



## **News and Update Early May 2023**

### **Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP)**

Our **HPP** remains our biggest program activity. Day-in, day-out, we're filing funding applications for tenants facing non-payment petitions. Since the pandemic, many tenants who had lost income during the shutdown (loss of job, reduction in hours, etc.), have not been able to get their income level back to where it was pre-pandemic. **MVUT** have assisted literally hundreds of tenants in accessing the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) funds. The ERAP funds could pay up to twelve (12) months' back rent and additionally three (3) months' rent going forward, for a maximum of fifteen (15) months. Many tenants however lost more than fifteen (15) months of income as a result of the pandemic. We see numerous tenants who still owe \$10,000.00, \$15,000.00 and more! Even after they've received the maximum ERAP funds! The work in processing Westchester County "Universal" applications for rent arrears assistance is especially time and energy intensive. Karen Heim has been particularly outstanding in working with the tenant clients in applying for and receiving financial assistance to pay their rent arrears. Way to go, Karen! We also continue to utilize various methods, in fighting their evictions. Just recently via Zoom we've helped represent tenants in Westchester Human Rights' Commission and New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (NYS-DHCR) Conferences to maintain their tenancies.

### **Tenant Action Project (TAP)**

A few new building organizing campaigns on the horizon are 159-165 East Third St., 256 New Main St. in Yonkers and Greater Centennial Homes. We'll be doing some city-wide flyering of the enclosed fund-raising flyer: "Attention Mt. Vernon Tenants" and we'd expect that we'll get requests for organizing assistance from that. We'll keep you posted. As part of our TAP we helped organize a "Rally and Court Watch" in Yonkers on March 24. We're enclosing a copy of a 3/31/23 article in the Journal News regarding this.

### **Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP)**

Great News! The New York State Legislature included the increase in the NPP that we have been lobbying for! This is a result of our bus trip to Albany in February and all of the cards and letters that members of **MVUT** and the other one hundred forty (140) Neighborhood Preservation Companies (NPCs) sent from all over the state throughout the last few months. Congratulations! Our hard work paid off. A personal thanks to all those who participated in the effort, all those who came to Albany with us and those who followed up with cards, letters and E-mails. This proves that when tenants (and other housing activists) fight back, we can win! With this increased funding and if we can get financial help from you, our members and friends, we hopefully will be able to hire an additional staff member. Think of all the great work we already do, and think of how much more we'll be able to help with an additional staff person. So please fill out the enclosed fund-raising appeal on the reverse side of the Journal News article and donate to **MVUT** with the largest contribution that you can afford. Thanks in advance!

### **State Housing Legislation Bills**

While the State budget has finally passed the legislative session will continue into June and there are three key bills affecting tenants which we are supporting:

Statewide Right to Counsel (S2721/A1493)

Winter Eviction Moratorium (S1403/A4093)

Good Cause Eviction (S3082/A4454) \*

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"We're enclosing a copy of a 5/4/23 LoHud article "Good Cause Eviction Bill cut from New York Budget. What's Next for Tenants, Landlords?" Please call the two (2) State Legislators representing Mt. Vernon (Assemblyman Gary Pretlow and Senator Jamaal Bailey) and the two (2) Housing Committee Chairs, Brian Kavanagh in the State Senate, and Linda Rosenthal in the State Assembly expressing your support for the three (3) bills and also make sure to thank them for their support for increased funding for the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP). If you live outside Mt. Vernon, try to look up your senator and assembly representative or call MVUT and we'll try to help. But still reach out to Senator Kavanagh and Assemblywoman Rosenthal.

Brian Kavanagh 518-455-2625 or 718-875-1917  
Legislative Office Bldg Rm 512  
Albany, NY 12247

Linda Rosenthal 518-455-5802 or 212-873-6368  
Legislative Office Bldg Rm 844  
Albany, NY 12248

J. Gary Pretlow 518-455-5291 or 914-667-0127  
Legislative Office Bldg Rm 845  
Albany, NY 12248

Jamaal Bailey 518-455-2061 or 71-597-8854  
Legislative Office Bldg Rm 609  
Albany, NY 12247

### "Fair Housing Month"

April was "Fair Housing Month" and MVUT participated in a number of events in recognition of "Fair Housing." "Fair Housing" is a twelve (12) month issue and if people have experienced any form of discrimination or know someone who has experienced discrimination, please call the MVUT office at (914) 699-1114 and we'll direct them who to call.

### Mt. Vernon Comprehensive Plan

Mt. Vernon United Tenants (MVUT) has been on the Advisory Committee for Mt. Vernon's Comprehensive Plan Committee and has been participating with them the last few months. On April 25 there was a city-wide Public Workshop on the "Comp Plan" at the Mt. Vernon Boys and Girls Club. There are five (5) different subcommittees for the "Comp Plan". They are:

- 1) Open Space & Parks
- 2) Mobility and Transportation
- 3) Business & Economics
- 4) Housing
- 5) Downtown Revitalization

There will be subsequent meetings of the "Comp Plan." If you or someone you know would like to get involved with the "Comp Plan," call the Associate Planning Commissioner Katherine Mella at (914) 508-8086.

## **Support Tenants' Rights!**

## **Support Affordable Housing! !**

## **Support MVUT !!!\***

\*Please fill out the enclosed Funding Appeal and return it to MVUT!