



LAWSUIT NEARS SETTLEMENT FOR LT RESIDENTS

LT Residents/Olnick close to settling rent overcharge lawsuit

On Thursday, June 13th Judge Andrew Borrok is expected to approve the preliminary settlement agreement of the class action lawsuit brought by Lenox Terrace residents according to long time tenants' rights attorney, David Hershey-Webb, of Himmelstein, McConnell, Gribben, Donoghue & Joseph LLP, who is representing Lenox Terrace residents.

The lawsuit began over ten years ago when David Hershey-Webb, LT-ACT's attorney, was hired by the class action members on a referral by LT-ACT's Executive Committee. Olnick had removed apartments from rent stabilization while still receiving the J-51 tax abatements. LT-ACT supports the lawsuit, but is not directly involved.

Upon signing of the preliminary settlement, Olnick has agreed to begin immediately rolling back rents. If your rent goes down, you may be one of approximately 175 current tenants affected.

Lenn Shebar, President of LT-ACT said of the proposed settlement, "This is a tremendous

statement on the power of tenant organizing and advocacy. If not for the ongoing efforts of the LT-ACT Executive Committee over the years, hundreds of apartments at Lenox Terrace would have been illegally deregulated forever."

Updates on the rent roll-backs and disbursement of overage checks to residents will be sent by email to the LT-ACT membership list. Updates, and information where former Lenox Terrace residents can send their information to receive their overage checks, will be posted on our website as well as they become available.

Nearly 175 current residents and over 700 former residents are affected.

Many thanks to everyone who helped through the years in reaching this proposed settlement for residents!

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LT-ACT

Serving the residents of Lenox Terrace!

Join online today at:
www.LTACT.WildApricot.org

or sign up in your building lobby by June 15th!

PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Members of LT-ACT,

Thank you so much for your support in electing the new slate of officers to the LT-ACT board. I am honored to serve as your newly elected President. A big thank you to all of the officers who put themselves forward to share their time and talent on behalf of our community. We have a lot of work to do and a large part of that work is better communications and outreach to the residents of Lenox Terrace.

This newsletter is a special edition for two reasons:

1. This is my first as President of LT-ACT and
2. I am delighted to share some amazing news-- **THE TENANTS OF LENOX TERRACE HAVE REACHED A PRELIMINARY SETTLEMENT IN THE CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT AGAINST THE OLNICK ORGANIZATION** for illegally removing apartments from Rent Stabilization, and in some cases tripling the rent while receiving J-51 Tax Abatement Benefits.

LT-ACT's Attorney, David Hershey-Webb, along with class action counsel Matthew Brinkerhoff of Emery, Celli, Brinkerhoff & Abady LLC, represents the residents. David shared that approximately 175 current residents are class members in the lawsuit and most can expect rent overage checks from Olnick, hopefully by the end of the year. Likewise, hundreds of former residents who moved from Lenox Terrace are also due rent overages, will receive checks. What is even more exciting is that the rents for most class members are to be reduced!

Sharing the details of this news is in keeping with my promise to improve the experience LT-ACT members have with the tenants' association, management, and the owners by providing a consistent, transparent, and informative line of communication. I see an opportunity to establish LT-ACT as an advanced communications hub for all tenant relations. In order to make this happen I will focus on three strategic priorities:

1. Strengthening our internal operations by developing procedures and protocols that enable the

executive board and committees to maintain a more focused organizational structure.

2. Mobilizing additional volunteer support and forming professional subcommittees, thereby allowing us to increase the functionality of our tenant advocacy efforts.

3. Improving our external communications by using specialized software programs to share pertinent and up-to-date information to tenants.

In an effort to ensure that your concerns are addressed, I look forward to reconvening the monthly meetings between the Building Chairs and management to discuss issues within each building. We will be working to establish direct lines of communication between you and your Building Chairs so your voice is heard at these meetings and your issues are better addressed. With the new slate of officers, I feel that we have assembled an effective team with the knowledge and cohesion to be a force to adequately serve our membership.

While I oppose Olnick's efforts to completely rezone Lenox Terrace from residential to a commercial property, I will work to make certain that we have a seat at the table to shape the terms of the conversation where decisions are being made that will affect our lives. My goal is to change the overall tenor by presenting a new voice, while relentlessly advocating for the benefit, security, and empowerment of my fellow neighbors.

If you haven't yet joined or rejoined, I hope I can count on your membership (General Membership only \$20 / \$10 for Seniors), and Happy Spring!

Lenn Shebar, President - LT-ACT

"If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair!" -Shirley Chisolm

LT-ACT Marks 29 Years of Advocacy!

In 1990, a group of concerned LT residents banded together to form Lenox Terrace Association of Concerned Tenants (LT-ACT). In founding LT-ACT, long-time resident and organizer Marlene McMillan said, "We realized we had to combine the buildings under one umbrella. Every building had a set of problems and the problems were related." The ultimate push came after an incident in 1990 when two young men were playing with a gun in front of one of the buildings and fatally shot a resident in his second floor apartment.

"We met with management and demanded security on the grounds. David Paterson allowed us to use his office in the State Building and we met with management there regularly to address the problems in the complex."

Early support for the founding group came from Rep. Charles Rangel, State Senator David Paterson, and Percy Sutton.

In 1992 Roy Miller and Marlene McMillan filed nonprofit incorporation paperwork with the State of New York to form Lenox Terrace Association of Concerned Tenants (LT-ACT) as a legal entity.

After incorporating LT-ACT, Roy and Marlene along with Kande Kennedy became officers of the organization: Roy Miller-President, Kande Kennedy-Vice President, and Marlene McMillan-Treasurer.

Marlene, who has lived in the complex for 57 years spoke of Lenox Terrace's role in the community, "[Lenox Terrace] is an important complex in the history of Harlem...It was a big deal when we founded the tenant's association."

The founding members keenly understood the power of many voices united together. Our united voices are as important now as it was then as we continue to fight for quality of life issues for residents: stronger rent regulations for market rate and rent stabilized tenants to maintain affordable rents, better response time and better quality of repairs from management, and grounds security among others.

We are also focused on making sure that any "in-fill" construction within the complex respects the residential character of the Lenox Terrace community and is scaled appropriately.

Thank you to all past and present LT-ACT Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and other Officers, Executive Committee Members, Building Chairs, and Floor Captains, who have worked tirelessly through the decades for the rights of residents. We have much more work to do and we welcome the voices of all Lenox Terrace residents in helping to achieve that!

LT-ACT Presidents 1990 – Present*

1990-2006

Genie Williams Jr.

Doris Dingle

Roy Miller

Henrietta Lyle

Lamarr Sellars

Henrietta Lyle
(2nd Term)

2006-Present

Jeanette Spencer

Delsenia Glover

Wallace Ford

Delsenia Glover
(2nd Term)

Lenn Shebar

*In chronological order.

JOIN LT-ACT TODAY!

We are stronger with your voice!

Join online at:
www.LTACT.WildApricot.org
or

Sign up in your building
lobby by June 15th!

**Working for the rights
of Lenox Terrace residents!**



Universal Rent Control Bills in the NYS Senate & Assembly

Bills seek to protect market rate & rent stabilized tenants

On June 15th, New York State's renter protection framework -- commonly known as rent stabilization -- will expire, giving tenants a moment of leverage to strengthen and expand their rights.

The State has the opportunity to extend and strengthen our rent stabilization framework to cover all of New York's tenants.

The Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance, a housing and tenants' rights advocacy group, is fighting for greater tenant protections for all New York State residents. They believe that housing is a human right; that all people should live without the fear of eviction; and that strengthening renters' rights is critical to strong neighborhoods, educational and health outcomes, and economic stability for all New Yorkers.

The Upstate-Downstate Housing Alliance is demanding that the New York State Assembly and Senate pass all **NINE** of their proposed bills to strengthen renter protection and rights, **including** laws that pertain to preferential rent.

Their nine bills include provisions that can return some NYC market rate apartments, which were formerly rent-stabilized, back into rent-stabilization. From their website, the bills include:

End vacancy decontrol (S2591/A1198): Vacancy decontrol allows landlords to permanently deregulate apartments once the rent reaches \$2,733 a

month and the current occupant leaves the unit. Our current legislative plan calls for repealing vacancy decontrol and re-regulating units that have been lost to this egregious loophole.

Make preferential rents permanent (S2845A/A4349)

Eliminate the vacancy bonus (S185/A2351): Under rent stabilization, landlords receive a 20% "statutory vacancy bonus" every time an apartment turns over.

Eliminate permanent rent hikes caused by major capital improvements (S3693/A6322) and individual apartment increases (S3770/A6465): Under our current system landlords that upgrade building systems and individual apartment finishes are able to pass the cost of those repairs onto tenants forever.

You can find more information about the proposed legislation here:

<https://www.housingjusticeforall.org/our-platform>

Call 311

Any time you have a major service issue – elevators going out, no hot water, faucets with brown water, heat issues, etc. – call 311 and report it. It's important for every resident to report these issues to the City. The City can extract fines from management for work that is not done in a timely manner.

Contact our State Senator Brian Benjamin and State Assemblyperson Inez Dickens and **voice your support for the bills:**

NYS State Representatives

NYS Senate

Brian Benjamin

Phone: 212-222-7315

bbenjamin@nysenate.gov

NYS Assembly

Inez Dickens

Phone: 212-866-5809

DickensI@nyassembly.gov

Calendar

June 4 - Tuesday

LT-ACT Town Hall Meeting

Kennedy Center

34 W. 134th St.

6:30-8:30 pm

1st Wed. of Each Month

Community Board 10

General Meeting

163 W. 125th St.

(State Building)

2nd Floor Art Gallery

June 15th – Saturday

LT-ACT Membership Drive

Last day!

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