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THE PARK WEST TENANT

RENT LAWS TO EXPIRE 6/15/03

laws governing rent stabilization and rent control are set to expire on June 15, 2003 and if we don't take action now, the 2.3 million tenants living in rent-regulated apartments in New York could be reduced by half over the next few years. In an era of skyrocketing rents and unprecedented profits for landlords, it's imperative that we let our state elected officials know that the small amount of affordable housing left in New York City must be protected. This means that the rent laws must not only be renewed this June, but also **strengthened**.

The last time the NY State rent laws were renewed in 1997, landlords spent millions of dollars via lobbying and political contributions, to weaken protection for tenants. The result was the Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 in which landlords won the vacancy decontrol of apartments (that have reached a rent of \$2,000), and also won a reduction of

For those of us living in rent-regulated apartments, this is a critical time. The NY state

high-income decontrol (or luxury decontrol) from a \$250,000 income to a \$175,000 income for families living in an apartment with a rent of \$2,000 or more. These were serious blows to tenants all over New York, and as a result, as many as 150,000 rent regulated apartments have been lost. Vacancy decontrol is an almost irresistible invitation to landlords to harass existing tenants and raise rents above \$2,000. Here in Park West Village in the rent stabilized buildings, over 100 apartments have been removed from stabilization.

This year, landlords don't need to lobby our Senators or spend millions of dollars to weaken protections for tenants as they did in 1997 - they know that simply renewing the rent laws will result in a further loss of rent-regulated apartments and an eventual end to rent-regulation entirely. This year, it is the tenants who need to let our elected officials know that affordable housing in NY is a priority. The organization "Tenants & Neighbors" has clearly outlined some of the measures that the State Legislature can enact in order to protect our rent laws

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UPDATE ON RENT STRIKE

One of the clauses in the rent strike stipulation, filed in court on December 6, 2002, states that if the timetable included in this agreement for the completion of the three phases of the elevator work was not met, the owners of Park West Village would compensate the tenants' association in the amount of \$1,000 per day. The agreement was signed by the attorney and principals for PWV Acquisitions, LLC and PWVTA. The amount of the compensation was proposed by Joseph Chetrit one of the owners. As per the stipulation, the release of additional funds from the escrow account to management is contingent upon the receipt of this compensation.

The date of the completion of Phase II (B elevators) as stated in the timetable was November 29, 2002, but the elevators in all three Columbus Avenue buildings were not operational until January 24, 2003. Therefore, management owes \$56,000 for missing its

schedule for Phase II. Phase III (A elevators) was scheduled for completion February 15, 2003. On March 25, the A elevator in 792 and 788 went into operation, but not in 784. The bill is mounting.

The management is looking for a way out of this agreement, an agreement they and their attorney negotiated. They have informed our attorney, Samuel Himmelstein, that a motion has been filed with the court to avoid paying this compensation. We will be back in Court on April 14, 2003 to argue this point. The Association and our attorney will insist that the Court hold management to its word.

Heartfelt thanks to all tenants on rent strike who made generous contributions to the Legal Fund from their rebate checks.

In the meantime, the rent strike goes on. For those participating, continue sending your rent to the Escrow Account until you are informed otherwise. Please make checks payable to PWVTA Escrow Account.

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for the future.

- Repeal the vacancy decontrol and the high-rent, high-income luxury decontrol.
- Expand the rent laws to include rent stabilization for tenants living in Section 8 housing and also for Mitchell-Lama buildings.
- Reduce the 20% vacancy bonus that a landlord receives when an apartment is vacated to 10% and limit its collection to once every five years.
- Tighten restrictions on owner's use evictions.
- Repeal the Urstadt Law, which would restore the power to change the rent-regulations to the NY City Council.

The campaign to renew and strengthen the rent laws needs tenants on the front lines! Please join your neighbors in the fight to preserve your right to affordable housing. First, we need

to write letters to Governor George Pataki, (see sample letter) to let him know that vacancy decontrol and luxury decontrol need to be repealed. Secondly, Tenants & Neighbors will be organizing phone banks

and mailings to let NY residents know how they can help. You can join your Park West Village neighbors for an organized outing to work the phones. Thirdly, Tuesday May 13th is "Tenant Lobby Day" and PWVTA is organizing transportation for tenants to go to Albany. The more people we have, the greater the impact will be. Please call Clare Dockery at 212-866-6061 or E-mail at CLAREDOCK@EARTH.LINK.NET to make a reservation or to find out more information. Join us in Albany to let the state legislature know that senior citizens, children, single mothers and working families from all over New York deserve to have their homes protected.

SAMPLE LETTER (your own handwriting is most effective)

Honorable George Pataki
Governor
Executive Chambers
Governor's Office
Albany, New York 12248

Dear Governor Pataki:
[Date]

Renewing and strengthening New York State rent regulation and eviction protection laws must be a priority.

It is especially important that "high rent" vacancy decontrol based on rent of \$2,000 per month be repealed. Rent-stabilized apartments in New York City are rapidly disappearing. In the past three years, Park West Village, where I live, has lost more than one hundred apartments due to vacancy decontrol. The decontrol allowance is also an incentive for landlords to harass long-term tenants.

Please support the repeal of this section of the law.

Sincerely,
[Name]
[Address]

WINDOWS MCI UPDATE

Negotiations are still continuing with respect to the 1995-6 Windows Major Capital Improvement (MCI) petition in the three Columbus Avenue buildings.

Last month at the suggestion of the owner's advisor and at the encouragement of PWVTA's attorney, Robert Anderson, the negotiations were expanded to include the disposition of a petition for administrative review (PAR) concerning the diminution of security at the three rental buildings of Park West Village. An order was issued by the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) in 1999 with respect to these petitions, and that order determined that the then level of security (9 guards covering the 3 buildings) was comparable to prior service and rent reduction was denied. A PAR was subsequently filed by our attorney challenging that order, but the DHCR has not acted on that PAR to date.

As part of the current Window MCI negotiation,

the owner has offered to waive all arrears relating to these PARS if the tenants withdraw both the window and security appeals. PWVTA has most recently proposed that the owner provide 24/7 security with uniformed guards (including periodic building inspections) as a condition for withdrawing the security PAR.

The Court has ordered DHCR to arrive at a decision by the end of March on the window MCI. Because we have been working with DHCR on a negotiated settlement, we have mutually agreed to extend the March deadline to the end of April. We are awaiting the landlord's response to our latest proposal.

WELCOME BACK

Tenants in 788 have seen George Houlihan at his post in the lobby of the building. Congratulation on winning your job back.

UPDATE ON THE 392 MCI INCREASE

On Wednesday, March 5, 2003, oral arguments were presented to Judge York in the case of Park West Village Tenants Association (PWVTA) v. Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) regarding the MCI increase granted in late July, 2002. This case is about the MCI rent increase issued by the Office of Rent Administration, granting a retroactive rent increase to the landlord for a new roof on the building at 392 Central Park West. Based on the order granted in July, 2002, the effective date would be retroactive to August 1, 1987 in the amount of \$.89 per room per month. Stellar Management started in January 2003 to add the charge to the monthly bills for the rent stabilized tenants in 392.

The attorney for the DHCR admitted to Judge York that the papers supporting their granting of the increase were lost. David Hershey-Webb, attorney for PWVTA, told Judge York that his office had been requesting copies from DHCR since last July.

Judge York will review the written submissions before making his final decision. He may make a determination or may remand the case to DHCR.

PARKING LEASE RENEWAL

Parking spaces have always been part of the lease and should remain so. Remember that parking space renewals are not separate from the apartment lease renewals, and management is entitled only to the same percentage increase as is permitted for apartment leases as determined by the Rent Guidelines Board.

If you receive separate apartment and parking lease renewals, we suggest that you return them to management and insist that the parking be included in the basic lease. No security deposit is required for a parking place.

Contributors to this issue

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**PARK WEST
VILLAGE
TENANTS'
ASSOCIATION
HOTLINE
662-2610**

TENANTS RECEIVE CHECKS FOR INTEREST ON SECURITY DEPOSITS

Beginning March 15, 2003, tenants in Park West Village began receiving checks for the interest earned on their security deposits. This was the culmination of a long struggle (since PWV Acquisitions purchased the property in 2000) to continue receiving this interest directly rather than having it added to the security deposit held at the bank.

Through the persistence of the Tenants' Association and with the assistance of the Attorney General's Office, we were able to convince management to return to the prior practice of sending the interest earned directly to tenants.

PWVTA OFFICERS 2003

PWVTA officers for 2003 were elected at the Annual Membership meeting held on March 13, 2003. They are:

President:	Vivian Dee	- 788
Vice President:	Amy Haber	- 792
Treasurer:	Emily Margolis	- 400
Membership:	Miriamne Spector	- 372
Secretary:	Judy Urrutia	- 784

Grateful appreciation was expressed to Mary Livingston and Dan Dunbar for their service in leadership positions over the past years. We hope that, as their time permits, they will continue to be active with the Association in other capacities.

State Senator David Paterson and State Assembly member Daniel O'Donnell both expressed their strong support for the renewal and strengthening of the rent laws this year. City Council member Phil Reed informed us that the City Council has voted to renew rent regulations until 2008. They also asked the State to extend them for same period. The State Assembly has already voted to extend rent regulations and to eliminate vacancy decontrol. The critical battle now focuses on the State Senate and the Governor.

By Any Other Name

Since our last newsletter Stellar PWV Management has changed its name to PWV Management. There has been no change in ownership.

JOIN THE PWVTA NEWSGROUP

The PWVTA has started an online newsgroup at: http://group.yahoo.com/group/pwvta_group/
The group posts news of interest to all PWVTA members, although group membership is open to everyone. To join the group, it is necessary to have or create a Yahoo ID (screen name). Your real name, e-mail account and any other personal information you enter into your Yahoo profile will remain confidential. Your Yahoo ID can be the same as any screen name you currently use, and e-mail from the group can be directed to your current e-mail account. Although you may opt not to receive e-mail from the group, we urge you to do so, because e-mails from the group will be few in number.

... AND YOUR RECIPES PLEASE!

We know there are many cooks, many nationalities and many people living here at PWV who just plain enjoy good food. So, the time has come for PWV to have its own cookbook.

We need your recipes to put this book together. Recipes can be your own concoctions, old family recipes that have been passed on or that dog-eared yellow recipe that you clipped from some long forgotten magazine or newspaper. All recipes should be ones that you really love and serve often. Every recipe will bear the name of the person who donated it for use in the book.

This is a project that shares, and can earn the Association always needed money. If you can volunteer some time to make this a reality call Lois Hoffmann 212-222-1621 to be a part of the Cookbook Committee. We will need people within each building to distribute the recipe forms, collect the forms and get them to the Committee. The goal is to have the book ready by late November. Our deadline to submit the copy is the second week in July. If you are interested please call.

OUR FAN MAIL

To All Officers and Committee Members of PWVTA:

I want to express my thanks to all who gave so much time and effort to the struggles with management and for the resolution that you have obtained thru your devotion and diligence on behalf of all tenants.

Of course, I'm also grateful to our lawyers for their efforts and have written to them.

Am enclosing a check for \$300; \$40 for annual dues and the remaining \$260 to help build up the Legal Fund for future battles (which I hope won't materialize).

With great respect & appreciation,
C.S., 784

I am happy to contribute the full amount of my rent rebate in grateful appreciation of all the loyal volunteers of PWVTA.

Thanks,
H. B., 788

Thank you all for all your hard work. No doubt that you are the only reasons these buildings are livable. Without your hard work and determination, we would all really be "up a creek."

Thank you all.

Sincerely,
T. D., 788

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

TENANT LOBBY DAY

ALBANY, MAY 13TH

PWVTA MEMBERSHIP: Your membership counts. If you have not yet joined the PWVTA for the Year 2003, please do so. If you are already a member, thank you for your continued support and involvement.

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PLEASE RETURN THIS MEMBERSHIP COUPON TO YOUR BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE or MAIL TO:

**Park West Village Tenants' Association, PO Box 20339
Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025-0339**

Name _____ Building _____ Apt _____ Telephone _____

Please make check payable to PWVTA. Year 2003 membership dues are \$40 and contributions to the legal fund are needed. If you are unable to pay \$40, please pay what you can. Your membership card will be delivered to you.