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Tenant Inquilino

Vol 39, No. 6
June 2009

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

PERIODICAL

Tenants Pressure Albany on Rent Reforms

By Mario Mazzoni and Steven Wishnia

Editor's Note: The article was written before the Republican takeover of the state Senate, which happened just as we were going to press on June 8.

With the end of the legislative session in Albany less than two weeks away, a coalition of groups fighting to strengthen our rent laws are targeting the state senators from the New York City area who are still not supporting the repeal of vacancy decontrol.

That bill's fate will likely be determined at the last minute. "Things are very iffy all the way around," says Michael McKee of TenantsPAC. "We really have to put pressure on our friends to make things happen."

The Assembly passed ten pro-tenant bills earlier this year. On May 12, hundreds of tenants from New York City and the suburbs traveled to Albany to press the state Senate to pass the whole package this legislative session. The package includes bills to repeal vacancy decontrol, which would prevent landlords from deregulating empty apartments that can be rented for $2,000 a month or more; repealing the Urstadt law and giving New York City home rule over rent regulations; reforming the major-capital-improvement system so that rent increases are no longer permanent; and putting all former Mitchell-Lama and project-based Section 8 buildings into rent stabilization.

"I'm more optimistic than I was a few weeks ago," says Michelle O'Brien of the Housing Here and Now coalition. "It's just going to take a lot of work from all of us."

The key swing votes are a group of senators from the city and suburbs who have not endorsed repealing vacancy decontrol. Many of these holdouts have made vague statements about supporting "affordable housing," or have touted their tenant credentials by signing on as sponsors to much less significant bills, but their failure to make clear commitments on the bills of greatest consequence has made them targets of protests and campaigns in their districts.

Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith's spokesperson says Smith is "committed to passing housing reform this session." Craig Johnson (D-Nassau), who pledged to be "a visible and vocal advocate for repeal of vacancy decontrol" when he was running for office in 2007, now "is currently reviewing these bills" and "does not have a position." Martin Malave Dilan (D-

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GOP Coup Jeopardizes Rent Bills

Two renegade Democrats dealt a serious blow to the chances of pro-tenant legislation passing in the Senate this year, when they joined Republicans in overthrowing the Senate's Democratic leadership June 8.

The Republican led coup began at 3 p.m. when Senator Thomas W. Libous (R-Binghamton) demanded a roll-call vote to oust the Democratic leadership. Democrats Pedro Espada Jr. of the Bronx and Hiram Monserrate of Queens backed the GOP, giving them a 32-30 win and deposing Malcolm Smith (D-Queens) as majority leader.

Espada and Dean G. Skelos (R-Nassau) will share leadership duties, as part of a previously negotiated deal.

Tenant advocates are especially concerned about the leadership change. As *Tenant/Inquilino* went to press, the Housing Committee, which Espada chairs, was scheduled to vote on a package of pro-tenant bills June 9, including the repeal of vacancy decontrol. Now with Republicans back in power, the future of tenant legislation is unclear.

Espada and Monserrate, along with Carl Kruger of Brooklyn and Ruben Diaz of the Bronx, previously threatened to throw their support to the Republicans last November, when the Democrats captured a narrow majority in the Senate. They agreed to back Smith after Espada and Kruger were given powerful committee chairmanships.

—Rachel Rachlin

Whose Rents Are Going Down?

By Mario Mazzoni

A casual observer of the media, unfamiliar with the realities facing average renters, could be forgiven for thinking that finding an apartment in New York City these days was like shopping for bargains at a 99-cent store during a going-out-of-business sale.

"Home Cheap Home: Manhattan Rents Plummet" heralds a NBC news report from May 28. "Livin's a Bit Easier" reads a *New York Post* headline from May 27. "A Month Free? Rents Are Falling Fast" proclaims a *New York Times* headline from Feb. 1. "It's a good time to be a renter in New York City," its opening sentence declares.

Before you get the impression that you'll find next month's rent money by digging for change between the sofa cushions, wait until you find out the answer to a *Times* headline from March 27, which asks "Why are These Renters Smiling?" Apparently, as the article explains, it's because average asking rents for one-bedroom apartments in Manhattan have dropped to $3,395 for doorman buildings, and $2,632 for non-doorman buildings. How much were these apartments renting for before this apparent plunge? If you missed the reports on housing prices at their peak, spare yourself a trip to the cardiologist and don't ask.

Among the so-called bargains found by mainstream news outlets: On March 25, WCBS-TV highlighted a one-bedroom apartment in Lower Manhattan that rented for $4,300 in 2008 that was on the market for $3,400. The report failed to note that this lower price was still out of reach to all but the city's richest fifth. The apartment still cost more than the entire pre-tax income of most renters in the city. Absent from all of these stories were statistics that would ground the hype about declining rents in reality: The median New York City renter household made $36,000 in 2008, and more than one-quarter of the city's tenants already pay over half of their income towards rent.

The recession has not caused rents to go down in most New York neighborhoods, and rent burdens on families are not being eased. Reports of price drops in a few elite areas have been well publicized, but elsewhere, rents have held steady or are continuing to go up. With declining wages and rising unemployment, housing is becoming less affordable for many households.

Only in the upper end of the unregulated housing market have there been notable declines. Among the luxury apartments that are now renting below their peak, real-estate analysts find that prices have returned at best to 2006 levels. For many years, new construction and conversions have been almost exclusively focused on the luxury market, and the abundance of high-end

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Federal Court Protects Staten Island Mitchell-Lama

A federal court has blocked the sale of two Mitchell-Lama buildings on Staten Island to a developer who planned to take them out of the program.

On June 4, U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton dismissed a lawsuit by St. Mark's Place Associates—the owner of Castleton Park Apartments—and Larry Gluck of Stellar Management. The owner wanted to sell the two 18-story buildings to Gluck, who has a long history of taking Mitchell-Lama developments out of the program and jacking up rents. Once the sale was complete, Gluck would have prepaid the $11 million mortgage and taken the 454 apartments out of Mitchell-Lama.

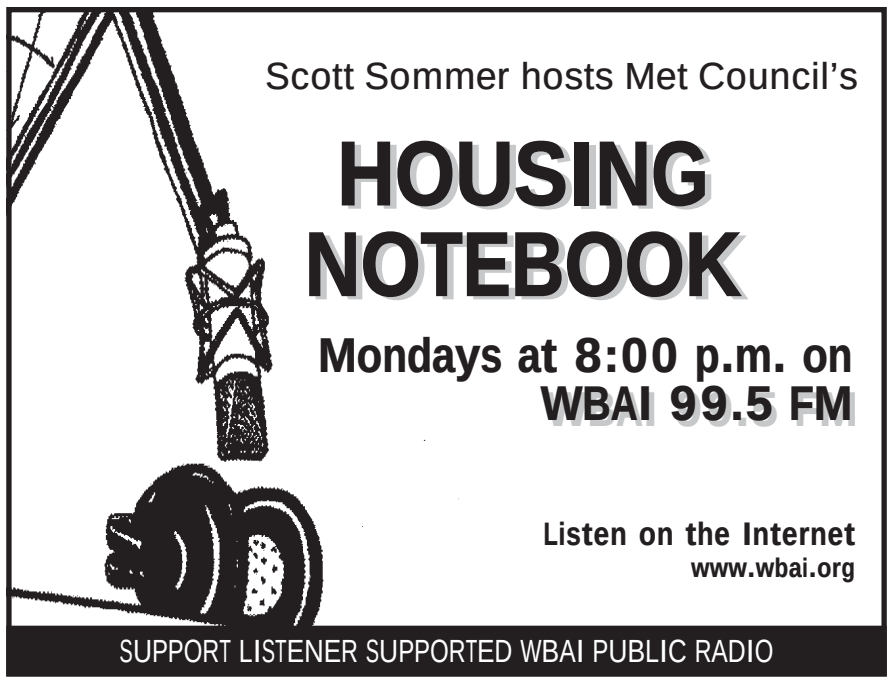
St. Mark's Place Associates and Gluck filed the suit against the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, which in December 2007 refused to grant permission for the sale.

Tenants in the buildings, in the St. George neighborhood on Staten Island's North Shore, said if the deal had gone through, rents for a two-bedroom apartment would have risen from $870 to $2,000.

"We are clearly ecstatic and absolutely pleased. We just have to wait and see what happens next," Judy Montanez, cochair of the Castleton Park tenants association, told the *Staten Island Advance*.

The HUD decision came after pressure from tenants and local legislators, including Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY), Rep. Michael McMahon (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), state Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn), and Assemblymember Matthew Titone (D-Staten Island/Brooklyn). They noted that federal law says HUD can let buildings withdraw from a mortgage it insures only if it determines that the project "is no longer meeting a need for rental housing for lower-income families in the area."

—Steven Wishnia



Bloomberg Appoints Banker to Head NYCHA

A former Wall Street investment banker with no public-housing experience has been selected to lead the New York City Housing Authority. The public-housing agency has been troubled with mismanagement, deteriorating housing stock, and a $45.1 million operating budget deficit.

On May 13, Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the appointment of former Lehman Brothers economic advisor John B. Rhea to head NYCHA. The 43-year-old investment banker, also a former executive at JP Morgan Chase, was the managing director of Lehman Brothers' global consumer retail group when the firm collapsed.

The mayor claims that Rhea's experience in finance will help ensure NYCHA's long-term fiscal stability. However, both housing advocates and City Council members have expressed serious concerns, arguing that Rhea's expertise on Wall Street does not translate to sound public-housing policy.

"Rhea has never [even] walked in the door of a New York City public-housing complex," exclaimed Councilmember Letitia James (D-Brooklyn), in a recent interview with the *Queens Ledger*.

As NYCHA chair, Rhea will manage 178,000 apartments in 340 developments throughout the five boroughs. He will also administer the federal Section 8 voucher program in the city.

Public housing and Section 8 apartments combined make up 8 percent of all New York City housing. They serve more than 630,000 residents, most of whom earn less than $25,000 a year.

Rhea joked with reporters that he's "not taking the job for the money." As chair, he'll be earning $189,700 a year.

—Rachel Rachlin

NYCHA

New NYCHA head John B. Rhea.

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Tenant Inquilino

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

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

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Articles, letters, artwork and photographs are welcome.

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

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

ISSN-1536-1322 ©2009

Visit Met Council's Website www.metcouncil.net

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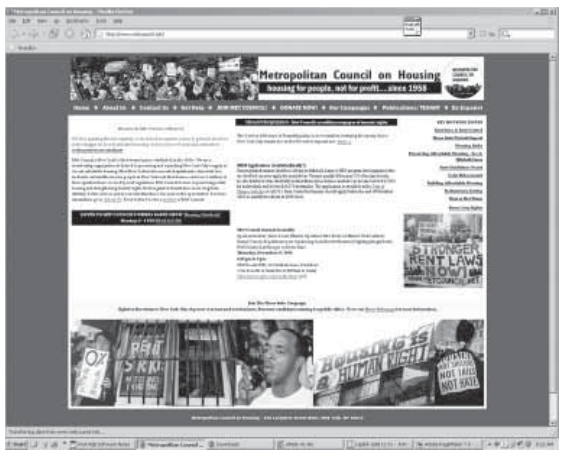

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EL INQUILINO HISPANO

¿De quiénes son los alquileres en descenso?

Por Mario Mazzoni
Traducido por Lightning Translations

Se podría perdonar al observador que, dando una ojeada a los medios de comunicación y sin tener conocimiento de la realidad que los inquilinos comunes y corrientes enfrentan, llegue a creer que encontrar un apartamento en la Ciudad de Nueva York en estos días es como buscar gangas en una tienda de 99 centavos durante su última venta de liquidación.

"Hogar barato hogar", anuncia una noticia de NBC el 28 de mayo. "Vivir es un poco más fácil", dice una cabecera en el *New York Post* el 27 de mayo. "¿Un mes gratis? Los alquileres están bajando rápido", proclama una cabecera del *New York Times* el 1º de febrero. "Es un buen momento para ser inquilino en la Ciudad de Nueva York", asevera su primera frase.

Antes de formarte la impresión de que podrás encontrar el dinero para pagar el alquiler del próximo mes al escarbar monedas entre los cojines del sofá, espera hasta te enteres de la respuesta a una cabecera en el *Times* el 27 de marzo, que pregunta, "¿Por qué están sonrientes estos inquilinos?" Aparentemente, como explica el artículo, es porque los alquileres promedio que se piden para apartamentos de un dormitorio en Manhattan han bajado a $3,395 para edificios con conserje y $2,632 para edificios sin conserje. ¿A cuánto se alquilaban estos apartamentos antes de este aparente desplome? Si te perdiste las noticias sobre los precios de vivienda en su cumbre, ahórrate una visita al cardiólogo y no preguntes.

Entre las supuestas gangas encontradas por los medios de comunicación principales: el 25 de marzo, WCBS-TV destacó un apartamento de un dormitorio en el bajo Manhattan que se alquiló por $4,300 en 2008 y que ya estuvo en el mercado a $3,400. El informe omitió en señalar que este precio más bajo todavía estaba fuera del alcance de todos menos de la quinta parte más rica de la población de la ciudad. El apartamento aún costó más de todo el ingreso antes de pagar impuestos de la mayoría de inquilinos en la ciudad. Lo que no apareció en todas estas historias fueron las estadísticas que hubieran podido bajar la hipérbole a la realidad: La familia media de inquilinos en la Ciudad de Nueva York ganó $36,000 en 2008, y más de una cuarta parte de los inquilinos en la ciudad gastan más de la mitad de sus ingresos en el alquiler.

La recesión no ha causado que los alquileres hayan bajado en la mayoría de los vecindarios de Nueva York y el peso de la renta sobre las familias no se ha aliviado. Los informes sobre caídas de precios en algunas áreas élites han ganado mucha publicidad, pero en otras partes los alquileres se han mantenido en el mismo nivel o siguen subiendo. Con los salarios disminuyendo y el desempleo aumentando, la vivienda es cada vez menos asequible para muchas familias.

Las disminuciones notables han ocurrido solamente en el extremo más alto del mercado de vivienda desregulada. Entre los apartamentos de lujo que ahora se alquilan por menos de su precio más alto, los analistas de bienes raíces han encontrado que en el mejor de los casos, los precios han regresado a los niveles de 2006. Por muchos años, las nuevas construcciones y conversiones han sido enfocadas casi exclusivamente en el mercado de lujo, y la abundancia de urbanizaciones carísimas explica los precios en declive para estas unidades durante esta recesión.

La verdadera noticia sobre los precios en declive ha sido en ventas de apartamentos, no su arrendamiento, y esto sigue a una burbuja especulativa en la cual los precios de compra aumentaron por años en tasas inauditas. Hasta el fin del primer trimestre de 2008, mientras en la mayor parte del país los precios de hogares bajaban, la Ciudad de Nueva York tuvo un salto de precios de un 28 por ciento en un año, con los precios en Manhattan aumentando un 41 por ciento. Sólo en 2007, los precios de hogares en el Upper West Side aumentaron un 96 por ciento y en Harlem aumentaron un 93 por ciento. En julio de 2008, cuando la

pasa a la página 4

Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 40)

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

Tipo de Contrato		*Renta Legal Actual*	*Contrato de 1 Año*	*Contrato de 2 Años*
Renovación del Contrato	Todos	casero abastece la calefacción	4.5%	8.5%
		inquilino paga la calefacción	4%	8%
	$alvo 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	45	85
		inquilino paga la calefacción	40	80
Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos	Más de $500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	16%	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 17.25%	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar
	Menos de $300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	16% + $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, +16% + $100	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento
	Renta de $300 a $500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	16% 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 16%, o $100, lo que sea mayor	0.6% por el número de años desde el último incremento por estar vacío, mas 20%,

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

Asignación de Subarriendo
Los caseros podrán cobrar un aumento de 10 por ciento durante el término de subarriendo que comience durante este período de las pautas.
Programa de Exención de Incrementos de Renta para las Personas de Mayor Edad Las personas de mayor edad con renta estabilizada (y los que viven en apartamentos de renta controlada, Mitchell-Lama y cooperativas de dividendos limitados), con 62 años o más, y cuyos ingresos familiares disponibles al año sean de $27,000 o menos (para 2006) y que paguen (o enfrenten un aumento de renta que les haría pagar) un tercio o más de 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

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

Hoteles y SROs
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 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

Williamsburg Rezoning Yields Little Affordable Housing

Four years after the Bloomberg administration pushed through a plan to rezone the Williamsburg/Greenpoint waterfront for luxury condos, the blocks near the East River in north Brooklyn are packed with new high-end buildings. Yet none of the more than 1,300 affordable apartments promised in the plan have been completed.

The administration pledged to include 1,345 low- and middle-income apartments in order to win City Council approval for the controversial rezoning in 2005. Yet so far, construction has started on only 14 of those apartments, in a building on Herbert Street.

According to the *Daily News*, an analysis by community groups in February found that the city Department of Housing Preservation and Development had selected a developer for just 92 of the affordable apartments.

More than 2,500 people have requested applications for the 14 apartments in the Herbert Street building, North Brooklyn Development Corp. director Rich Mazur told the *News*.

The rezoning "forced a lot of the middle-income and poorer-income residents to leave because they couldn't afford the rents anymore," he added. "There's huge… pent-up demand."

HPD blamed problems relocating a Department of Environmental Protection sludge tank and a Metropolitan Transportation Authority facility in Greenpoint. More than 600 affordable apartments were slated for those sites.

Rosenthal to Head Mitchell-Lama Subcommittee

Assemblymember Linda B. Rosenthal (D/WFP-Manhattan) has been appointed chair of the Assembly's Mitchell-Lama Housing Subcommittee this week. The panel oversees issues pertaining to the Mitchell-Lama program.

"I hope to slow the exodus that is occurring from the Mitchell-Lama program," Rosenthal, who represents the Upper West Side and part of Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, said in a statement. "I look forward to working with the many activists who are dedicated to preserving Mitchell-Lama housing. I hope to discuss the possibility of creating another program similar to Mitchell-Lama that could be implemented in New York and that would increase the access of moderate-income families to affordable housing."

About 140,000 apartments were built under the Mitchell-Lama program, which was created in 1955 to give moderate-income families greater access to affordable housing. In the last 20 years, however, about one-third of those units have been taken out of the program.

Rosenthal was also a sponsor of the bill to repeal vacancy decontrol for apartments renting for $2,000 or more. The Assembly passed it in February.

alquileres en descenso

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mayoría del mercado de vivienda en el país ya había empezado a bajar, el *New York Post* citó a Pamela Liebman, gerente general de la compañía de corretaje Corcoran Group, quien dijo que en Nueva York, "los mega-ricos no muestran ningunas señales de contenerse". Ella sostuvo que un apartamento que se vendió por $30 millones en 2007 hubiera podido ser vendido por $60 millones a mediados de 2008.

Mientras la cantidad de cooperativas, condominios y arrendamientos de lujo crecía año tras año, respondiendo a lo que Liebman llamó "una escasez de vivienda inasequible" para los más ricos de los ricos, las opciones para las familias de bajos y medios ingresos disminuyeron rápidamente. Más de la mitad de los inquilinos de Nueva York no pueden pagar alquileres de más de $1,000; sin embargo, un informe difundido en abril por la oficina del controlador estatal mostró que desde 2002 hasta 2008, la ciudad perdió 178,542 apartamentos que se alquilaban por menos de $1,000, ajustado conforme a la inflación.

El resultado es que un 43 por ciento de las familias de inquilinos en la ciudad cargan un "gran peso por el alquiler", gastando más de un 30 por ciento de sus ingresos en el alquiler. Es poco probable que las personas con bajos ingresos que buscan un nuevo apartamento encuentren algo al alcance de sus bolsillos en el mercado abierto, aun en las áreas de los alquileres más bajos.

En Bedford-Stuyvesant o Bushwick, una familia que gana el ingreso medio del vecindario tendría de gastar dos tercios de sus ingresos para alquilar un apartamento de tres dormitorios, según un análisis usando datos demográficos del Centro Furman de la Universidad de Nueva York y recientes precios de arrendamiento del sitio Web Zilpy.com. En Washington Heights, Kingsbridge o Brownsville, un apartamento semejante costaría tres cuartos de sus ingresos, y en Harlem o Mott Haven, el 100 por ciento.

La recesión no ha proporcionado ningún alivio, porque la zona sur del Estado de Nueva York tiene una escasez crónica de vivienda. Esto mantiene los alquileres en niveles inflados a pesar de las tendencias de más envergadura en la economía. Como dice el sitio Web de la Junta de Renta Regulada (Rent Guidelines Board, RGB), "excepto en los sectores de altos alquileres donde los alquileres al nivel del mercado prevalecen, la escasez de vivienda en Nueva York en la mayoría de los casos suprime u oculta estas consecuencias. Para inquilinos de ingresos bajos y moderados, en gran parte el beneficio de una deflación inducida por una recesión se pierde".

La crisis económica realmente ha puesto tensión en el mercado de arrendamiento, y las familias de bajos y medios ingresos son las que más sufren. Por ejemplo, la crisis de ejecuciones hipotecarias y el mercado de crédito restringido han empujado a algunas familias, que de otra manera hubieran sido dueños de sus propios hogares, dentro del mercado de arrendamiento, aumentando la demanda. Mientras tanto, el desempleo y el subempleo han causado una baja en los ingresos de muchas familias, haciendo los alquileres aun menos asequibles para ellas.

Entre estas circunstancias, los caseros siguen estando tan enfocados como siempre en la desregulación de apartamentos. Durante la burbuja de vivienda, compraron muchos edificios de viviendas múltiples a precios inflados, basados en enormes aumentos proyectados en sus ingresos de arrendamiento. Estos propietarios dependen de ardides para desalojar a inquilinos de muchos años para aumentar sus registros de alquiler, en la vivienda de alquiler regulado al aprovechar el descontrol de viviendas disponibles y en los edificios Mitchell-Lama y de Sección 8 al optar por salir de estos programas de subvenciones y elevar los alquileres hasta la tasa del mercado.

Hasta el inquilino que encuentre una oferta de alquiler regulado "especial de recesión" no podrá estar seguro que siga estando al alcance de su bolsillo a largo plazo, ya que los descuentos del máximo alquiler legal no son permanentes. Las leyes actuales permiten a los caseros hacer a inquilinos entrar en apartamentos de alquiler estabilizado con el engaño del "alquiler preferencial" durante el primer período del contrato, mientras guardan el derecho de elevar los alquileres al máximo legal cuando el contrato se renueve.

En los cada vez más apartamentos desregulados, cualquier oportunidad de alquilar que la recesión pueda crear no durará por mucho tiempo. Una vez que la economía y el mercado de bienes raíces suban, los inquilinos que no estén protegidos por las regulaciones de alquileres podrán ser desalojados por los alquileres excesivamente altos, trastornando a sus familias y vecindarios enteros.

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 $28,000 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:

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

Los inquilinos minusválidos que reciben ayuda financiera relacionada con invalidez y tienen ingresos de $18,396 o menos para individuos y $26,460 o menos para una pareja y quienes enfrentan rentas iguales a o más de un tercio de sus ingresos pueden llenar los requisitos para la Exención de Incrementos de Renta para Minusválidos (Disability Rent Increase Exemption, DRIE). Solicítela a:

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

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

Albany

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Brooklyn) declined to comment. Jeffrey Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester) would rather raise the decontrol threshold from $2,000. Housing Committee chair Pedro Espada (D-Bronx), Martin Golden (R-Brooklyn), Carl Kruger (D-Brooklyn), and Diane Savino (D-Brooklyn/Staten Island) did not return phone calls from *Tenant/Inquilino*.

Kruger, who along with Espada threatened to defect to the Republicans after Democrats won a narrow majority in the Senate last November, is a focus of the campaign. "He's basically owned by real estate," opines McKee. At midday on May 21, dozens of tenants paid a surprise visit to his district office on Avenue U in South Brooklyn, filling the place and chanting loudly before being escorted out of the glass-lined storefront by police. No arrests were made, and the crowd formed a picket on the sidewalk, continuing the protest.

On May 28, tenants lined the entrance of a restaurant near City Hall, where Jeffrey Klein was answering questions at a breakfast forum sponsored by *City Hall* magazine. Klein, the Senate's deputy majority leader, has been thwarting efforts to repeal vacancy decontrol. Instead, he is proposing legislation that would merely raise the $2,000 threshold and index it to the rate of inflation.

"That's unacceptable. We'd rather have no bill," says McKee. "It would mean the end of rent regulations. There is no oversight. Vacancy decontrol is rampant with fraud. Landlords can treat vacant apartments as deregulated."

O'Brien agrees, saying that raising the threshold would just give landlords "a new goal" for deregulation.

In addition to the picket in front of the breakfast forum, tenants have been canvassing Klein's district to get the word out among his constituents that he has been betraying tenants.

Two other key bills are the Mitchell-Lama legislation sponsored by Andrea Stewart-Cousins (D-Westchester) and the repeal of the Urstadt law, sponsored by Liz Krueger (D-Manhattan). The Stewart-Cousins bill, which would put all former Mitchell-Lama and project-based Section 8 units into rent stabilization, is competing with a weaker measure backed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg. That bill would protect only Mitchell-Lama buildings taken out of the program in the future.

MARIO MAZZONI

Tenant lobbyists fill "the well" of the Legislative Office Building in Albany May 15.

Urstadt repeal may make it through at the last minute. But according to McKee, it has been encountering opposition from legislators who fear that they might lose real-estate campaign contributions if they give up jurisdiction over New York City's rent laws.

Amid actions focused on the legislative campaign, a protest on May 28 in Harlem highlighted the unique problems of tenants in buildings that were bought by predatory-equity firms at the height of the housing bubble. Over 100 tenants from buildings purchased by Urban American Management Corp. gathered in front of one of their buildings, Schomburg Plaza, on 110th Street and Fifth Avenue. This was one of several former Mitchell-Lama developments purchased by Urban American. The company also acquired rent-regulated buildings with the intention of deregulating as many apartments as possible.

Tenants in Urban American's buildings have faced the dual threats of displacement and declining services. Many speakers at the Harlem rally called on the owner to address the deteriorating conditions that have plagued thousands of residents, but they also called on Fannie Mae to intervene in the likely scenario that Urban American defaults on its mortgage. They want to prevent the portfolio from ending up in the hands of another developer intent on pushing out longtime tenants.

So far, Fannie Mae has yet to address the needs of renters in overleveraged multifamily properties. Housing groups and other advocacy organizations have spent years on the defensive as speculators destabilized communities. Now, many of these groups hope that they can create opportunities for the long-term preservation of affordable housing in properties where those speculators are in default.

Lobby in Albany June 16

Join Met Council on June 16 on a trip to Albany to lobby our state senators and push them to pass our package of pro-tenant legislation. We will leave by van in the morning and return on the same day. There is no charge for coming, and no prior lobbying experience is necessary.

Also, be ready to come to Albany on short notice when important tenant legislation comes up for a vote, such as the bill to repeal vacancy decontrol. Buses will be leaving from neighborhoods across New York City.

For information on Albany lobbying trips, call Mario directly on his cell phone: (646) 642-2507

Hotline Volunteers Needed!

Our phones are ringing off the hook! Met Council is looking for people to counsel tenants on our hotline. We will train you! The hotline runs on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 1:30-5 p.m. If you can give one afternoon a week for this crucial service to the tenant community, call (212) 979-6238 ext 207.

Senior and Disabled Tenants

Seniors, 62 or older, in rent-regulated, Mitchell-Lama and some other housing programs whose disposable annual household income is $28,000 or less (for the previous 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 Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE). Apply to:
The NYC Dept of the Aging
SCRIE Unit
2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007.

Disabled tenants receiving eligible disability-related financial assistance with incomes of $18,396 or less for individuals and $26,460 or less for a couple facing rents equal to or more than one-third of their income may be eligible for the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). Apply to:
NYC Dept. of Finance
DRIE Exemptions
59 Maiden Lane - 20th floor
New York, NY 10038

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

HPD CODE VIOLATIONS ON LINE

Look up your building!

HPD violations are available on-line.
Go to nyc.gov and select the Housing-HPD link from the agency drop down list.

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

Rents

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developments accounts for declining prices for those units during this recession.

The real news about falling prices has been in apartment sales, not rentals, and this follows a speculative bubble wherein purchase prices increased for years at unprecedented rates. Through the first quarter of 2008, while most of the nation was seeing home prices fall, New York City saw a single-year price jump of 28 percent, with prices rising 41 percent in Manhattan. In 2007 alone, home prices in the Upper West Side rose 96 percent, and in Harlem they rose 93 percent. In July 2008, when most of the nation's housing market had already begun its slide, the *New York Post* quoted Pamela Liebman, CEO of the Corcoran Group brokerage firm, saying that in New York, "the megarich are showing no signs of holding back." She claimed that an apartment that sold for $30 million in 2007 could have fetched $60 million in mid-2008.

While the number of luxury co-ops, condos, and rentals expanded year after year, responding to what Liebman called "a shortage of unaffordable housing" for the richest of the rich, the options for low- and middle-income families were rapidly shrinking. More than half of New York renters cannot afford rents above $1,000, yet a report released in April by the state comptroller's office showed that from 2002 to 2008, the city lost 178,542 apartments that rented for less than $1,000, adjusted for inflation.

The result is that 43 percent of city renter households are "rent burdened," paying more than 30 percent of their income. Low-income people who are looking for a new apartment are unlikely to find anything they can afford on the open market, even in the lowest-rent areas.

In Bedford-Stuyvesant or Bushwick, a family making the median income for the neighborhood would have to spend two-thirds of it to rent a three-bedroom apartment, according to an analysis using demographic data from New York University's Furman Center and recent rental prices from the real-estate Web site Zilpy.com. In Washington Heights, Kingsbridge, or Brownsville, it would cost three-fourths of their income, and it would take 100 percent of their income in Harlem or Mott Haven.

The recession has provided no relief, because the downstate New York region has a chronic shortage of housing. That keeps rents at inflated levels despite larger trends in the economy. As a Rent Guidelines Board report states, "except in high-rent sectors where market rents prevail, New York's housing shortage largely suppresses or masks these consequences... The benefit to low- and moderate-income tenants of a recession-induced deflation of rents is largely lost."

The economic crisis has actually put unusual strains on the rental market, and low- to middle-income families are suffering the most. For instance, the foreclosure crisis and tight credit market have pushed some higher-income households who would otherwise be homeowners to the rental market, driving up demand. Meanwhile, unemployment and underemployment have caused many household incomes to decline, making rents all the more unaffordable for these families.

Amid these circumstances, landlords are as focused as ever on deregulating apartments. During the housing bubble, they purchased many multifamily buildings at inflated prices, based on projected huge increases in rental income. These owners rely on schemes to push out longtime tenants to increase their rent rolls—in rent-regulated housing by using vacancy decontrol, and in Mitchell-Lama and Section 8 buildings by opting out of those subsidy programs and moving rents to market rates.

Even a tenant who finds a rent-stabilized recession special may not be assured of its long-term affordability, as any discounts they get from the legal maximum are not permanent. Current laws allow landlords to lure new tenants into rent-stabilized apartments with "preferential rents" for the first lease term, while reserving the right to raise rents to the legal maximum when the lease is renewed.

In the growing number of unregulated apartments, any rental opportunities that might be created by the recession will be short-lived. Once the economy and real estate market rises, tenants who are not protected by rent regulations can be priced out of their homes, disrupting their families and whole neighborhoods.

MARIO MAZZONI

Harlem tenants protested predatory equity May 28.

Complaint Numbers

To reach the Department of Housing, Preservation and Development's Central Complaints hotline, call 311.

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

NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments
(Order No. 40)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2008 through Sept. 30, 2009

Order No. 39, covering leases commencing prior to October 1, 2008, 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	4.5%	8.5%
		tenant pays for heat	4%	8%
	Except where last vacancy lease was 6 or more years ago and rent is below $1000	landlord supplies heat	$45	$85
		tenant pays for heat	$40	$80
Vacancy leases	More than $500	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	16%	20%
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 16%	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 20%
	Less than $300	Vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	16% plus $100	20% plus $100
		No vacancy allowance charged within last 8 years	0.6% times number of years since last vacancy allowance, plus 16% 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	16% *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 16%, *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 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program Rent-stabilized seniors (and those living in rent-controlled, Mitchell-Lama, and limited equity coop apartments), 62 or older, whose disposable annual household income is $28,000 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 2.5 percent for a one-year lease and 5.25 percent for two years. No vacancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

Hotels and SROs
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.

RGB Chair Shows True Colors

By Kenny Schaeffer

In a revealing May 18 interview with Eliot Brown in the *New York Observer*, New York City Rent Guidelines Board chair Marvin Markus confirmed what many who have been watching and listening to him for years already believed—that he neither understands nor agrees with the Rent Stabilization Law he has taken an oath to enforce.

Ducking questions about why the RGB is proposing further rent increases for stabilized tenants when rents on unregulated apartments are falling, Markus proposed abolishing the current system through vacancy decontrol. He said that a decontrol-recontrol system, in which landlords can charge whatever they want once an apartment becomes vacant and the unit is then restabilized at the higher rent, would make "a lot more sense." Poorer tenants would receive a government subsidy similar to Section 8, financed through a "rent tax" on tenants.

Markus did not specify what the maximum income would be to get the subsidy, but unless the legislature wanted to spend billions of dollars on subsidies, his system would eliminate rent protections for working and middle-class people. Though he claims that decontrolling only vacant apartments would protect "the tenant in possession," the prospect of winning massive increases would give landlords a powerful incentive to harass those tenants. His proposal would also channel billions of taxpayer dollars to landlords and make it impossible for most New York renters to find new housing.

The RGB was created as part of the city Rent Stabilization Law of 1969, which was enacted in response to what was then and still is an acute housing-affordability crisis. The law begins with the declaration that a "public emergency" exists, causing "serious threats to public health, safety and general welfare." It adds that "action is necessary in order to prevent exactions of unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive rents and rental agreements and to forestall profiteering, speculation, and other disruptive practices."

In the ensuing four decades, New York's housing affordability crisis has only deepened. The median rent-to-income ratio for the city's one million stabilized households is over the federal hardship level of 30 percent.

The Rent Guidelines Board was created to consider all relevant data each year and determine what rent adjustments, if any, are appropriate for the coming year.

The Myth of "the Poor Owner"

Despite this clear legislative purpose, Markus admitted in the Observer interview that he has a completely different interpretation of his job: to balance the interests of tenants against those of "the poor owner" by imposing increases year after year on all tenants. He said that further increases are needed this year because "the income that the tenants are providing to the owners is likely to be insufficient to carry that building."

The myth of the "poor owner" is aggressively promoted by the real-estate industry's well-financed lobbying arm, the Rent Stabilization Association, but it flies in the face of the RGB's own studies. This year, they show that owners are keeping a staggering 38 percent of every rental dollar in profit.

Expert testimony presented to the RGB on April 30 showed that most of the properties in financial trouble are those overleveraged in debt by speculators. These owners bought buildings at inflated prices, unrealistically counting on pushing out the rent-stabilized tenants and taking advantage of huge vacancy increases and vacancy decontrol.

Moreover, the Rent Stabilization Law contains a "hardship" provision under which any owner who opens his books and can demonstrate that he is not making a fair rate of profit is entitled to increases above the general guidelines amounts. This individualized, case-by-case provision is designed specifically to avoid having to raise rents for all one million stabilized households to protect those few owners who legitimately might merit special consideration. Even so, only a handful of owners each year are able to claim that they are entitled to the hardship increase.

The reality is that owners are doing so well that they can distribute large amounts of cash to the state legislators who control the city's rent laws, with enough left over to bankroll an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the legislature from raising taxes on the rich to help reduce the state's budget shortfall [see March 2009 *Tenant/Inquilino*].

"Not Concerned"

Markus admitted to the *Observer* that his approach is to ignore the vast majority of buildings whose owners are enjoying record profits, and to focus on those few who might not be, in order to raise everyone's rent, whether they can afford it or not. "We're generally not concerned overall with those buildings that are 'working,'" he stated. "What our overall concern is to make sure that the buildings that are in the distressed category, or are barely working, have income."

Markus claimed that his opinions and actions are "not the Bloomberg administration's." Yet Markus, like other RGB members, serves at the pleasure of the mayor. In 2006, Bloomberg refused to reappoint board member Martin Zelnik, who had voted for a rent freeze the previous year. In the eight years of Bloomberg's tenure, that was the only time an RGB public member ever supported a tenant-backed proposal for apartment guidelines.

Many tenants are demanding that Bloomberg replace Markus before the RGB's final vote on June 23 and appoint a new chair who understands the affordability crisis afflicting city tenants. They want someone who is willing and able to obey his or her oath of office and implement the purposes of the rent stabilization law: "to prevent exactions of unjust, unreasonable, and oppressive rents."

Rent Guidelines Board Schedule

Public Hearing
(Public Testimony)
Monday, June 15
Main Theatre of Hostos Community College/CUNY
450 Grand Concourse
Bronx, NY 10451
4:00–10:00 p.m.

Public Hearing
(Public Testimony)
Wednesday, June 17
The Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 East 7th St.,
corner of 3rd Ave. (Basement)
New York, NY 10003
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Public Meeting (Final Vote)
Tuesday, June 23
The Great Hall at Cooper Union
7 East 7th St.,
corner of 3rd Ave. (Basement)
New York, NY 10003
5:30–9:30 p.m.

SRO Tenants Lose Home Due to Landlord Neglect

By Aaron Howell

Tenants in a West 14th Street SRO lost their homes last month when city officials deemed the building's structure unsafe because of a collapsing façade.

On May 7, the city Department of Buildings ordered the front facade of 152 West 14th St. completely removed and won't let the tenants move back in until it is completely restored. The tenants have been staying in homeless shelters, with friends, or with the Red Cross.

Tenants complain that they are paying the price for landlord Stanley Wasserman ignoring previous violations issued by the city. Wasserman first received a violation for the façade's condition in 2007. Last March, the city ordered the front part of the building vacated until it was fixed.

"There is a lack of maintenance that [Wasserman] is known for, but ours is structurally damaged," tenant Viktor Luna said in Housing Court. "We are also human beings that pay rent, and doing this to us is inhumane."

The landlord has offered some of the displaced tenants housing in nearby SROs that he owns, but on the condition that they renounce any claims to their former apartments and drop a lawsuit against him to fix the building.

"If we do accept new tenancy here in the other building, we are afraid that we will end up in the same situation of being forced to vacate down the road," said one tenant, who asked to remain anonymous. "Inside the place they want us to move is in very bad condition, the stairways and such are in very bad condition."

As the tenants cannot live in their apartments, the city has reduced their rent to $1 a month, preventing Wasserman from trying to evict them for nonpayment.

Susanna Blankley, a tenant organizer for the West Side SRO Law Project, suspects that Wasserman, who in 2003 owned about 70 multifamily dwellings in Manhattan and the Bronx, may want the 14th Street SRO declared structurally unsound, as it would enable him to tear it down and build luxury housing on the site. Half the 24 rooms in the building were already empty.

Wasserman says he won't replace the front façade until he gets the building inspected to ensure that it is structurally sound. The Department of Buildings did a visual inspection and says the building looks fine.

A longer version of this article appeared on www.indypendent.org. Reprinted with permission.

Tenants Urge Fannie Mae to Stop Deterioration in Foreclosed Buildings

By Karen Loew

From a tenant's point of view, one major problem with "predatory equity" is that if a real-estate investor pays too much for a property—realizing post-purchase that the building's rents will never be enough to pay back the mortgage debt assumed—the investor will start to cut costs by reducing maintenance of the property.

That fear has been fully realized at the 16 buildings in the Bronx owned by the Ocelot Company. Living conditions have deteriorated among many of these 400 apartments to the point that half the buildings are in the Alternative Enforcement Program aimed at compelling improvements to the city's worst residential buildings.

The debt on the Ocelot buildings—which are estimated to be at least 50 percent overleveraged, or worth only about half the purchase price—was taken over by Fannie Mae, the government-sponsored enterprise chartered by Congress to help make funds available to homebuyers (which received a federal bailout in September), in mid-2007. The same year, Fannie Mae also purchased the $700 million in debt on a much larger portfolio: 4,000 former Mitchell-Lama apartments owned by Urban American Management. And according to tenants, advocates, and elected representatives, living conditions have continued to decline in those buildings as well.

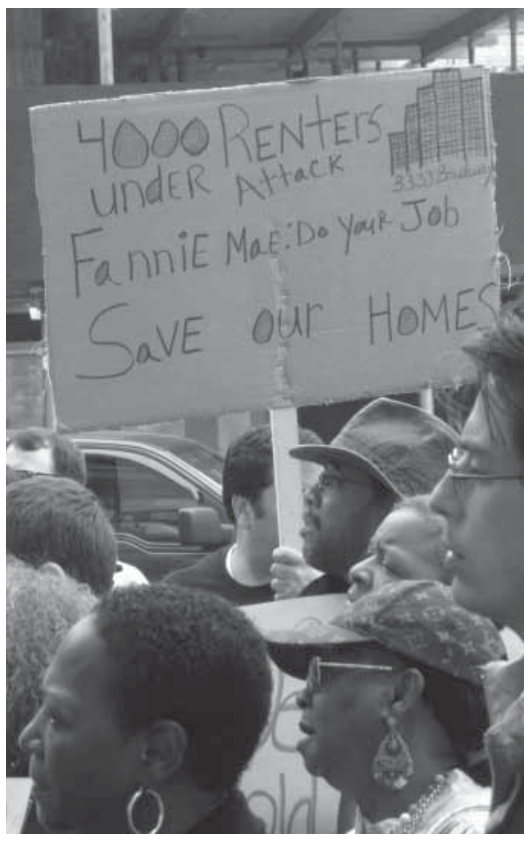
Tenants and elected officials rallied May 28 in Harlem to urge Fannie Mae to take a more active role in ensuring upkeep of the properties—so that the mold, leaks, holes and deterioration common to Ocelot properties not become the norm across the 7,000 overleveraged apartments in the Bronx, Manhattan and Roosevelt Island for which Fannie Mae holds the debt.

"We stand with the tenants of the Urban American Management portfolio to urge Fannie Mae to live up to the spirit of the law to ensure that these buildings are kept in good condition," Rep. Charles Rangel of Harlem said in a statement. "We cannot wait until these buildings fall off a cliff and must do everything we can now to protect our tenants."

For most real-estate speculators and investors, "they don't have to care about tenants, they don't have to care about affordable housing," says Dina Levy, director of organizing and policy for the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board. "With Fannie Mae, that's not true. It's had a social mission since its inception."

The same day as the rally, Fannie Mae responded, issuing a statement saying it is committed to meeting with affected parties to hear problems and work toward solutions. "We have ordered on-the-ground inspections of each of the buildings in question and, to the extent we can as a mortgagee and secondary market participant, we are taking steps through our servicers to compel building owners to properly maintain the properties," said Brian Faith, managing director for communications on New York rental properties.

Levy said advocates are "generally very optimistic" about Fannie Mae's response and pledge to work together. "We're hopeful for a real dialogue that helps us figure out how to solve this," she said—especially because new cases of troubled overleveraged properties and foreclosures crop up all the time, and the fallout for tenants, buildings and neighborhoods does not promise to end in the near future.



MARIO MAZZONI

Harlem tenants protest deterioration in buildings whose mortgages are held by Fannie Mae.

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WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at
Cooper Square Committee
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2nd Ave. & Bowery)
Tuesdays ..... 6:30 pm

CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING
Covers 14th St. to 30th St., 5th Ave. to the Hudson River.
322 W. 17th St. (basement), 212-CH3-0544
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.; 212-595-1274
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
Pomonok Community Center,
6709 Kissena Blvd., Flushing
(718) 591-6060
Fridays ..... 10 am-12 pm

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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

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