



Mt. Vernon United Tenants, Inc.

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**NEXT MVUT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
TUESDAY – JUNE 7, 2016 - 7:00 PM
MVUT OFFICE - 2 GRAMATAN AVE. - SUITE 304**

Westchester Rent Guidelines Board (WRGB)

The *WRGB* first *Public Hearing* was held this past Wednesday in Yonkers. We're enclosing a schedule of the next two (2) *Public Hearings* and subsequent *Public Meetings*. As you can see, the order of the *Public Hearings* was changed this year. In the past, it's usually begun in Mount Vernon first, Yonkers second, and White Plains third and last. Of far greater concern though is the fact that both of the two (2) Tenant Representatives have resigned their seats – Genevieve Roche immediately, and Reverend Emma Jean Loftin-Woods at the end of the year (Dec. 31, 2016). The motivation for this extreme action is the fact that last year Michael Rosenblatt, former attorney for the *WRGB* was appointed as a "Public Member" to the *WRGB*, despite the fact that he now works for one of the largest real estate law firms in New York City. We're enclosing a Phil Reisman *Journal News* column regarding this "Cry of Cronyism Creates Crisis". This appointment and confirmation was and is an unmitigated disaster. It literally defies imagination to even consider that someone in Mr. Rosenblatt's professional position could qualify as a "Public Member". He would, as both our Tenant Representatives pointed out, make a proper Landlord Representative – but definitely and decidedly not a Public one. Both of our Tenant Representatives felt that they could not in good conscience continue to serve on the *WRGB*, i.e. that their continued participation would recognize the legitimacy of Mr. Rosenblatt's appointment. There are in effect now three (3) Landlord Representatives on the *WRGB*, directly contradicting the statutory basis of the *WRGB* – two (2) Landlord Representatives, two (2) Tenant Representatives, and five (5) Public Members. The integrity of the whole process has been compromised and tenants will undoubtedly be the losers.
SHAME !!!

One of the points that our *Executive Director* has always made at prior *WRGB* Public Hearings was that the main issue, often overlooked by many, in the ever-escalating rents, was vacancy allowances. We're enclosing a May 18, 2016 *New York Times* article – "Tenant Groups Renew Effort To Prohibit Rise In Rent On Vacant Regulated Units" that focuses on this, and a possible Albany solution. On the other side is a *New York Times* editorial from the same day "Tenants vs. Landlords From Hell" which highlights some of the challenges and threats tenants face and the means to which some landlords will go to abuse tenants. Sound familiar ?

(See Over)

National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT)

Our *VISTA* volunteer, Saudia Smith and our Executive Director Dennis Hanratty will be traveling down to Washington for the *NAHT* Annual Meeting and Conference on June 11- 14. There'll be exciting workshops, plenaries and presentations and a final day of lobbying on Capitol Hill. (Saudia and the other *VISTA* volunteers are prohibited from engaging in any lobbying effort). We'll report back in an upcoming mailing

Disabled Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE)

It appears that the City Council is finally ready (We hope so !) to pass the *DRIE*. *MVUT* has been engaging in an almost year-long campaign to achieve this. We expect that at one (1) of the City Council's June meetings that they will actually do so. Call the office for confirmation.

MVUT Staff

We're proud to announce that *MVUT* has hired a new caseworker – Michelle (Shelley) Ellis. Shelley has been a real world-beater and has been providing stellar case management. She's proven to be an excellent advocate for her clients and has quickly and effectively acclimated herself to *MVUT*'s operations, especially in eviction prevention work. Great work Shelley !! We'll have eviction prevention and rehousing successes listed in our next mailing.

Fundraising

We are in desperate need of cash right now. We're expecting our state *Neighborhood Preservation Program* (NPP) funding to kick-in in July /August, but till then we are asking our friends and supporters to help in any way they can. Please help and encourage others to do so as well. Enclosed find a self-addressed envelope for your convenience. Thanks !!

Support Tenants' Rights!
Support Affordable Housing!!
Support *MVUT*!!!