

The Park West Tenant

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The Newsletter of the Park West Village Tenants' Association info@pwvta.org summer 2008

THE PWVTA WORKS FOR YOU!

Remember why you moved here? Large, affordable apartments, trees, Central Park, views, and the diverse population of neighbors who could become a personal universe of good friends!

All this and more has made Park West Village a very special place. But now new stores and monstrous buildings on Columbus Avenue are upending our wonderful neighborhood. "Columbus Village" would be a destination shopping area like the East Side or Columbus Circle.

The PWVTA has worked to create a vision of the PWV community that's manifested in our lives here today. We provide helpful information, protect your rights, and connect with other advocacy groups and local elected officials to resolve issues of common concern.

Your participation is welcomed too — JOIN US!

TENANTS HEAR PWVTA PAST, PRESENT

An "All Tenants" meeting was held June 3 to help explain the work of the PWVTA. The Executive Board had created an ad hoc Membership Committee for this, chaired by Miriamne Spector, Membership Secretary.

Former President Emily Margolis listed our accomplishments. The PWVTA won the battle over the proposed "Hardship" Rent Increase, conducted the successful Rent Strike, and established the Warranty of Habitability law.

Recent President Lois Hoffmann discussed major issues, including legal initiatives, subletting concerns, Rent Stabilization laws, and the Major Capital Improvement (MCI) charges in rents.

Clare Dockery spoke about the Rent Guidelines Board operations effecting our rents. Newly elected Treasurer Florence Wagener explained how the PWVTA helps tenants with rent overcharges.

Jennie Laurie of Met Council on Housing spoke about the Rent Guidelines Board, rent regulation, reform efforts, Vacancy Decontrol, and the need to repeal the Urstadt Law to give NYC tenants Home Rule. She also warned of the widespread private equity investments in undervalued rent-regulated residential real estate.

RGB Votes New Increases

The Rent Guidelines Board voted June 19 to increase Rent Stabilized apartments renewing leases between Oct. 1, 2008 and Sept. 30, 2009: 4.5% for a one-year lease renewal; 8.5% for a two-year lease renewal; and a 10% sublet allowance.

RGB also voted to approve an extra "longevity increase" for tenants who have lived in their apartment for 6 years or more at a rent of \$1000 or less. They will have to pay a minimum increase of \$45 dollars per month (1-yr lease) or \$85 dollars per month (2-yr lease). The result: *rent increases well above the already excessive increases that other tenants will have to pay.*

This "longevity increase" was only proposed at the final vote of the RGB and was not raised or debated at the RGB preliminary vote in May or the subsequent RGB public hearings. ***See the next story below!***

RGB POTENTIAL LAWSUIT

Tenant advocates claim the RGB exceeded its authority and possibly acted illegally in approving the longevity increase without first proposing it, then soliciting public comment and expert testimony prior to the final vote June 19.

Staff Attorney Afua Atta-Mensah of Legal Aid – Civil Practice, Law Reform Unit (212-577-3964) seeks plaintiffs for a lawsuit to stop the increase and force the RGB to follow its proper procedures before enacting such an increase.

To determine eligibility to join as a plaintiff, visit www.pwvta.org and click the first link. A plaintiff must be a USA resident and a tenant in his/her current Rent Stabilized NYC apartment at least 6 years, not eligible for SCRIE or DRIE, rent below \$1000/month and able to afford it, income \$36,000 or less, no rental arrears, negative consequences from the supplemental increases, and must consent to being a plaintiff.

PROTECTING RIGHTS, HELPING NEIGHBORS, SAVING THE COMMUNITY! www.PWVTA.org

**Westiders for Public Participation
REPORT TO PWV COMMUNITY**

Paul Bunten reports that WPP has amended and re-filed their lawsuit, now naming the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) as a defendant. A hearing date in the New York State Supreme Court is expected soon.

WPP's suit asks the court to compel compliance with the Zoning Rules of the City and order an environmental review. The suit also would force an injunction to stop all excavation and construction until the environmental review is satisfied, applying to all five building sites, including 808 Columbus Ave.

The lawsuit will also ask the court to order the BSA to produce the letter written to the developers informing them that they are continuing construction "at their own risk."

For more info and support: westiders@earthlink.net

**BUILDING MEETINGS ELECT
BUILDING REPS AND ALTS**

Following the PWVTA General Membership Meeting May 19 that elected new officers, most of the seven PWV buildings plan to elect their new PWVTA Building Representatives and Alternate Representatives after Labor Day.

Building Reps (3 per building) and Alternates (3 per building) serve and vote on the Executive Board. Meeting notices will be posted.

372 CPW's annual election meeting was held June 9, hosted by Francine Brewer, and elected Building Reps Charlie Berger, Francine Brewer, and Palmer Tome. Elected Alternate Reps: Arnie Ellman, Annie Muir, and Ellen Wright.

PWVTA's June Cruise

The Bateaux Cruise was a great social success. Again – thank you to all 29 PWV residents and friends. We all enjoyed each other's company, the superb food, great service, music, and the sun shining through the elegant glass of the Bateaux Cruise Ship!



The PWVTA Executive Board usually meets on the third Monday of the month. PWVTA members are welcome to attend. Next meeting: Monday, September 15, 7:30 pm, at the Ryan Health Center, 110 W. 97 St. downstairs.

Produced by the PWVTA Communications Committee.
Contributors: Judith Bloch, Paul Bunten, Dean Heitner, Dorri Jacobs, Daphne Myers, Eileen Salzig, Miriamne Spector, Chuck Tice, and Palmer Tome. To help report, edit, compose, design, or distribute, call the PWVTA Hotline: 212-662-2610, or write Communications@pwvta.org. Submit content to: Editor@pwvta.org.

✂ JOIN YOUR NEIGHBORS – RENEW NOW!

**PLEASE RETURN THIS MEMBERSHIP / ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP COUPON
TO YOUR BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE OR MAIL TO:**

Park West Village Tenants' Association
P.O. Box 20339, Park West Finance Station, New York, NY 10025-0339

Name: Building: Apt.: Phone:

Rent-stabilized tenant Market-rate tenant Renting from private owner Owner Email:

Check for 2008 membership dues enclosed, **payable to PWVTA**. \$40 Other*: \$.....

Check for 2008 associate membership dues enclosed, **payable to PWVTA** \$35.....

Check includes additional contribution to Legal fund. Amount:

*If you cannot make full \$40 payment of your annual dues, please pay what you can.

Your membership card will be delivered to you.