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Housing for people, not profit

# Tenant Inquilino

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

## Rents Could Go Up 7.5%

### RGB Recommends Range of Raises in Preliminary Vote

By Steven Wishnia and Jenny Laurie

The city Rent Guidelines Board broke precedent on May 10, voting to suggest a range of possible rent increases rather than setting a specific number as its preliminary guideline for rent-stabilized apartments. But for the 1 million households affected, the result will be more of the same: higher rents.

The RGB voted 5-4 to propose allowing increases of 3 to 5.5 percent for a one-year lease renewal and 5.5 to 7.5 percent for two years. If the board approves the 5.5 and 7.5 percent guidelines at its final vote June 17, that would be the highest rent increases allowed since the 1980s.

RGB chair Marvin Markus justified the idea of proposing a range as a means of opening up debate. Markus used that unprecedented tactic, according to some observers, because he feared that extensive debate might end up yielding low preliminary guidelines. By proposing the range early on in the debate, he preserved the higher guidelines that, presumably, he and the Bloomberg administration want, while not offending the public members who have been persuaded by the evidence that lower guidelines are warranted.

All the public members voted for the range except for Martin Zelnik. Both tenant representatives and landlord representative Steven Schleider voted no. Harold Lubell, the senior landlord representative, cast the deciding vote after passing on the first round—rather begrudgingly, as he said it wasn't enough of an

increase.

Like previous years, this preliminary vote of the RGB was a ritual exercise in political theater. Scores of tenants and landlords packed the room, tenants mostly elderly in yellow "Stronger Rent Laws Now" and pink and white "I'm a Tenant and I Vote" painter's caps, landlords in the blue and white baseball caps of the Rent Stabilization Association, their lobbying group. Tenants, as usual, outnumbered landlords by about 2-1, and both sides cheered, booed, and heckled, while Markus—who tenants have nicknamed "Marvin Markup"—tried to keep order like an ill-tempered junior-high-school teacher.

Yet over the last several years the outcome has

been as preordained as pro wrestling. First, the two tenant representatives on the board propose a rent freeze or a minimal increase, talk about housing costs and homelessness, and lose 7-2. Then the two landlord representatives stretches of the outer boroughs will be abandoned if they don't get it. This year, they wanted a 9 percent increase, plus a \$25-a-month surcharge on tenants who'd lived in the same apartment for eight years or more. Steven Schleider piously intoned that it's the government, not property owners, who should subsidize poor people—while declaring that renewing a lease with only limited rent increase is "not a birthright, but a

privilege." Finally, the five public members pass a rent increase as high as possible without causing political damage to the mayor who appointed them, with virtually no debate.

"There is no economic justification for rent increases. There might be a political one," says tenant lawyer Tim Collins, former staff director of the RGB. In testimony before the board in April, Collins noted several salient facts which show tenants doing poorly, while landlords have done extremely well since the late 1980s. The RGB report on mortgage activity shows that owners have greater earnings than other reports indicate—because while land

*continued on page 8*

## Housing Protest Set for GOP Convention

By Jennifer Flynn

These past few years, housing organizers and advocates and tenants have really faced some serious losses—rising rents, weakened tenant protections, and unresponsive politicians. It makes you wonder how we ever got things like public housing and rent protections and subsidies.

When I was a new community organizer in New York City, I remember hearing stories of 30,000-40,000 tenants taking to the streets to demand an end to the deplorable conditions in tenement buildings. Many attribute the creation of affordable housing on the Lower East Side to the organization of tenants and their strength and visibility.

Most of us working in

the housing movement know that the housing crisis can't be solved with ONLY stronger rent laws—although that would help a lot—or with inclusionary

zoning measures. We need to make sure that immigrant New Yorkers are able to report the problems in their buildings without fear of deportation or detention. We need to make sure that people living with HIV/AIDS and other illnesses have a decent rental subsidy so that they can remain in their apartments long after they are too sick to work. We need to make sure that our welfare sys-

tem does not push poor New Yorkers into dead-end jobs, but rather really provides a safety net that doesn't force them to choose between paying their rent or feeding their children.

Working on all of these issues at the same time can be difficult, to say the least. It is easy—and arguably necessary—for community-based organizations to become specialized in one issue area. There are few places for us to express our collective outrage about all of these issues that keep our housing unaffordable, keep our children unhealthy, and keep us in poverty. Fortunately or unfortunately, that place has been created for us: The Republicans are coming to New York City this Au-

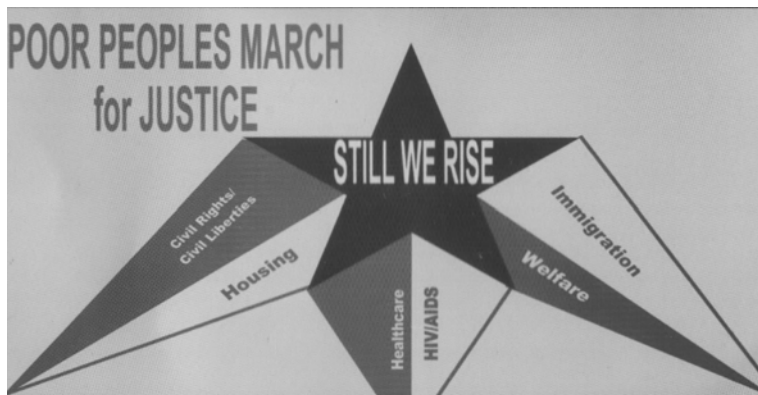
gust to nominate George W. Bush as their candidate for president.

Community-based organizations working on housing, such as Met Council, Pratt Area Community Council, Harlem Operation Take Back, the New York City AIDS Housing Network, Mothers on the Move, and Picture the Homeless, have joined together with groups working for immigration rights (ROC-NY and El Centro de Hospitalidad), welfare rights (FUREE and Community Voices Heard), improved health care (Gay

Men's Health Crisis and the Latino Commission on AIDS), and for an end to the criminalization of our communities (Racial Justice 911) have joined together to form the Still We Rise Coalition.

We named the coalition Still We Rise after the famous Maya Angelou poem to illustrate how years of unjust government policies have torn the lives of most New Yorkers apart, yet we still will rise against them. Long before 9/11, low-income New Yorkers

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# Landlords Cry Foul Over Council's Section 8 Bill

By Christine Lagorio

Can the city compel landlords to participate in a federal housing program? That was the question on the table at a May 4 City Council hearing on legislation proposed by Bill de Blasio (D-Brooklyn), chair of the Council's General Welfare Committee.

The bill, Intro 178, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of source of payment, was written to stop landlords from turning down or evicting tenants who receive rental assistance, such as Section 8 vouchers and HIV/AIDS housing assistance. De Blasio argues that safeguarding these tenants is especially important now, with homelessness on the rise and federal subsidies shrinking.

"We're on the verge of something horrible on the national level, and, frankly, it's unifying us on a municipal level," de Blasio said.

But owners say his good intentions trample on their property rights. "While in theory Section 8 should benefit both tenants and owners, the overwhelming bureaucratic quagmire involved in the administration of the program gives owners ample reason to avoid participation," said Frank Ricci, in his testimony on behalf of the Rent Stabilization Association, a landlord group.

The bill also drew criticism from the city, which warned that forcing private landlords to accept public dollars could prompt lawsuits.

"Generally when someone makes a case based on financial concerns, that's deemed to be acceptable, and nondiscriminatory," said Clifford Mulqueen, a deputy with the city's Commission on Human Rights.

But de Blasio, a former New York regional director for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, points out that more than a dozen states already have laws similar to Intro 178.

While the average New York City landlord can turn away a voucher-bearing tenant without a second thought, across the Hudson in Hoboken, that landlord could be fined \$10,000 or more under decades-old case law that was signed into an antidiscrimination law by Governor James McGreevey in 2002.

Comparable laws protect renters in California, Connecticut and Washington, D.C. "We have one of the tightest markets in the country, so the state and the city have already placed many regulations on it. Rent stabilization is a good example," said Ashwani Prabhakar, a staff attorney at the Legal Aid Society Brooklyn Office for the Aging. "I don't think they could argue that this is an area in which government can't intercede, because it already has in so many ways."

De Blasio is willing to compromise on some aspects of the bill, but pointed out that he and his 22

cosponsors are dead serious about passing it. "This isn't symbolic legislation," he said. "Bottom line is we want to create a dynamic here where a Section 8 voucher is

seen by a landlord as as good as cash.

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## Housing Costs Threaten Region's Economic Stability

High housing costs, poor housing quality and long commutes are endemic in the New York/New Jersey/Connecticut metropolitan area, putting the region at an extreme economic disadvantage and diminishing residents' quality of life, concludes a new report, *Out of Balance: The Housing Crisis from a Regional Perspective* released last month.

Researchers from the Regional Plan Association and Citizens Housing and Planning Council found that 29 percent of area households spend more than 35 percent of their income on housing, and the number of affordable units is shrinking even as the number of households that need them grows. The region also has the oldest housing stock and longest work commutes in the nation.

"Housing is a regional issue that

is crucial to economic competitiveness," said Robert Yaro, president of the Regional Plan Association. "Employers make business-location decisions based on the ability to attract a talented workforce, and our region's housing crisis makes it increasingly difficult to attract and retain residents at all income levels." Data from this report will form the basis of a policy paper due out next fall about ways the city and state governments can address the housing crisis.

*—Elizabeth Cady Brown*

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# EL INQUILINO HISPANO

## Las rentas podrían aumentar por un 7.5% RGB recomienda un rango de incrementos en su votación preliminar

Por Steven Wishnia y Jenny Laurie  
Traducido por Lightning Translations

La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) rompió con precedentes el 10 de mayo al votar sugerir un rango de incrementos de renta posibles en vez de establecer una cifra específica como su pauta preliminar para los apartamentos de renta estabilizada. Sin embargo, para el millón de familias afectadas, el resultado será más de lo mismo: rentas más altas.

La RGB votó 5 a 4 proponer incrementos de 3 a 5.5 por ciento

por un contrato de renovación de un año y de 5.5 a 7.5 por ciento por dos años. Si la junta aprueba las pautas de 5.5 y 7.5 por ciento en la votación final el 17 de junio, serían los incrementos más altos permitidos desde los años 80.

El presidente de la junta Marvin Markus justificó la idea de proponer un rango como manera de abrir el debate. Según algunos observadores, Markus empleó esa táctica inaudita para proteger la

posibilidad de pautas más altas, al temer que un debate extensivo terminara con pautas preliminares bajas. Al proponer el rango al principio del debate, protegió las pautas más altas que él y el gobierno de Bloomberg probablemente quieren, sin ofender a los miembros públicos convencidos por la evidencia que las pautas más bajas son justificadas.

Todos los miembros públicos, menos Martin Zelnik, votaron por

el rango. Los dos representantes de inquilinos y el representante de los caseros Steven Schleider votaron en contra. Harold Lubell, el representante de los caseros de más antigüedad en la junta, dio el voto decisivo después de haber pasado en la primera vuelta—a regañadientes, diciendo que no fue un incremento suficiente.

Como en años anteriores, esta

*pasa a la página 4*

### Los Ajustes de la "Junta de Regulación de Renta" de la Ciudad de Nueva York (Orden No. 35)

Para los contratos de apartamentos de Renta Estabilizada que comienzan el 1ro. de octubre de 2003 hasta el 30 de septiembre de 2004, incluyendo las concesiones de Pataki adoptadas por la Legislatura Estatal el 19 de junio de 1997

Los topes de renta que aparecen en el cuadro son los incrementos máximos que los dueños de edificios pueden cobrar legalmente por los apartamentos de renta estabilizada en la ciudad de Nueva York. Son válidos para todos los contratos que comienzan dentro del período de doce meses a partir del 1ro. de octubre de 2003. Los incrementos de alquiler basados en las pautas para la renovación del contrato de 1 o 2 años pueden cobrarse solamente una vez durante el período cubierto por dichas pautas, y deben ser aplicados a la renta legal estabilizada para el 30 de septiembre de 2003. Las cantidades que aparecen en el cuadro y los incrementos para los apartamentos vacíos no se aplican a los apartamentos que estaban sujetos a renta controlada en aquella fecha. No se permite el recargo también conocido como el «impuesto de pobres.»

**Los Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos o Nuevos** En junio de 1997, el gobernador George Pataki, al intentar destruir la regulación de rentas, forzó cambios que les dieron a los caseros un recargo muy grande por los apartamentos vacíos. Una cláusula de la "Reforma al Acta de Regulación de Renta" de 1997 permite que los nuevos alquileres sean incrementados en un porcentaje obligatorio: 20% para un contrato de dos años, y por un contrato de 1 año, 20% de incremento menos la diferencia en el tope de renovación para los contratos de 1 y 2 años. La ley permite también incrementos adicionales para los apartamentos vacíos donde no se habían cobrado incrementos por desocupación por ocho años o más.

**Exceso de Cobro** Los inquilinos deben estar al tanto de que muchos caseros van a aprovecharse de la complejidad de estas regulaciones y subvenciones, así como del poco conocimiento de los inquilinos del historial de renta de sus apartamentos, para cobrar un alquiler ilegal. Una vez que el inquilino haya tomado posesión del apartamento, puede escoger entre

llenar un formulario de queja de exceso de cobro de renta con la oficina de la División de Vivienda y Renovación Comunal (DHCR), o disputar la cantidad de la renta en la corte de vivienda de la ciudad para que se determine cuál es el alquiler legal.

Si un posible inquilino da muestras de conocer sus derechos, lo más probable es que el casero no firmará ningún contrato con tal inquilino. Los caseros evitan contratar con inquilinos que les pueden dar problemas. El exceso de cobro de alquiler es muy común. Todos los inquilinos deben luchar contra posibles excesos de cobro. Obtenga y llene un formulario *Form RA-89* con la oficina de DHCR para determinar el alquiler correcto en los archivos oficiales. Llame a la DHCR a (718) 739-6400 para obtener un formulario, o búsquelo en el sitio [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us).

**La Apelación de la Renta de Mercado Justa** Otro tipo de exceso de cobro sucede frecuentemente cuando se vacía un apartamento que previamente estaba sujeto a renta controlada y se alquila con renta estabilizada. La Junta de Regulación de Renta (RGB) establece anualmente lo que ellos llaman el "Tope Especial de la Renta de

Mercado Justa," el cual es empleado por la DHCR para bajar las rentas de mercado injustas de los inquilinos que llenan el formulario llamado "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" (FMRA). Según la Orden 35, es la Renta de Mercado Justa de HUD o un 50% sobre la renta base máxima. Ningún inquilino de un apartamento de renta estabilizada que fue descontrolado el 1ro de abril de 1984 o después debe dejar de poner a prueba la llamada "Renta Legal Inicial Regulada" (renta de mercado) que los caseros cobran cuando hay descontrol del apartamento. Use el formulario de DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indique claramente que su queja es tanto una queja de "Apelación a la Renta Justa de Mercado" como de "exceso de cobro." La corte de vivienda no puede tomar decisión sobre una Apelación de Renta de Mercado. Apartamentos vacíos que antes estaban controlados en edificios que se han convertido en cooperativas o condominios no se vuelven estabilizados y no satisfacen los requisitos para la Apelación de la Renta Justa de Mercado.

**Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad:** Las personas de 62 años o más que viven en apartamentos estabilizados y cuyos ingre-

sos familiares anuales son de \$24,000 o menos, y que pagan (o enfrentan un incremento de alquiler que los forzaría a pagar) una renta de un tercio o más de sus ingresos, pueden tener derecho al programa de Exención de Incrementos para las Personas de Mayor Edad (SCRIE, por sus siglas en inglés), si aplican al Departamento de la Ciudad de Nueva York Sobre las Personas de Mayor Edad, cuya dirección es: SCRIE Unit, 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. Si el alquiler actual de un inquilino que tiene derecho a este programa sobrepasa un tercio del ingreso, no se lo puede reducir, pero es posible evitar incrementos de alquiler en el futuro. Obtenga el formulario de SCRIE por llamar al (212) 442-1000.

**Unidades de Desván (Lofts)** Los incrementos legales sobre la renta base para las unidades de desván son de un 4 por ciento por un contrato de un año y un 7 por ciento por un contrato de dos años. No se permiten incrementos para las unidades de desván vacías.

**Hoteles y Apartamentos de una Sola Habitación** La pauta es un 3.5% para hoteles de clase A, casas de huéspedes, hoteles de clase B (de 30 habitaciones o más), hoteles de habita-

ciones solas (SROs) y casas de habitaciones (clase B, de 6 a 29 cuartos), por encima de la renta legal que se pagó el 30 de septiembre de 2003. No se permite ningún incremento de vacancia. No se puede cobrar el incremento estipulado por la pauta a menos que un 75% o más de las unidades en el edificio sean ocupados por inquilinos permanentes de renta estabilizada o controlada pagando las rentas reguladas legales. Además, no se permite ningún aumento cuando el dueño deje de dar al nuevo inquilino de aquella unidad una copia de los Derechos y Obligaciones de los Dueños e Inquilinos de Hoteles, según la Sección 2522.5 del Código de Estabilización de Rentas.

**La Desregulación de Rentas Altas y Altos Ingresos** (1) Los apartamentos que legalmente se alquilan por \$2,000 o más por mes y que se desocuparon entre el 7 de julio de 1993 y el 1ro. de octubre de 1993, o en o desde del 1ro de abril de 1994 son sujetos a la desregulación. (2) La misma desregulación se les aplica, para el mismo período establecido en (1), a los apartamentos que legalmente pagan \$2,000 o más mensualmente aunque no se desocupen, si el ingreso total de la familia es más de \$175,000 en los dos años consecutivos previos. Para cumplir los requisitos de esta segunda forma de desregulación, el casero tiene que enviarle un formulario de certificación de ingreso al inquilino entre el 1ro de enero y el 1ro de mayo, así como someter dicho formulario al DHCR y conseguir su aprobación.

Para pautas previas, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934 o busque el sitio [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com).

Tipo de Contrato	Renta Legal Actual	Contrato de 1 Año	Contrato de 2 Años
<b>Renovación del Contrato</b>	Todas	4.5%	7.5%
<b>Contratos para Apartamentos Vacíos</b>	Más de \$500	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17%
		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 el 17%
	Menos de \$300	Incrementos por desocupación cobrados en los últimos 8 años	17% + \$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
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 rentas

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votación preliminar de la RGB fue un ejercicio ritual en el teatro político. Muchísimos inquilinos y caseros llenaron la sala, los inquilinos en su mayoría gente mayor trayendo gorras de pintor amarillas con el lema “Leyes de Renta Más Fuertes Ahora” o de blanco y rosa con el lema “Soy Inquilino y Voto” y los caseros con las gorras de béisbol de azul y blanco de la Asociación de Renta Estabilizada, su grupo de cabildeo. Como siempre, los inquilinos eran más numerosos que los caseros a razón de 2 a 1; ambos lados vitorearon, abuchearon e interrumpieron mientras Markus—apodado “Marvin el Sobrecargador” por los inquilinos—trató de mantener el orden como un maestro de mal genio en un instituto de enseñanza media.

Sin embargo, durante los últimos años el desenlace ha sido tan preparado como en la lucha libre profesional. Primero, los representantes de inquilinos en la junta proponen una congelación de renta o un incremento mínimo, hablan de los costos de la vivienda y la tasa de falta de hogar—y pierden, 7 a 2. Luego, los dos representantes de caseros reclaman más dinero, amenazando con el abandono de vastas áreas de los conda-

dos fuera de Manhattan si no lo consiguen. Este año, querían un incremento de 9 por ciento, además de un recargo de \$25 al mes para los inquilinos que habían habitado el mismo apartamento por ocho años o más. Steven Schleider entonó piadosamente que el gobierno y no los caseros debe subvencionar a la gente pobre—al declarar que renovar un contrato con sólo incrementos de renta limitados “no es patrimonio, sino un privilegio.” Finalmente, los cinco miembros públicos aprueban un incremento de renta—lo más alto posible sin causar daños políticos al alcalde que los nombró—sin casi ningún debate.

“No hay justificación económica alguna para incrementar la renta. Este aumento puede ser de tipo político,” dijo el abogado de inquilinos Tim Collins, antiguo director de personal de la RGB. En su testimonio delante de la junta en abril, Collins señaló varios hechos notables que muestran lo mal que les va a los inquilinos, mientras que les va muy bien a los caseros desde hacia fines de los años 80. El informe de la RGB sobre actividades hipotecarias muestra que los caseros reciben ganancias más grandes de las indi-

casadas por otros informes: aunque los caseros puedan declarar menos de lo que realmente ganan al Departamento de Hacienda municipal, pintan el mejor cuadro posible para los prestadores de hipotecas. Los ingresos netos operativos de los caseros (el dinero que sobra después de pagar los gastos e impuestos) aumentaron casi un 20 por ciento entre 1989 y 2002.

En cambio, los inquilinos han sufrido una caída salarial de 5 por ciento en 2002 y viven en una ciudad que tiene una alta tasa de desempleo (8.4 por ciento), una alta tasa de falta de hogar (un promedio de 38,000 personas en el sistema de albergues cada noche) y más de 300,000 demandas por falta de pago y desalojos al año. El ingreso mediano de los inquilinos de renta estabilizada es \$31,000 al año, según cifras de la junta citadas por la representante de inquilinos Adriene Holder, mientras la tasa de apartamentos vacantes que se alquilan por menos de \$700 al mes es un 1.4 por ciento. “¿Qué se supone que la gente haga?” preguntó.

Los inquilinos ganaron pequeñas victorias al derrotar el recargo para inquilinos a largo plazo—lla-

mado “cuota de igualación” por Markus e “impuesto de ancianos” por los inquilinos—y al frustrar los esfuerzos del gobierno de Bloomberg para justificar los incrementos de renta por los supuestos costos de hacer cumplir la nueva ley municipal sobre la pintura con plomo.

De todos modos, los ciclos sin fin de incrementos de renta anuales son desalentadores para muchas personas. “Ser parte de este proceso socava la moral. Estoy harta de que todo se salde a cuenta de la gente trabajadora y pobre,” dijo Adriene Holder después de la votación. “Este proceso sólo ha tratado de establecer los márgenes de ganancia para los caseros, cuando es necesario que trate sobre los inquilinos.”

La junta también sugirió un rango de incrementos de renta para hoteles y desvanes. Aprobó incrementos preliminares de 0 a 2 por ciento para hoteles, 5 a 4, después de votar 6 a 3 al rechazo de la propuesta de Martin Zelnik para bajar las rentas de habitaciones en un 3.5 por ciento, en efecto anulando el incremento de 3.5 por ciento del año pasado. Para

pas a la página 5

## ¡Demandemos que Marvin Markus Renuncie de la RGB!

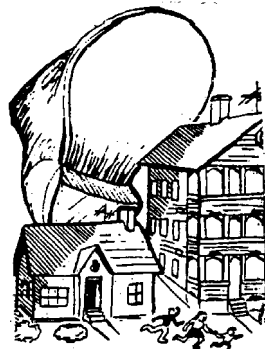
Unase a nosotros el lunes 14 de junio a las 5 PM, Frente a la oficina de GOLDMAN SACHS 85 BROAD STREET (J,M a Broad Street o 2,3,4,5 a Wall Street)

### ¿Quién es Marvin Markus?

- Es el presidente de la Junta de Regulación de Rentas (RGB).
- Trabaja para Goldman Sachs, una compañía gigantesca de inversiones.
- No vive en un apartamento regulado.
- Tiene más dinero de lo que tendrá la mayoría de los neoyorquinos en toda la vida.
- ¡Apoya aumentos de alquileres muy altos cada año!
- ¿Porqué es este hombre el presidente de la RGB, que determina los aumentos de renta para más de un millón de inquilinos?

**La RGB aplasta a los inquilos!**

## Inquilinos de renta estabilizada: ren al alcalde Berg antes de que suba las rentas!



La Junta de Renta (RGB) está dispuesta a elevar las rentas otra vez. El año pasado, la junta estableció las pautas más altas para inquilinos de renta estabilizada desde 1989—después de que los caseros han tenido ganancias cada vez más grandes al elevar las rentas hasta las nubes. Los miembros nombrados a la junta por el alcalde Bloomberg ya están por hacerlo otra vez—a menos que los inquilinos los detengan. Usando la nueva ley sobre el plomo como pretexto, el gobierno de Bloomberg está presionando a la RGB para que otorgue a los caseros incrementos altos por segundo año consecutivo. No deje que la RGB repita las pautas desastrosas del año pasado. ¡Haga que su voz sea escuchada!

Haga piquete contra el alcalde Bloomberg y su Junta de Regulación de Renta el 17 de junio.

Venga a las reuniones de la RGB. Testifique en la Audiencia Pública. Dígame a la RGB cómo le lastimaron a Vd. y a sus vecinos las pautas del año pasado – dígame cómo le afectarán los incrementos altos este año. Llame al alcalde Bloomberg al: 212-788-3000

### Audiencia Pública Martes 15 de junio

La Sala Grande de Cooper Union  
10 A.M. - 10 P.M.

### Votación Final Jueves 17 de junio

La Sala Grande de Cooper Union  
5:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.

Para inscribirse como testigo en la audiencia pública, llame a la RGB al 212-385-2934

El manifestacion es co-patrocinado por Met Council on Housing y Tenants & Neighbors

Para más información: Met Council on Housing (212) 979-6238 ext 3; active@metcouncil.net; www.metcouncil.net

Tenants & Neighbors: (212) 608-4320, ext. 401; info@tandn.org

# New Met Council Board Members

At our annual assembly on Saturday, May 22, Met Council members elected the following people to serve another term on the board of directors: Jennifer Flynn, Vajra Kilgour, Artemio Guerra, Vicki Larson, James Lewis, Jon Lilienthal, Seth Miller, Kenny Schaeffer, Alex Schafran, Charlie Seelig, Scott Sommer and Gloria Sukenick. Also elected were the following new members:

## Rick Echevarria

Rick Echevarria is currently associate director of the Bushwick Housing Independence Project, a tenants' organizing and advocacy initiative in the Bushwick neighborhood in Brooklyn. It aims to combat the forces of gentrification that have led to the threatened housing displacement of low-income residents within the community. He is a graduate of the Wagner School for Public Service at New York University, where he received an M.P.A. degree in 2003. Previous to



RGB tenant representative Adriene Holder speaking at the annual assembly.

tion. Rick is a lifelong resident of the Bushwick community.

## Jackie Del Valle

Jackie Del Valle is the lead housing organizer for New Settlement



New board member Jackie Del Valle.

Apartments in the Bronx. New Settlement Apartments develops and manages affordable housing, operates numerous youth-development programs, and has an emerging and increasingly powerful community-organizing capacity. They have achieved much success in education reform and have recently begun a tenant organizing initiative, which Jackie coordinates. She has previously worked at the Highbridge Community Life Center as a community organizer and has a background in event planning and community development. She resides in Manhattan with her husband and is also pursuing her



Returning board member Jen Flynn of the NYC AIDS Housing Network.

his work with the Bushwick Housing Independence Project, Rick worked as a researcher on economic justice issues for the Brennan Center for Justice. He has also worked as a researcher for the Open Society Institute's Access to Justice Program, and is a founding board member of Harlem Operation Take Back, a Harlem-based housing organiza-

master's degree in urban planning at Hunter College.

Grad, Marilyn Bowie, Lydia Padilla, and Deneane Brown.

## Gabriel Thompson

Gabriel Thompson is director of organizing at Pratt Area Community Council (PACC) in Central Brooklyn. He works primarily on anti-eviction and code-enforcement issues, with a focus on lead paint. He has been at PACC for 2 and one half years. Originally from San Jose, California, he got his first organizing experience working on the Justice for Janitors campaign in Denver, Colorado.

Met Council says farewell to five board members who served the organization with great energy and dedication: Grover Foster, Cathy



Returning board member James Lewis of Harlem Operation Take Back.

## HPD CODE VIOLATIONS ON LINE

### Look up your building!

At long last, the HPD violations terminal is available on-line. If you go to the HPD Website listed below and follow the instructions, you should be able to get an up-to-date list of violations on a building.

[www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/data/hpd-online-portal.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/data/hpd-online-portal.html)

## Convention

continued from page 1

were struggling to get by. Since 9/11, New Yorkers have been pushed harder and harder by politicians looking to capitalize on our grief. And poor New Yorkers rise. And still tenants rise. And still we will rise on August 30 at 2 p.m. marching from Union Square to Times Square.

Still We Rise will make sure that the voices and faces of the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who are angered that our government's inaction to meet our most basic needs—housing, health care, civil rights, economic justice—are heard and seen. It's time for New York City's tenants to band together and take to the streets and make sure that we are visible to

our future leaders.

The Still We Rise march is not the answer to our housing crisis—it is only a visibility action—but it is a vital way to bring the real issues that affect our daily lives into the national debate. It is our way to say to politicians that if they want to play heroes, if they want to come to New York and share in our grief, they have to deal with all of it. End the housing crisis. Help us rebuild all parts of our cities for all of us who live here. Join Met Council on Housing on August 30 at 2 p.m. at Union Square for the Still We Rise march.

Jennifer Flynn is co-director of the NYC AIDS Housing Network and a Met Council board member.

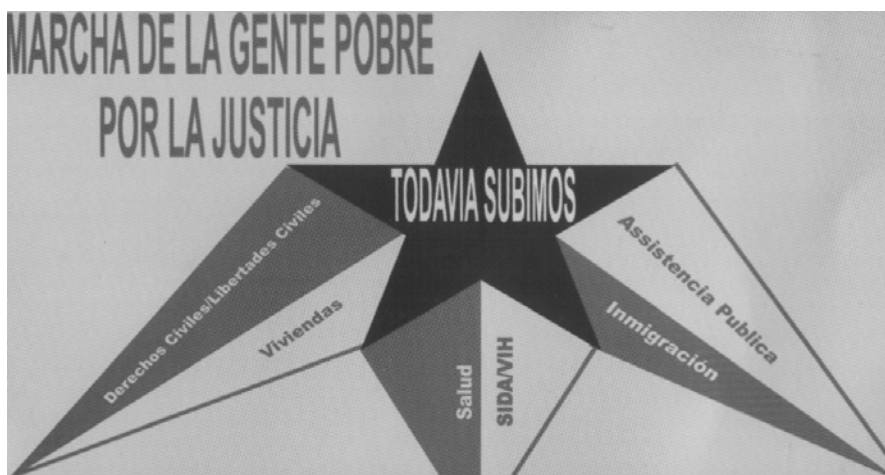
## Las rentas

viene de la página 4

desvanes, la junta recomendó pautas de un 2.5 a un 5 por ciento por un contrato de un año y 5 a 7 por ciento por dos años, también 5 a 4.

Al fin de la noche, hubo una disputa breve sobre la limitación de los incrementos de vacancia al 20 por ciento especificado por la

ley estatal. Los límites se sostuvieron 6 a 1, con Schleider y Harold Lubell—los que habían planteado la cuestión—absteniéndose. Zelnik, quien anteriormente había sugerido que la junta estableciera pautas distintas para tipos de edificios distintos, emitió el único voto en contra.



## Demand That Mr. Markus Resign From The RGB!

JOIN US MONDAY, 5 P.M., JUNE 14

AT THE OFFICE OF GOLDMAN SACHS  
85 BROAD STREET

(J,M to Broad Street or 2,3,4,5 to Wall Street)

### Who is Marvin Markus?

- He is the chairman of the Rent Guidelines Board (RGB).
- He works for Goldman Sachs, a major banking conglomerate.
- He does not live in rent-regulated or any rental housing.
- He is wealthier than most New Yorkers ever will be.
- Every year Markus supports huge rent increases!
- Why is this man chairman of the RGB, which determines rent increases for over a million tenants?

RGB Smashes Stabilized Tenants!

# Yassky Criticized for Housing Trade

By Elizabeth Cady Brown

David Yassky, a second-term City Council member known for his unswerving commitment to affordable housing, has come under fire from constituents in his Williamsburg district for supporting a luxury high-rise.

At a May 17 community board meeting, many of his supporters said they were shocked and angered to hear Yassky defend developer Louis Kestenbaum's plans to build a large luxury apartment building at 184 Kent Ave. along the Williamsburg waterfront, a project with no affordable apartments. Kestenbaum is seeking a zoning variance for the project, which is on a formerly industrial site.

"I was very disappointed that our young, smart legislator, who has identified his support for affordable housing, would cast his political vote with selfish people just looking to

make huge profit on projects that do harm to this neighborhood," said Felice Kirby, a local business owner.

Yassky, a Princeton and Yale-trained lawyer, has won the trust of his working-class constituents by fighting hard to keep re-zoned Williamsburg affordable to the families who live there now. A strong supporter of "inclusionary zoning" measures—which require developers to reserve part of their buildings for affordable housing—he argues that sometimes compromises are necessary to achieve the goal.

In exchange for writing a letter to the city's zoning review board in support of a variance request for 184 Kent Ave., he got the developer to agree to contribute \$355,000 into a fund managed by the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development that sup-

ports affordable construction in Williamsburg.

"Variances go through all the time and the community gets nothing," explained Yassky's press secretary, Evan Thies. "David knew he wasn't going to stop it from going through, so this is a creative new way of using existing government programs to try to get something for the community."

The pragmatism defense carries little weight with his constituents. Deborah Masters, a member of the community board, argued that this is a moment for bold action, not piecemeal agreements with individual developers. "He's put himself forward as a leader on the housing issue, and now he's undermined his own efforts by making that deal," said Masters. "How does it look for him to approve a project that has not one unit of affordable housing?"

Other board members questioned the \$355,000 payment. "It doesn't sound like a lot of money to me," said Teresa Toro. "You can't build anything for a few hundred thousand dollars." Besides, she pointed out, the 19-year-old affordable housing fund Kestenbaum would pay into already has \$2.6 million sitting unused because nonprofit developers have had trouble finding affordable land.

A number of other elected officials weighed in at the hearing as well. Assemblymember Vito Lopez and Councilmember Diana Reyna both opposed the variance on the grounds that this application does not meet the criteria for getting a variance and, moreover, that this is an important moment for affordable housing advocates to take a symbolic stand against pure

market-rate developments.

"I came from Albany to be at the meeting because I wanted to send a strong message about affordable housing," said Lopez. "You can't come in project by project and give a little carrot like \$350,000—it's a sham."

The community board itself recommended against the variance request by a vote of 24 to 13, but it now goes to the city Board of Standards and Appeals, which makes the final decision. In the meantime, Yassky may need to do some fence-mending. "He has so much to prove now to the community," said Masters. "I don't know why he went down that road."

*Reprinted with permission from City Limits Weekly.*

## NYC Rent Guidelines Board Adjustments (Order No. 35)

for Rent Stabilized Leases commencing Oct. 1, 2003 through Sept. 30, 2004, including the Pataki vacancy bonuses adopted by the State Legislature on June 19, 1997

This rent guidelines table shows the maximum increases landlords in New York City can legally charge for rent stabilized apartments on all leases commencing in the twelve-month period beginning October 1, 2003. Increases in rent based on the 1- or 2-year renewal guidelines can be charged only once during the period covered by the guidelines, and must be applied to the legal stabilized rent on September 30, 2003. The above guidelines and vacancy bonuses do not apply to an apartment which was rent controlled on that date. There is no low rent supplement, a.k.a. poor tax, allowed.

### Sublease Allowance

Landlords can charge a 10 percent increase during the term of a sublease that commences during this guideline period.

### Vacancy Leases

In June 1997, Governor George Pataki, as a part of his efforts to destroy rent regulation, forced changes that gave landlords large vacancy bonuses. Provisions of his Rent Regulation Reform Act of 1997 allow the rents of apartments to rise by a statutory percentage: 20 percent for a 2-year lease, and 20 percent minus the difference between the 1- and 2-year renewal guidelines for 1-year leases. The law also allows additional vacancy increases for apartments which have had no vacancy allowance in eight or more years.

### 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. The tenant can choose be-

Lease Type	Current Legal Rent		One-year Lease	Two-year Lease
<b>Renewal Leases</b>	All		4.5%	7.5%
<b>Vacancy leases</b>	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	

tween filing an overcharge complaint with the Division of Housing and Community Renewal or challenging the rent in Housing Court to get a determination of the legal rent.

A prospective tenant who expresses knowledge of their rights will probably not be given a lease to sign. Landlords avoid renting to tenants who may be troublesome. Overcharging is very common. Every tenant should challenge possible overcharge. With DHCR, obtain and fill out *Form RA-89* to determine the correct rent from official records. Call DHCR at (718) 739-6400 to obtain the form or go to: [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us)

### Fair Market Rent Appeal

Another type of overcharge frequently occurs at the time that a previously rent controlled apartment becomes vacant and is re-rented as a stabilized unit. The Rent Guidelines Board an-

nually sets what they call the "Special Fair Market Rent Guideline" that is used by DHCR to lower unfair market rents for tenants who file the Fair Market Rent Appeal (FMRA). Under Order 35, it is HUD Fair Market Rent or 50% above the maximum base rent., whichever is higher. No stabilized tenant of an apartment that was decontrolled on or after April 1, 1984 should fail to challenge the so-called Initial Legal Regulated Rent (market rent) that landlords charge upon decontrol. Use DHCR *Form RA-89*. Indicate clearly that your complaint is both a complaint of "overcharge" and "Fair Market Rent Appeal." The Housing Court cannot determine a Fair Market Rent Appeal. Formerly controlled vacant apartments in buildings converted to co-ops or condos do not become stabilized and are not eligible for a Fair Market Rent Appeal.

### Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption

Rent stabilized seniors, 62 years or older, whose disposable annual household income is \$24,000 or less 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) if they apply to the NYC Dept of the Aging, SCRIE Unit at 2 Lafayette Street, NY, NY 10007. If an otherwise eligible tenant's current rent level is already above one-third of income, it cannot be rolled back, but future rent increases may be avoided. Obtain the SCRIE application form by calling (212) 442-1000.

### Loft Units

Legalized loft unit increases above the base rent are 4 percent for a one-year lease and 7 percent for two years. No va-

cancy allowance is permitted on vacant lofts.

### Hotels and SROs

The guideline is 3.5% for Class A apartment hotels, lodging houses, Class B hotels (30 rooms or more), single room occupancy (SROs) hotels, and rooming houses (Class B, 6-29 rooms), above the legal rent paid on September 30, 2003. No vacancy allowance is permitted. The guideline is not collectible unless 75% or more of the units in the building are occupied by permanent rent stabilized or controlled tenants paying legal regulated rents. Further, no increase is allowed when the owner has failed to provide to the new occupant of that unit a copy of the Rights and Duties of Hotel Owners and Tenants, pursuant to Section 2522.5 of the Rent Stabilization Code.

### High-rent, High-income Deregulation

(1) Apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month that became vacant from July 7, 1993 through October 1, 1993, or on April 1, 1994 and thereafter are subject to deregulation. (2) The same deregulation applies in the time periods set forth in (1) above to apartments legally renting for \$2,000 or more a month without their becoming vacant if the total household income exceeds \$175,000 in each of the prior two consecutive years. To be eligible for this second form of deregulation, the landlord must send an income certification form to the tenant between January 1 and May 1 and file it with and get the approval of DHCR.

For previous guidelines call the RGB at 212-385-2934 or go to [www.housingnyc.com](http://www.housingnyc.com).

# Court Says Welfare Recipients Can't Go on Rent Strike

By Steven Wishnia

Welfare recipients can't withhold their rent even if there are dangerous violations in their building, according to a ruling handed down by the state's highest court on May 11. Instead, they must rely on the city Human Resources Administration to do it for them, the Court of Appeals said.

The case, *Matter of Notre Dame Leasing, LLC v. Alexandria Rosario*, involved Alexandria Rosario, who had withheld \$1,454—her share of four months' rent on her Queens apartment—in the winter of 1999-2000. When the landlord, Notre Dame, tried to evict her and her husband and children, Rosario argued that she had not paid the rent because there were water leaks, broken windows, and dangerous flaws in the apartment's wiring.

Her key argument centered on the Spiegel Law, a 1962 measure that lets welfare recipients withhold rent for violations related to conditions "which are dangerous, hazardous, or detrimental to life or health." According to city Department of Housing Preservation and Development records, the building had 33 Class B and Class C viola-

tions; Class C violations are considered "immediately hazardous."

Assemblymember Sam Spiegel, the law's sponsor, said at the time that it was intended to "attack... the 'jugular vein' of the slumlord by temporarily withholding payments of rent until hazardous and dangerous violations are cleared... public funds should not be used to further the continuance of any building which is substandard."

Rosario won in Civil Court, but lost in the Appellate Division, which ruled that she could not withhold rent unless HRA also did so. The Court of Appeals affirmed the Appellate Division's ruling, 5-2. The majority opinion, written by Judge Albert M. Rosenblatt, held that the Spiegel Law was intended to protect tenants from eviction when HRA withholds rent and doesn't entitle them to go on rent strike on their own "when public welfare officials themselves recognized no imperative to suspend payment." It also noted the 1997 rent-deposit law, and said that if Rosario's interpretation of the Spiegel Law was correct, it would let tenants use irrelevant violations "to avoid paying rent."

"There is nothing in the provision requiring that the agency must act first to withhold rent on the tenant's behalf," responded the two dissenters, Judges Carmen Beauchamp Ciparick and George Bundy Smith. "Allowing tenants to withhold rent themselves continues to further the purpose of the statute, especially in light of the present situation where public welfare officials apparently are not using their statutory power to withhold rent when violations are present.... The majority's interpretation of the statute essentially thwarts its purpose—taking away the threat of nonpayment of rent to offending landlords and the incentive to make repairs."

The result, Legal Services of New York City head Andrew A. Scherer told State Supreme Court Justice Emily Jane Goodman for the Gotham Gazette Web site, will be that "people on public assistance in unsafe, unhealthy buildings, are not going to be able

to avail themselves of a law designed to protect them." Combined with the 1997 rent-deposit law, Scherer added, the decision "guts a powerful tool for addressing deplorable housing conditions" and "makes it impossible for tenants to take advantage of something that was created for them."

## 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.

## Disappearing Dollars: Report Says 'Little, If Any' of \$1 Billion Pledged Went to Housing

Less than a quarter of \$1 billion in Battery Park City revenues that the city was supposed to use to build affordable housing was actually spent for that purpose, according to a report by the city's Independent Budget Office.

The amount dropped to almost nothing over the last 15 years, despite a 1989 agreement that committed \$600 million to be set aside for affordable housing development. Virtually all that \$600 million went to general budget purposes, the IBO report said, with "little, if any" going to housing. A clause in the agreement allowed part of the money to be used to "maintain fiscal stability... or existing city services."

The Battery Park City site, 92 acres of landfill, was slated for a mix of low-income, middle-income, and market-rate housing in 1969. But when nothing was built by 1980, the city turned it over to the state, which removed the minimum requirements for affordable housing. After the site was built up during the early 1980s, the city worked out a deal that in exchange for it not buying out the bonds and retaking the land, the Battery Park City Authority would contribute surplus revenues to a fund for affordable housing. In 1985, the BPCA pledged to back \$400 million in bonds for that purpose; \$210 mil-

lion worth were actually issued, and \$143 million of that was used for housing, to rehabilitate 1,557 apartments in the Bronx and Manhattan.

The 1989 agreement committed \$600 million in current revenues, not bonds, and was intended to "augment—not substitute for—existing housing programs," the report said. Yet from 1991 to 2003, city funding for the Department of Housing Preservation and Development's expense budget fell by 70 percent, and funding for its capital budget dropped by 60 percent. If the money collected from the BPCA had gone to housing, it "would have accounted for the majority of HPD's expense budget" in the late '90s; in 2001, the BPCA's \$76.7 million payment "was actually larger than the city-funded portion of HPD's expense budget."

Of the \$1 billion commitment, the report concluded, "little of the total appears actually have gone to housing programs."

With the 1985 and 1989 commitments paid off, the Bloomberg and Pataki administrations now want to use \$350 million in Battery Park City revenues to finance expanding the Javits Convention Center.

—Steven Wishnia

## West Village Houses Tenants Reach Deal With Landlord

After two years of negotiation and litigation, the tenants of the West Village Houses have reached an agreement with the owners and the city to keep their housing prices from possibly tripling.

Under the terms of the agreement, the 420-unit Mitchell-Lama complex will be transformed into a co-op. Slightly more than half the residents will buy their apartments at a discount from the market rate. The other tenants will be able to rent their apartments, receiving some increases but still paying less than market rate. In order for the owner to agree to this deal, the city agreed to forgive about \$19 million in interest that it was owed on a mortgage loan. The landlord will also receive some tax breaks.

The Greenwich Village complex was built in the 1970s under the Mitchell-Lama program to provide affordable housing. But after 20 years, the owner was able to buy out of the program, which made the deal a necessity for the middle-class tenants. If it hadn't hap-

pened, rents in the buildings could have gone from \$900 a month for a two-bedroom apartment to \$2,700.

All sides seemed to be pleased with the deal. "This resolution will preserve affordable housing," Mayor Bloomberg said in a statement, "while at the same time balancing the needs of tenants and building owners." "This is the American dream come true for homesteaders of the old West Village," added Katy Bordonaro, president of the West Village Houses Tenants' Association. "We are free from the looming nightmare of skyrocketing rents and displaced families." "I am proud to be a part of this historic win-win resolution that accommodates the needs and concerns of West Village Houses, the owner and the City of New York," concurred Jeffrey Cohen, a principal of the Island Capital Group, which is the general partner of the owner of the property.

—Ian Present

## City Limits

New York's Urban Affairs News Magazine

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Insight into the politics of poverty, race and urban economics

10 issues a year \$25  
Two years for \$35

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New York, NY 10005

**RGB**

*continued from page 1*

lords might under-report their income to the city Department of Finance, they show the best possible picture to mortgage lenders. Landlords' net operating incomes (money left over after expenses and taxes are paid) rose close to 20 percent between 1989 and 2002.

Tenants, however, suffered a 5 percent drop in wages in 2002 and live in a city with high unemployment (8.4 percent), a high rate of homelessness (38,000 average in the shelter system each night), and more than 300,000 nonpayment petitions and evictions a year. The median income of rent-stabilized tenants is \$31,000 a year, according to board figures cited by tenant representative Adriene Holder, but the vacancy rate for apartments renting for

less than \$700 a month is 1.4 percent. "What are people supposed to do?" she asked.

Tenants had the small victories of defeating the surcharge for long-term tenants—called an "equalization allowance" by Markus and a "senior-citizen tax" by tenants—and turning back the Bloomberg administration's efforts to use the alleged costs of enforcing the city's new lead-paint law to justify rent increases.

Still, the endless rounds of annual rent increases are discouraging to many. "It's demoralizing to be a part of this process. I'm tired of everything being balanced on the backs of working and poor people," Adriene Holder said after the vote. "This process has been all about setting landlords' profit margins. It needs to be about the tenants."

The board also suggested ranges for rent increases for hotels and lofts. It approved preliminary increases of 0 to 2 percent for hotels by 5-4, after voting 6-3 to turn down Zelnik's proposal to lower room rents by 3.5 percent, in effect rescinding last year's 3.5 percent increase. For lofts, it recommended guidelines of 2.5 to 5 percent for a one-year lease and 5 to 7 percent for two years, also by 5-4.

At the end of the night, there was a brief dispute about limiting vacancy increases to the 20 percent specified by state law. The limits were sustained 6-1, with Schleider and Harold Lubell—the ones who'd raised the issue—abstaining. Zelnik, who had earlier suggested that the board set different guidelines for different types of buildings, was the one no vote.

**Rent Stabilized Tenants!  
Stop Mayor Bloomberg  
before he raises your rents!**

The Rent Guidelines Board is set to raise your rents again. On May 10<sup>th</sup>, the RGB set preliminary guidelines of 3 to 5.5 percent for a one year lease, and 5.5 to 7.5 percent for a two year lease. Increases of 5.5 and 7.5 would be higher than last year's—which were the highest increases in 14 years. The RGB votes on June 17 – BE THERE TO STOP ANOTHER OUTRAGEOUS INCREASE.

- ◆ Picket Mayor Bloomberg and his RGB on June 17.
- ◆ Testify at the Public Hearing on June 15.
- ◆ Tell the RGB how last year's guidelines hurt you and your neighbors – let them know what high increases will do to you this year.  
Call Mayor Bloomberg: 212-788-3000

**Public Hearing**

**Tuesday, June 15; 10 A.M. - 10 P.M.**

The Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7 E. 7 St. (corner of 3rd Ave.) (6 to Astor Place or R to 8<sup>th</sup> St.) Manhattan

**Picket outside the RGB Vote**

**Thursday, June 17; 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

The Great Hall at Cooper Union

**Final Vote**

**Thursday, June 17; 5:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.**

The Great Hall at Cooper Union

To Register to testify at the public hearing, call the RGB at 212-385-2934

Co-sponsored by Met Council on Housing, Tenants & Neighbors and Citywide Tenants Coalition

More info: Met Council on Housing 212/979-6238 ext 3; active@metcouncil.net; www.metcouncil.net, or Tenants & Neighbors: (212) 608-4320, ext. 401 or info@tandn.org

**Blessed City**



COURTESY OF JOHN WATSON/ALL SOULS CHURCH

About 50 people spent the night of May 13-14 in City Hall Park, urging elected officials to adopt policies that will end chronic homelessness in New York. The 20-hour "Blessed City" event was sponsored by the Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing, a coalition of church groups.

**WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

**LOWER EAST SIDE BRANCH at Cooper Square Committee**  
61 E. 4th St. (btwn. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. & Bowery)  
**Tuesdays ..... 6:30 pm**  
Closed during August, reopens Tuesday, September 7th

**CHELSEA COALITION ON HOUSING**  
Covers 14<sup>th</sup> St. to 30<sup>th</sup> St., 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. to the Hudson River.  
322 W. 17<sup>th</sup> St. (basement), CH3-0544  
**Thursdays ..... 7:30 pm**

**GOLES (Good Old Lower East Side)**  
525 E. 6<sup>th</sup> St. (btwn. Aves. A & B) Lower East Side tenants only, 212-533-2541.

**HOUSING COMMITTEE OF RENA**  
Covers 135<sup>th</sup> St. to 165<sup>th</sup> St. from Riverside Dr. to St. Nicholas Ave.,  
544 W. 157<sup>th</sup> St. (basement entrance).  
**Thursdays ..... 8 pm**

**LOWER MANHATTAN LOFT TENANTS**  
St. Margaret's House, Pearl & Fulton Sts.,  
212-539-3538  
**Wednesdays ..... 6 pm-7 pm**

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

**WEST SIDE TENANTS UNION**  
200 W. 72nd St. Room 63; 212-595-1274  
**Tuesday & Thursday ..... 2-5 pm**  
**Tuesday & Wednesday 6-7:45 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**

**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 is  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