regulaciones”, dijo, “la gente optará por la privatización. Estoy segura que en mi edificio una votación democrática por parte de los ocupantes ilegales hubiera decidido vender a la tasa del mercado. Ellos opinaron que este modelo era punitivo”.

Marcuse abarcó el sentido de tener derecho a lucrar con la vivienda al diferenciar entre “derechos de uso” y “derechos de trueque”. Ser dueño del propio hogar incluye un paquete de derechos y responsabilidades que suponen el uso, ocupación y otros factores, explicó, pero no “tiene que significar que tienes el derecho a vender lo que tienes, para lucrar con ello”. Vincular los derechos al uso al “derecho a comprar y vender vivienda y a lucrar con la vivienda”, dijo, es “equivocado y muy destructivo”.

Val Orselli, del Fideicomiso de Inmobiliario Comunitario y la Asociación Mutua de Vivienda de Cooper Square (Cooper Square Community Land Trust and Mutual Housing Association), dijo que el grupo ha intentado amortiguar los intereses del mercado en sus 21 casas de vecindad en el Loisaida al “separar la propiedad de los edificios de la propiedad de la tierra”. Se creó un fideicomiso inmobiliario para guardar el título de la tierra, con restricciones de escrituras que mandan que la tierra se use para vivienda que será permanentemente para personas de bajos ingresos. El fideicomiso arrienda la tierra a una asociación mutua de vivienda, que mantiene los edificios colectivamente y está dirigida por un grupo mezclado de inquilinos y miembros de la comunidad no interesados, quienes son elegidos. Al hacer esto, dijo Orselli, “es-

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No se quede helado: ¡ORGANÍZASE!

La ley requiere que su casero proporcione calefacción y agua caliente a las temperaturas siguientes, desde el 1ro de octubre hasta el 31 de mayo:


Desde las 6 a.m. hasta las 10 p.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 55 grados, la temperatura adentro debe ser al menos de 68 grados en todo el apartamento.

Desde las 10 p.m. hasta las 6 a.m.: Si la temperatura afuera es de menos de 40 grados, la temperatura adentro debe ser al menos de 55 grados en todo el apartamento.

Se tiene que proporcionar agua caliente a un mínimo de 120 grados en el grifo las 24 horas del día, todo el año.

Si su casero no mantiene estas temperaturas mínimas, usted debe:

- * Comenzar una “Acción HP” (HP Action) en la Corte de Vivienda. Pida una inspección por orden de la corte y una Orden de Corrección (Order to Correct)
- * Llamar al Buro Central de Quejas (Central Control Bureau) de la ciudad de Nueva York al 311 inmediatamente, para documentar la violación del casero. Llame repetidamente. Se supone que un inspector vendrá eventualmente, aunque a veces no lo haga.
- * Exhortar a los otros inquilinos en el edificio a llamar al Central Complaint. Todos deben llamar repetidamente, al menos una vez al día, todos los días en que tengan problemas con la calefacción.
- * Comprar un buen termómetro para afuera y adentro, para documentar las fechas exactas, las horas, y las temperaturas, tanto afuera como adentro, mientras tenga problemas con la calefacción. Esta documentación es su evidencia
- * Llamar a la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal del Estado de Nueva York (DHCR, por sus siglas en inglés) al (718) 739-6400, y pedir que le envíen el formulario de Queja de Calefacción y Agua Caliente. Llene el formulario y consiga la participación de todos los



inquilinos en su edificio que pueden firmarlo. Reclame una orden para restaurar la calefacción y el agua caliente, y que se reduzcan y congelen (¡disculpe lo de “congelen”!) todas las rentas.

- * Necesitarán una fuerte asociación de inquilinos para obligar al casero a proporcionar calefacción y agua caliente. Escriban y llamen al casero para demandar reparaciones y aceite. Prepárense para una huelga de renta (sobre todo con asesoría legal)—de relámpago si es necesario.

Las leyes sobre la calefacción establecen también:

- * Que el Departamento de Reparaciones de Emergencia de la ciudad le proporcione la calefacción si el casero no lo hace. (No se siente en un bloque de hielo—otra vez, ¡disculpe!—mientras espere que lo haga.)
- * Una multa de \$250 to \$500 al casero por cada día que se produzca la violación. (Pero la verdad es que la Corte de Vivienda raras veces impone las multas, y menos aun las cobra).
- * Una multa de \$1,000 al casero si algún aparato de control automático se instala en la caldera para mantener la temperatura por debajo del mínimo legal.
- * Si el tanque de combustible de la caldera está vacío, los inquilinos tienen el derecho de comprar su propio combustible después de haber pasado 24 horas sin calefacción y también sin obtener ninguna respuesta del casero. Esto no se aplica si la caldera está rota y necesita tanto reparación como combustible.

¡Cuidado! ¡proteja su dinero! Si los inquilinos deciden comprar el combustible, hay que seguir los procedimientos legales cuidadosamente. Consiga la ayuda y el consejo de un organizador de inquilinos. La existencia de leyes de calefacción y agua caliente vigentes no garantiza que el gobierno las implemente. No se quede helado por esperar que la ciudad o el estado actúe. ¡Organízes!

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 \$29,000 o menos (el año pasado) 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:

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

Los inquilinos minusválidos que reciben ayuda financiera relacionada con invalidez y tienen ingresos de \$19,284 o menos para individuos y \$27,780 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, SCRIEDRIE Exemption
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.

Homeless

continued from page 1

Brooklyn, despite the fact that most homeless men are in Manhattan. It has actually closed or cut hours for most of the eleven 24-hour drop-in centers that existed in 2008. The Department of Homeless Services Web site lists

only two 24-hour centers, one in Manhattan and one in the Bronx. Three other centers listed are open only during the day.

While most homeless adults access the city's congregate shelters, many do not. About 1,000 men

don't or won't use the shelter system. They rely on the drop-in centers, where they can spend the day, and where they can sleep on chairs if there are no beds available elsewhere. Some are taken each night to faith-based shelters, which are mostly basements in churches, synagogues, and mosques staffed by volunteers. The barrier to housing many of these men is that their long-term, serious disabilities, including mental illness, make accessing the shelter system more unattractive than living on the streets.

The city's number of people in homeless families is much bigger—close to 40,000 by most counts. Homeless families in the

city now face huge obstacles. Because of a recent shortfall in federal funding (or mismanagement by the Bloomberg administration), the city in December cut off Section 8 vouchers that had been promised to about 2,600 formerly homeless families and individuals. The Housing Authority recently announced that it will have to cut off 10,000 households currently receiving Section 8.

If it proceeds, many, if not most, of those 10,000 families will end up in Housing Court eviction proceedings—followed quickly by the city's shelter system.

programas de vivienda asequibles

viene de la página 4

tás creando un mecanismo para asegurar que las restricciones de reventa se hagan respetar y que la vivienda quede asequible a perpetuidad. No hay especulación, no hay explotación”.

“Si no tienes un fideicomiso inmobiliario comunitario, tu cooperativa se va a volver privada, y esto es el fin de toda esa vivienda asequible”, alertó la co-fundadora de Cooper Square Committee Frances Goldin. “Será el fin de la vivienda que se luchó tanto para conseguir”. Ella citó varios ejemplos de batallas ganadas a duras penas por inquilinos para crear y controlar urbanizaciones de vivienda asequible, sólo para que los residentes después optaran por ventas a la tasa del mercado.

James Tracy, del Fideicomiso Inmobiliario Comunitario de San Francisco (San Francisco Community Land Trust) habló sobre un modelo similar que su grupo ha implementado, aunque sea para hogares más pequeños. Para éstos, el fideicomiso guarda la tierra y fija bajos precios de reventa para las casas en él, los cuales pueden aumentarse al ritmo del Índice de Precios de Consumo (Consumer Price Index).

Los conferenciantes también hablaron de esfuerzos locales e internacionales de residentes de comunidades para manejar los


procesos de planificación y presupuestarios que los afectan. La ocupación ilegal sigue siendo una cuestión reñida. Frank Morales, antiguo usurpador de tierras quien actualmente es organizador en Imagínese a los Sin Techo (Picture the Homeless), sostuvo que la gente que necesita vivienda tiene “un derecho moral a ocupar espacios vacíos”, mientras otros señalaron batallas divisivas del pasado entre usurpadores de tierras y organizaciones comunitarias que tenían planes para convertir las mismas propiedades en vivienda para personas de bajos ingresos.

Los organizadores de la conferencia expresaron la esperanza que movimientos dispares se unieran para crear estrategias para lograr la visión en común de vivienda libre de especulación, explotación y otras influencias del mercado privado.

“Si quieres decidir si quieres más mercado o menos mercado, mira lo que ha producido el mercado hasta ahora”, dijo Marcuse. “Ha producido la falta de techo, ha producido la segregación, ha producido todos los males que la mayoría de nosotros están aquí para vencer.

“Tenemos que sacar el mercado de la vivienda en vez de desalojar a la gente de la vivienda”.

Unarse a Real Rent Reform
(la compañía de renta reforma real) para



REAL RENT REFORM CAMPAIGN

UN DIA DE LOBBY

Martes, APRIL 27, 2010

Vamos a Albany para apoyar mas fuerte las leyes que protegen a inquilinos

- Revocar desregulacion de vacantes y volver a regular apartamentos descontrolado
- Proteccion para inquilinos de Mitchell-Lama & Seccion 8
- Renover las rentas estatales y proteccion para inquilinos de Coop ,Este Ano!!!!
- Reformar el programa “ mejora capital significativa”[MCI] y los incrementos del programa
- ... y mas. para el programa legislativo completo:
www.realrentreform.org.

Inquilinos de la ciudad de Nueva York y condados suburbanos de Nassau, Westchester y Rockland vamos a Albany para decirles que fortalezcan las leyes de renta y proteccion contra el desalojo.

<p>Para reservar un asiento en el bus y informacion:</p> <p>Email: info@housinghereandnow.org Phone: (718) 802-9540. ext. 9</p>	<p>Se necesita donaciones para el costo del autobus,mande un cheque a:</p> <p>Housing Here and Now 80A Fourth Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11217</p>
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GET ACTIVE!

Sign up for Met Council's e-mail alerts and get notices of rallies, hearings, and other important actions for tenants' rights and affordable housing.

www.metcouncil.net

Don't Freeze—Organize!

The law requires your landlord provide heat and hot water at the following levels from October 1 through May 31:


From 6 am to 10 pm: If the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees, the inside temperature must be at least 68 degrees everywhere in your apartment.

From 10 pm to 6 am: If the outside temperature falls below 40 degrees, the inside temperature must be at least 55 degrees everywhere in your apartment.

Hot water at a minimum 120 degrees at the tap must be provided 24 hours a day, year round.

If your landlord does not maintain those minimum temperatures, you should:

- * Start an “HP action” in Housing Court. Ask for a court-ordered inspection and an Order to Correct.
- * Call the New York City Central Complaints Bureau at 311 immediately to record the landlord's violation. Call repeatedly. An inspector should eventually come, although sometimes they don't.
- * Get other tenants in your building to call Central Complaint. Everybody should call repeatedly, at least once every day the condition is not corrected.
- * Buy a good indoor/outdoor thermometer and keep a chart of the exact dates, times, and temperature readings, inside and out, so long as the condition is not corrected. The chart is your evidence.
- * Call the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal at (718) 739-6400 and ask them to send you their Heat and Hot Water complaint form.



Get as many other apartments as possible in your building to sign on, demanding an order restoring heat and hot water, and a reduction and freeze (pardon the expression!) in all the rents.

You'll need a strong tenant association to force the landlord to provide heat and hot water. Write and call the landlord and demand repairs or fuel.

Prepare to go on rent strike—but get legal advice first.

The heat laws also provide for:

- * The city's Emergency Repair Department to supply your heat if the landlord does not. (Try waiting for this one!)
- * A \$250 to \$500 a day fine to the landlord for every day of violation. (But the Housing Court rarely imposes these fines, let alone collects them.)
- * A \$1,000 fine to the landlord if an automatic control device is put on the boiler to keep the temperature below the lawful minimum.

If your boiler's fuel tank is empty, tenants have the right to buy their own fuel after 24 hours of no heat and no response from the landlord. But this provision does not apply if the boiler is broken and needs both repairs and fuel.

Caution! Protect your money! If you decide to buy fuel, you must follow special lawful procedures very carefully. You should get help and advice from a tenant organizer.

Because the heat and hot water laws are in the law books does not mean they are enforced by government. Don't freeze to death waiting for the city or state to act. Organize!

DHCR Rules Against IPN Tenants

By Steven Wishnia

The state housing agency has ruled against Independence Plaza North tenants, saying that the former Mitchell-Lama complex in Tribeca should not be rent-stabilized.

In an opinion issued March 5, Leslie Torres, deputy commissioner at the Division of Housing and Community Renewal, said that the agency would not dispute the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development's decision to let landlord Laurence Gluck retroactively withdraw from the J-51 program. All buildings receiving tax benefits through J-51 must remain rent-stabilized.

Torres wrote that "it is not within the purview of DHCR to second-guess or overrule" HPD.

The case now goes back to State Supreme Court Justice Marcy Friedman. Tenants in the 1,339-unit complex have been fighting against Gluck's attempts to raise rents since 2004, when he bought IPN and took it out of the Mitchell-Lama program. In 2005, when they discovered that Gluck was receiving J-51 benefits, they sued to challenge rent increases.

Tenants said they will appeal if Judge Friedman accepts the DHCR's advice and declares that the building is not rent-stabilized. "We still adamantly challenge the legality of 'retroactive termination,'" the IPN Tenants Association said in a flyer handed out in the building.

Gluck received about \$18,000 in J-51 tax breaks for IPN after withdrawing it from Mitchell-Lama. In 2006, HPD accepted his argument that he had mistakenly accepted the tax breaks. It let him repay the money and, retroactively, held that he had officially stopped receiving J-51 benefits in 2004 when he took the building out of Mitchell-Lama. HPD used that to rule that as Gluck had never received the benefits, he was therefore exempt from the legal obligations they carry.

"It just doesn't make any sense," Seth Miller, a lawyer for the tenants, told the *Tribeca Tribune*.

"The issue is simple: Are we going to follow the only law that applies to the termination of benefits and how that affects stabilization? Or, are we going to pretend that the benefits were never given and that the law doesn't apply?"

Gluck is expected to appeal if Friedman rules that the complex is rent-stabilized. His Stellar Management has specialized in buying Mitchell-Lama buildings and taking them out of the program. He is estimated to own 24,000 apartments, in New York, Chicago, Washington and San Francisco.

Gluck Loses Riverton, Aims for Tivoli

The next week, Gluck lost a corner of his empire that had come to symbolize housing-bubble greed. On March 11, the Riverton Houses, a 1,230-apartment complex on East 135th Street and Fifth Avenue that was Harlem's counterpart to Stuyvesant Town, were sold for \$125 million at a foreclosure auction. The buyer was CWC Capital Management, a firm associated with Wells Fargo, trustee for bondholders on the complex.

Stellar Management had purchased Riverton's 12 buildings in for \$130 million in 2005. Gluck then refinanced, borrowing \$250 million against their value. But he was unable to drive rent-regulated tenants out fast enough to make the deal profitable. In February, Wells Fargo foreclosed on the complex. In early March, it topped the list of distressed New York City properties cited by the commercial-loan tracking firm Trepp, as it had the largest loan balance more than 60 days delinquent.

Yet Stellar may be about to acquire another former Mitchell-Lama: Tivoli Towers in Brooklyn's Prospect Heights. Gluck has been trying to buy the 33-story building since 2005. City and federal housing officials are now working out a deal that would let him do it, the *New York Times* reported on March 30.

According to the *Times*, Gluck would buy Tivoli for \$11.25 million and get

\$45.7 million in low-interest mortgages from the city Housing Development Corporation. In return, he would have to invest \$15 million in repairs and keep the building affordable until 2040.

Rents will still go up. Alice Mitchell, head of the Tivoli tenants association, told the *Times* that her one-bedroom apartment will more than double, from \$656 to \$1,370. The federal Department of

Housing and Urban Development will cover the amount over 30 percent of tenants' incomes.

"What a disgrace!" responded Judy Montanez, a tenant leader at Castleton Park on Staten Island, another Mitchell-Lama where residents tangled with Gluck. "Allowing Gluck to use the government money to save his butt. America is the laughingstock of other countries who see how scoundrels like Gluck can

come in and make fools of our government."

But with the building deteriorating, Dina Levy of the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board told the *Times*, Tivoli residents "have to make a choice between getting desperately needed repairs and taking their chances living under Larry Gluck—or fighting the deal and risking that the building sits in limbo, with no repairs getting done."

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 41)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2009 through Sept. 30, 2010
Order No. 40, covering leases commencing prior to October 1, 2009,
is available at <http://www.metcouncil.net/campaigns/RGB.htm>

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent	One-year Lease	Two-year Lease	
Renewal Leases	All...	landlord supplies heat	3%	6%
		tenant pays for heat	2.5%	5%
	Except where last vacancy lease was 6 or more years ago and rent is below \$1000	landlord supplies heat	\$30	\$60
		tenant pays for heat	\$25	\$50
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

Renewal Leases

Landlords must offer a rent-stabilized tenant a renewal lease 90 to 120 days before the expiration of the 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, the tenant has 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 per-

cent 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 \$29,000 or less (for 2007 tax year) 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 \$18,396 or less for individuals and \$26,460 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 3 percent for a one-year lease and 6 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs

4.5% for all categories, however, 0% when fewer than 85% of units are occupied by permanent, rent-regulated tenants.

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.

Help us make calls to win rent-law reforms!

Join us on Wednesday evenings from 5:30 to 7:30 PM to call tenants in neighborhoods where state senators are blocking rent-reform legislation.

April 21; May 12, 19, 26; June 2, 9, 16, 23
(no calls on April 28 or May 5)

RSVP: 212-979-0611 active@metcouncil.net

Affordable Housing

continued from page 1

The metropolitan AMI, now \$77,400, is more than twice the median income for city renter households. Thus, in the city's poorest communities, where subsidized developments are often situated, households must make two or three times their neighborhood's median income in order to qualify for a subsidized "low-income" unit. Some programs subsidize developers for creating units for people who make above the AMI—so that "affordable" apartments are built for households with six-figure incomes.

Abandoned Buildings, Abandoned Programs

The epidemic of housing abandonment in the '70s and '80s led New York City to take ownership of tens of thousands of buildings, many still occupied by low-income tenants. The city eventually sold most of this property back to for-profit owners, but community groups pressured it to turn some into affordable developments, through initiatives such as the Tenant Interim Lease program.

In TIL, buildings are renovated at the city's cost and sold to their residents for \$250 per unit, if the tenants can organize and demonstrate their ability to manage the building themselves. The buildings become limited-equity cooperatives known as HDFCs.

Marina Metalios, an organizer at the nonprofit Urban Homesteading Assistance Board, spoke about the lessons learned from efforts to create these co-ops, which UHAB helped to pioneer in the late 1970s.

"To let tenants in landlord-abandoned buildings become the owners... reflected an innovation," she said, but she believes that the city supported such programs because the private market wasn't interested in investing in these communities and "it wanted to return

those properties to the tax rolls."

That motive informed the city's decision to impose resale restrictions that are weak and malleable. HDFCs typically limit the incomes of new shareholders somewhat, but resale prices are often not restricted at all, so that units now sell for hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Metalios said that there is inherently "a problem with the relationship between a tenant-controlled entity... and the capitalist circumstance in which it's placed. It's like having one drop of fresh water thrown into the sea." The temptations for tenants who can get a one-time windfall by reselling at a huge profit, she says, are "very, very great."

Tom Angotti, professor of urban planning at Hunter College, noted that none of the abandoned buildings the city acquired in the 1970s and 1980s were ever "put in programs that would make them permanently affordable to people with low incomes"—not even the small percentage turned over to nonprofit housing initiatives.

"We were used as babysitters for these buildings," Angotti claimed, while the city had "the strategic idea that in the long term, their land was going to be needed again. We could park community folks there for the moment, but sooner or later, those neighborhoods would be needed by the market."

New York City currently avoids taking ownership of tax-delinquent properties. Instead, it pushes them directly into private ownership. In some, UHAB works with tenants to develop limited-equity co-ops. It imposes greater resale restrictions on such developments than the city did with TIL buildings.

One such program is in about 10 former squats on the Lower East Side, in which residents joined with UHAB to become a legal co-op through this process. Yet even

among people from a movement often described as anti-capitalist, the resale restrictions are crucial, noted resident Jessica Hall.

"If we don't have these regulations," she said, "people will opt to privatize. I am sure in my building that a democratic vote of squatters would've voted to sell for market rate. They felt that this model was punitive."

Marcuse addressed the sense of entitlement to profit from housing by differentiating between "rights of use" and "rights of exchange." Home ownership includes a package of rights and responsibilities involving use, occupancy, and other factors, he explained, but it "need not mean that you have the right to sell what you have, to make a profit from it." Linking rights of use to the "right to buy and sell housing," he said, is "wrong and very destructive."

Val Orselli, of the Cooper Square Community Land Trust and Mutual Housing Association, said the group has attempted to buffer against market interests in its 21 Lower East Side tenements by "separating ownership of the buildings from ownership of the land." A land trust was created to hold title to the land, with deed restrictions mandating that the land be used for permanently low-income housing. The trust leases the land to a mutual housing association, which collectively manages the buildings, and is run by a mix of tenants and non-stakeholder community members who are elected. In doing this, Orselli said, "you create a mechanism to ensure that resale restrictions are enforced and housing remains affordable in perpetuity. There's no speculation, no profiteering."

"If you don't have a community land trust, your co-op is going to go private, and that's the end of all of that affordable housing,"

Cooper Square Committee co-founder Frances Goldin warned. "That will be the end of the housing you struggled so hard to get." She cited several examples of hard-won battles by tenants to create and control affordable housing developments, only to see residents later opt for market-rate sales.

James Tracy of the San Francisco Community Land Trust spoke about a similar model his group has implemented, but for smaller homes. In these, the trust holds the land, and resale prices of homes on it are set low and rise at the rate of the Consumer Price Index.

Panelists also covered local and international efforts by community residents to drive the planning and budgeting processes that affect them. Squatting remains a controversial issue. Frank Morales, a former squatter who is now an organizer at Picture the Homeless, argued that people in need of housing have "a moral right to occupy vacant spaces," while others noted divisive battles in the past between squatters and community organizations that had plans to develop the same properties as low-income housing.

Conference organizers expressed hope that disparate movements would come together to create strategies to achieve their common vision of housing free from speculation, profiteering, and other influences of the private market.

"If you want to decide whether you want more market or less market, look at what the market has produced so far," said Marcuse. "It's produced homelessness, it's produced segregation, it's produced all of the evils that most of us are here to do something about."

"We need to evict the market from housing rather than evicting people from housing."

NYCHA Threatens to Revoke 10,000 Section 8 Vouchers

By Steven Wishnia

Battered by a budget crisis, the New York City Housing Authority is threatening to revoke the Section 8 vouchers for 10,000 people. If the revocations go through, they would likely result in the eviction of thousands of people who depend on the federal subsidy program to pay their rent.

NYCHA, which administers most of the program in New York, says the cuts are necessary to close a \$45 million deficit. Last December, it announced it would cancel 2,600 vouchers that had been given to people who hadn't yet used them.

More than 130,000 low-income households in the city have Section 8 vouchers, which help them rent apartments from private landlords. They pay 30 percent of their income for rent, and the federal government covers the rest. NYCHA administers more than 100,000 of them; the city Department of

Housing Preservation and Development handles almost 30,000; and the state has the rest.

Are these cuts a genuine possibility, or are they the equivalent of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority warning that the subway fare will have to go up to \$3.50 if it doesn't receive additional funding? Judith Goldiner, a Legal Aid attorney who often represents Section 8 tenants, says she doesn't know—but it's "unimaginable" even to think about it.

"Is there the political will to stop it?" she asks. "Is there the political will to realize that it's completely wrong? Or is the government going to stand by while 10,000 people go into the shelters?"

NYCHA had issued the vouchers cancelled in December despite warnings several months earlier from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development that there would not be money available to pay for them. HUD,

which runs the Section 8 program, has cut funding significantly. And "the state government has never lived up to its obligations," says Goldiner.

The political problem, she says, is that Section 8 tenants are "the people we care about the least." They are generally poorer and less politically organized than public-housing residents. They are mostly disabled, elderly, or on

public assistance, and the vast majority are black or Latino.

On the other hand, she notes, Section 8 also subsidizes landlords. Though some owners in gentrifying areas have tried to stop accepting new Section 8 tenants, the program enables landlords in poorer neighborhoods to collect more rent than they could get otherwise. So maybe, she says, the Bloomberg administration might not want to "tell its friends in the real-estate community to take a \$45 million kick in the teeth. If they city doesn't care about my clients, maybe it will care about the landlords."



*Missed an issue
of TENANT?*

www.metcouncil.net

Aviation-Finance Lawyer Named to RGB

By Steven Wishnia

Maybe Mayor Bloomberg's new housing plan is to convert disused jumbo jets into apartments.

The mayor has named aviation-finance lawyer Ronald Scheinberg to be the Rent Guidelines Board's fifth public member. He fills the seat left vacant when Marvin Markus resigned and Jonathan L. Kimmel moved up to chair.

While Scheinberg has been called one of the country's top lawyers in arranging loans and leases for airplanes, he has no apparent experience in housing. Scheinberg has spent the past 18 years at the firm of Vedder Price. His official biography says he "concentrates his practice in corporate finance with a special focus on equipment and commercial bank finance" and "represents commercial banks, finance companies, underwriters, investment banks, insurance companies, manufacturers and airlines in the financing of aircraft, railcars and other equipment."

"We are utterly dismayed and frustrated," Gitanjali Dadlani of Tenants and Neighbors told the

New York Times. "We were hoping the mayor would take this opportunity to diversify the RGB. This development simply highlights the fact that many low- and middle-income New Yorkers, who make up the public, are not adequately represented. It also underscores the need for the appointment process to be reformed."

All of Bloomberg's choices for RGB public members have come from finance and corporate law.

Scheinberg told the *Times* that he would be open-minded and balanced. On the other hand, he is well-connected in real estate. He also said he had been recommended for the RGB post by Steven C. Koppel, a high-powered real-estate lawyer. Koppel, who has represented owners and developers for 25 years, is now one of the top attorneys working with private-equity investors. Two years ago, he became a partner at Jones Day, which is ranked by Bloomberg News as the largest real-estate law practice in the world.

Scheinberg contributed \$2,000 to President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign. In 2008, he gave

\$2,500 to the Mid Manhattan Political Action Committee. That PAC, described as pro-Israel, channeled money from Wall Street to a mix of far-right Republicans, such

as Rep. Dan Burton of Indiana, and powerful Democrats, such as House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer.

Rent Guidelines Board 2010 Schedule

Tuesday, April 27

Public Meeting
9:30 a.m.–Noon
Department of City Planning
Spector Hall, 22 Reade St.
New York, NY 10007

Friday, April 30

Public Meeting:
Invited Group Testimony
Department of City Planning
Spector Hall, 22 Reade St.
New York, NY 10007
Apartment Owners 9:45–11:45 a.m.
Apartment Tenants 1:00–3:00 p.m.
Hotel Owners 3:15–4:00 p.m.
Hotel Tenants 4:00–4:45 p.m.

Wednesday, May 5

Public Meeting
(Preliminary Vote)
5:30–9:30 p.m.
The Great Hall, Cooper Union
7 East 7 Street at corner of 3 Ave.
(Basement)
New York, NY 10003

Thursday, June 3

Public Meeting
9:30 a.m.–Noon
Department of City Planning
Spector Hall, 22 Reade St.
New York, NY 10007

Tuesday, June 15

Public Hearing
with Public Testimony
4–10 p.m.
LaGuardia Performing Arts Center
31-10 Thomson Ave.
(Use entrance on Van Dam St.,
just north of 47 Ave.)
Long Island City, NY 11101

Thursday, June 24

Public Meeting (FINAL VOTE)
5:30–9:30 p.m.
The Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 East 7th Street at corner of 3rd Ave.
(Basement)
New York, NY 10003

The final vote has not been scheduled yet. For more information, call Met Council or go to the RGB's Web site, <http://www.housingnyc.com/html/about/meetings.html>



WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

MET COUNCIL ON HOUSING CLINIC
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), 212-243-0544
Thursdays 7:30 pm

GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)
171 Avenue B (between 10 and 11 St.)
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

MIRABAL SISTERS
618 W. 142nd St., 212-234-3002
Saturdays 1 - 4 pm

PRATT AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL
201 DeKalb Ave., Brooklyn,
718-522-2613 ext. 24
3rd Wednesday 6 pm

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

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

HOUSING CONSERVATION COORDINATORS
777 10 Ave.; 212-541-5996
Mondays 7-9 pm

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS
Covers Sunset Park and surrounding neighborhoods
443 39 St., Ste. 202, Brooklyn
By appointment only. 718-686-7946, ext. 10

NYC TENANTS RIGHTS CLINIC
305 Broadway (Corner of Duane), Suite 201, 212-571-4080
Tuesdays 4:30-7:30pm

QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE
Forest Hills Community Center,
10825 62nd Dr., Forest Hills
(718) 592-5757, ext. 280
Mondays and Wednesdays ... 9:30-11 am

QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE
Pomono Community Center,
6709 Kissena Blvd., Flushing
(718) 591-6060
Fridays 10 am-12 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

Met Council on Housing's Brooklyn Housing Action Group

Monthly Meetings

2nd THURSDAY of Each Month - 6pm-8pm
Lafayette Ave. Presbyterian Church (meeting hall)
85 South Oxford St.
(btwn Lafayette Ave & Hanson Pl.)

By Subway: 2/3/4/5/B/Q to Atlantic Avenue
D/M/N/R to Pacific Street
C to Lafayette Avenue; G to Fulton Street

An RSVP is not required, but is certainly appreciated, especially as we first get started! Call Mario at 212-979-6238 x200 or email mario@metcouncil.net

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