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**NEW YORK STATE HOMES AND
COMMUNITY RENEWAL
BOARD MEETING**

**Rockland RGB Hearing and Vote Meeting
Held Via Teleconference
Monday, June 25, 2020
7:00 p.m.**

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MS. APRIL GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay. So anybody that's
3 not actually speaking should probably put themselves on
4 mute so we don't get any background noise during this.

5 And let's go back up here. All right.

6 So welcome to the Rockland County guideline hearing
7 and meeting.

8 "In response to the Governor's directive to take
9 every effort to keep New Yorkers safe and
10 mitigate the spread of COVID-19, and pursuant to
11 Executive Order 202-1, which allows for the
12 suspension of the Public Officers Law, the
13 Rockland County Rent Guidelines Board will be
14 conducting public hearings to set guideline
15 rates of rent adjustments for housing
16 accommodations within its jurisdiction subject
17 to the Emergency Tenant Protection Act of 1974
18 for leases commencing between October 1st, 2020,
19 and September 30th, 2021, via teleconference.
20 Instructions for members of the public to
21 simultaneously view or listen to the meetings
22 will be posted to HCR's website, for the Office
23 of Rent Administration under the public hearing
24 section prior to the meetings. The hearings
25 will also later be transcribed, and the public

1 will have the ability to view the transcripts."

2 Tonight's meeting is both a meeting and a hearing.

3 Initially, we will take public comments for today's

4 meeting, Thursday, June 25th. After we close the

5 commentary period, the Board will vote on a guideline.

6 Pat, it's on to you.

7 MS. PATRICIA CALDWELL: Okay. Good evening,

8 everyone. Welcome to Rockland County's Rent Guideline

9 Board meeting. As you know, tonight we made an

10 exception, and we are going to be able to allow several

11 people. Initially, we had two, then we got up to I think

12 four now.

13 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: At least three.

14 MS. CALDWELL: At least three speakers. You are

15 allowed to speak, but you are only allowed three minutes

16 per person. So April, if you would call the first

17 speaker so we can get this started, it would be fine.

18 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right. Let's see. So Alex,

19 we're promote -- you should be able to speak at this

20 point.

21 MR. ALEXANDER BURSZTEIN: Okay. I can hear you.

22 Thank you very much for letting me speak. Three minutes.

23 I am -- my name's Alex Bursztein. I'm the executive

24 director of Legal Aid Society of Rockland County. I've

25 been doing this since 1985. I've represented tenants in

1 Rockland County since 1985, and I think most of you if
2 not all of you will agree that this is a period like no
3 other. Truly, I've never seen anything like it. The
4 unemployment, I'm not going to bore you with statistics,
5 11 percent in Rockland County. 11 percent. At the
6 height of 2008/'09 economic crisis, it was between seven
7 and eight percent.

8 The question then becomes, whom is this going to
9 affect most severely, and I would submit to you that it
10 will affect most severely the working force. They are
11 the people who are losing their jobs, they are the people
12 who can't afford their rent, they are the people who
13 benefit from the ETPA and benefit from the protections it
14 affords. So if you look at that situation, now is not
15 the time to either increase or even keep the rents where
16 they are, and I'll get to that point at my conclusion.

17 The working force are the ones who (indiscernible
18 are at this point. If you have minimum wage jobs, if you
19 have day-to-day jobs, they are the most severely
20 affected. I have my job, I'm getting paid. They are
21 not, they're losing their jobs. That's where the 11
22 percent comes from. Now, there's a moratorium on
23 evictions. That is indeed true. That moratorium is for
24 nonpayment evictions caused by COVID-19 into August, but
25 landlords can start evictions right now if they so wish,

1 but they can't have them heard in court, and I will tell
2 you this from representing literally hundreds of tenants.

3 If you would like to stay in your apartment, you're
4 going to have to pay every penny that you owe. Every
5 penny. You're not going to be able to say, oh, there was
6 COVID and I can't pay the rent. That's not going to work
7 because the judge is going to say, the legislature had a
8 chance to say there's a moratorium on rents. There is no
9 moratorium on rents. Rents will have to be paid in full
10 sooner or later, and probably sooner rather than later.

11 So when you look at that situation, you realize that
12 when the eviction proceedings, whether they be in July or
13 in August -- I see you, Ms. Silva. Are you speaking? Am
14 I missing something? Hello?

15 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: We can hear you.

16 MR. BURSZTEIN: Okay.

17 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Hello.

18 MR. BURSZTEIN: Okay. I see Ms. Silva speaking, and
19 I don't know if she's saying something. Anyway, so the
20 new eviction proceedings brought the rent will have to be
21 paid in full, and that means that whatever relief you can
22 afford people who can least afford to pay it, whatever it
23 is you can afford, you should do that now, and you should
24 do it as soon as possible. When the (indiscernible) for
25 evictions, they will have to pay the rent in full. If

1 there is a reduction to rent, that's going to benefit
2 people greatly, really and truly.

3 Number 3, who is affected the most among the working
4 force is the undocumented people, for two reasons.

5 Number 1, they're not eligible to receive unemployment.

6 If you're undocumented, you cannot get unemployment.

7 There is no income coming in at all for you because under
8 the unemployment law, you have to be eligible for work,
9 and as a matter of law, as a matter of principle, if you
10 are an undocumented person, you're not eligible to work,
11 period.

12 So not only are those people scared because they're
13 being threatened with, you know, sent to ICE immediately
14 if they complain about anything, but they cannot even get
15 the benefits they're entitled to if they have work full
16 time for a period of time. So I would just ask you to
17 keep people who can least afford the rent to live in ETPA
18 housing, please lower their rent. Not drastically. Five
19 percent strikes me as a reasonable number at this point
20 because it's not going to be a huge difference for the
21 landlords, and it's going to make a huge, huge difference
22 for the clients whom Legal Aid represents, and for the
23 clients who can least afford to pay the rent.

24 I hope I was within three minutes. I'm done, thank
25 you.

1 MS. CALDWELL: All right. But go ahead. April?

2 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right. Let's promote our
3 next person. The person that signed in as
4 (indiscernible) has now been disconnected. They can
5 speak. Marie (phonetic)?

6 MS. CALDWELL: Go for the third person (audio
7 interference) that one.

8 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: There's only two people that are
9 called in at this point.

10 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. You have someone else holding
11 now?

12 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: The person that signed in as Fern
13 (phonetic) that I just asked them to unmute themselves.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. The one who had the young man
15 who was setting her up?

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yep.

17 MS. CALDWELL: Let's give her another minute. Maybe
18 she's calling her back to do it again.

19 MR. FERN DURAND: Hello?

20 MS. CALDWELL: Hello.

21 MR. DURAND: Yes, hi.

22 MS. CALDWELL: You're in for Fern?

23 MR. DURAND: Yeah, this is Fern. Yeah, my mother is
24 on her old Zoom. I think her name is Maria.

25 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: She's been unable to get in.

1 MR. DURAND: Oh, all right. So I guess I'll speak
2 on her behalf. She wanted to say something along the
3 lines of, you know, raising rent is a bit unfair during
4 this time period.

5 MS. CALDWELL: We don't have your picture, so would
6 you please introduce yourself?

7 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: You have to say your name.

8 MR. DURAND: Hi, everyone. My name is Fern Durand.

9 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Can you spell your last name,
10 Fern?

11 MR. DURAND: My last name is Durand, D-U-R-A-N-D.

12 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Thank you.

13 MR. DURAND: No problem. I'm speaking on behalf of
14 my mother, Marie Florence Aupont (phonetic), and I
15 believe she wanted to say something along the lines of
16 raising rent during this time period is unfair, and yeah,
17 I believe that's it.

18 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay.

20 MR. DURAND: All right.

21 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Thank you.

22 MR. DURAND: Thank you.

23 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right.

24 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Those were the only two
25 speakers we have?

1 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yep. Whoever the other person
2 was that called in yesterday that wanted to call in has
3 not called back in.

4 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: So at this point, you can close
6 the public hearing and open for a public meeting.

7 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. At this time, I entertain a
8 motion to close the public hearing.

9 Okay, and I'll move it. I move to close the public
10 hearing. Is there a second?

11 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: I'd say that was Kim.

12 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. All in favor? I'm going to
13 assume that's unanimous. Now, the public meeting is
14 officially closed. Okay. If you could give us a -- what
15 did he call us?

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Board members?

17 MS. CALDWELL: Yes. No, not Board members. What
18 did he call us? He said you could put us in on so we
19 could all see at the same -- the Brady Bunch. Could you
20 go to the Brady Bunch so we can all see?

21 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: I'll see if I can get the Brady
22 Bunch back.

23 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: How's it working for you?

25 MS. CALDWELL: I'm just --

1 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Do you feel more like the Brady
2 Bunch now?

3 MS. CALDWELL: I'm just seeing you, darling.

4 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Well, I don't know what to tell
5 you, but YouTube's seeing all of you, so.

6 MR. PETER STECKER: Yeah, I don't think April's able
7 to do that for you. I think that's something you'd have
8 to figure out how to do on your own device.

9 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. I have an iPhone. Up at the
10 corner -- the right-hand corner in red, it says record
11 and live, and then in white letters, it says on your
12 YouTube, on your tube.

13 MS. ALEJANDRA SILVA-EXIAS: Try swiping to the right
14 or to the left to see if it'll bring up the gallery view.

15 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. I'll look over that.

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Well, you just went dark.

17 Kim, you're on mute. You good? All right.

18 Milly, you're on mute, and Jain, you're on mute. I
19 don't know if you mean to be.

20 MS. MARTHA ROBLES: Oh, am I? I don't even know if
21 I'm on.

22 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: No, Martha, you're fine. Don't
23 touch a thing.

24 MS. ROBLES: Okay. It keeps blacking out, but
25 what -- leave me alone. I'm trying not to even move.

1 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Milly's still on mute.

2 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. I have April, Peter, Kim.

3 So where's everyone else?

4 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: If it's going down the side of
5 the page, just scroll and they'll come up. All right.

6 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. All right.

7 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Before we go any further, I need
8 to back up because I realize I didn't have -- ask Karen
9 to call the roll.

10 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

11 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: So for this public hearing -- or
12 for the public meeting, Karen, can you call the role, or
13 do you need me to do that?

14 MS. KAREN RODRIGUEZ: I will call the roll, all
15 right?

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay.

17 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Martha Robles?

18 MS. ROBLES: I'm here.

19 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Jared Oats (phonetic)?

20 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Not here.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Milagros Guzman?

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's not here.

23 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yeah, she's here. Milly
24 (indiscernible) here.

25 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Jain Jacob?

1 MR. JAIN JACOB: I'm here.

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Alejandra Silva-Exias?

3 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Present.

4 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Rabbi Hersh Horowitz? Kim Foskew?

5 Kim?

6 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Kim's here. She's not on mute.

7 All right.

8 MS. RODRIGUEZ: All right. And Patricia Caldwell?

9 MS. CALDWELL: Here. Kim is here.

10 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. You got it.

11 MS. KIM FOSKEW: Hello?

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: We're all here.

13 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Hello.

16 MS. CALDWELL: Hello. Well, we know what -- we know

17 what we're here to do tonight, is to make a decision as

18 to whether or not, you know, how we're going to handle

19 the rents, and (audio interference).

20 MS. ROBLES: She's cutting off.

21 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Pat, your voice is coming and

22 going.

23 MS. CALDWELL: Is going? You can't hear me?

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yeah, you have to speak into the

25 phone better. That's why.

1 MS. CALDWELL: Oh, okay. All right. At this time,
2 I'll entertain anyone who wishes to speak to the issue of
3 the rent controls, rent increase, rent decrease, or
4 maintaining the constant. Hello? Can you hear me?

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yep.

6 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

7 MS. CALDWELL: April, maybe you could do this again,
8 because they're having problems hearing me, so they'll
9 hear you better.

10 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: At this point, Pat's suggested
11 that somebody make a motion as to the guideline for the
12 2020 to '21 period for both renewal and vacant leases.

13 MS. ROBLES: Well -- all right.

14 Go ahead, speak.

15 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I wanted to ask, because it
16 doesn't make sense to make a motion if people aren't
17 going to agree on, like, whether or not to increase, a
18 freeze, or a reduction, so I just wanted to hear
19 generally if people are in agreement for a reduction, and
20 then we can start from there.

21 MS. ROBLES: Right, right. Yeah.

22 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Martha?

23 MS. ROBLES: Alex's was so compelling. I think I
24 would prefer a rent reduction. That would help people
25 with money in their pockets right away.

1 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I agree.

2 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Kim, you're on -- Kim, nobody can
3 hear you.

4 MS. ROBLES: No, she's --

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Kim?

6 MS. ROBLES: Maybe she could shake her head yes or
7 no? Yes or no?

8 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Milly is saying that she can't
9 hear anyone or see anyone.

10 MS. CALDWELL: I can't hear her either.

11 MS. RODRIGUEZ: And we can't hear her either.

12 MS. MILAGROS GUZMAN: (Indiscernible).

13 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Milly, was that you?

14 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Milly?

15 MS. ROBLES: We're better off having distant
16 meetings sitting somewhere 12 feet apart. It's terrible.
17 It's hard to manipulate this.

18 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Well --

19 MS. CALDWELL: I don't (audio interference) any
20 picture of her.

21 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: No.

22 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. How about Jain? You have
23 something you'd like to say, Mr. Jacobs (sic)?

24 MR. JACOB: Yes. I believe a reduction probably is
25 the one going to pass, but I think I am for keeping it

1 the same because it's otherwise just going to hurt up the
2 landlords, so.

3 MS. ROBLES: Are you for a reduction or not for a
4 reduction?

5 MR. JACOB: Not for a reduction.

6 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: He's not for a reduction.

7 MS. CALDWELL: Kim, you have thumbs up, thumbs up or
8 what?

9 MS. ROBLES: Rent reduction?

10 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: A rent reduction.

11 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right.

12 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

14 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Milly, you may have to call back
15 in.

16 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Yeah, I told her to just leave and
17 then sign in again.

18 MS. GUZMAN: Leave and then sign in again.

19 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay. But now I just heard her?

20 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Yeah, I just heard you.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: We can hear her, but barely.

22 MS. CALDWELL: Cristopher (phonetic). I'm looking
23 at a name here.

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: So both Kim --

25 MS. CALDWELL: What's that?

1 MS. ROBLES: I'm not even sure (audio interference).

2 Oh, gosh.

3 MS. CALDWELL: So you have all of us?

4 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: I have nobody. Okay. Kim's
5 back. Milly's trying to connect to audio.

6 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yeah.

7 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Is she back?

8 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yes. Milly, if you unmute
9 yourself?

10 MS. GUZMAN: Okay. I don't know what happened.

11 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Where are we now? All right.
12 Would everyone else --

13 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right. Milly's back.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Milly, you can hear us?

15 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right.

17 MS. CALDWELL: All right. We were discussing a
18 reduction.

19 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Well, you're discussing without a
20 motion, so I'm not really sure what we're discussing, so
21 at this point, you guys have to figure out how to move it
22 along, but --

23 MS. CALDWELL: I don't know how --

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: -- if you're just discussing it,
25 that's great. At some point, you need a motion to figure

1 out what you guys are going to do with this.

2 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Right, but we need to hear from
3 all the Board members because we're not going to make a
4 motion to (audio interference) if no one's going to vote
5 for it, so it makes sense to get just a general idea of
6 each person so that we know where to start.

7 MS. CALDWELL: We're doing that. I don't know
8 (audio interference) to make a motion, then you do it
9 second, and then you discuss, and that's when you decide,
10 but you want to do it in the reverse, so we're trying
11 that. I am not in favor.

12 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Okay.

13 MS. GUZMAN: In favor of -- I missed the other
14 point.

15 MS. CALDWELL: No, I'm not in favor of rent
16 reduction.

17 MS. GUZMAN: Not in favor of rent reduction, okay.

18 MS. KIM FOSKEW: Could I ask why?

19 MS. CALDWELL: You can ask why, because I don't
20 believe that that's a fair thing to do not only to the
21 tenant, but to the landlord, and not all landlords are
22 gougers. Not all landlords take advantage, and they
23 shouldn't have to suffer in a reduction. I would gladly
24 go along with the maintaining the constant. Whatever's
25 there now, and I could certainly agree with that, but I'm

1 not going to reduce their income.

2 MS. FOSKEW: But the surveys that we've seen prove
3 that they're not hurting --

4 MS. CALDWELL: What surveys have you --

5 MS. FOSKEW: But there's proof that the tenants are,
6 and --

7 MS. CALDWELL: What proof is it?

8 MS. FOSKEW: That the landlords are making money or
9 that the tenants aren't?

10 MS. CALDWELL: I don't believe -- okay.

11 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: All right. Let's then move this
12 along, and I'm going to make a motion for a reduction, a
13 five percent rent reduction for one-year lease, and a
14 rent reduction for two-year leases.

15 MS. FOSKEW: I'll second that.

16 MS. CALDWELL: What percentage are you talking for
17 two year?

18 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Five.

19 MS. FOSKEW: Five.

20 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: For both years.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Is there a second?

22 MS. FOSKEW: Second. I'll second it.

23 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. On a motion to have a rent
24 reduction in the amount of five percent for a one-year
25 and five percent for a two-year, would the clerk please

1 call the roll?

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Martha Robles? Martha Robles?

3 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: You have to turn your sound back
4 on, Martha.

5 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Martha Robles?

6 MS. ROBLES: I'm for the reduction. Can you hear
7 me?

8 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yes.

9 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, I heard you.

10 MS. ROBLES: (Indiscernible). I'm for the
11 reduction.

12 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Milagros Guzman?

13 MS. GUZMAN: I'm for the reduction.

14 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Jain Jacob?

15 MR. JACOB: I'm against the reduction.

16 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Alejandra Silva-Exias?

17 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I'm for the reduction.

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Kim Foskew?

19 MS. FOSKEW: I'm for the reduction. Did you hear
20 me?

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. And Patricia Caldwell?

22 MS. CALDWELL: I'm against the reduction.

23 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: The motion fails, four to two.

24 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. We need to discuss first
25 alternative to the reduction. What would you propose?

1 MS. ROBLES: Freeze.

2 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: No one will -- you and Jain will
3 not vote for any reduction, even though four of us would
4 agree that there needs to be a reduction.

5 MS. CALDWELL: That's what the vote just showed,
6 yes.

7 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Would you agree to any reduction,
8 is my question?

9 MR. JACOB: I don't.

10 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: You won't agree to a five percent
11 reduction. Would you agree to any reduction?

12 MR. JACOB: I won't agree to any reduction. I will
13 agree to a freeze.

14 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I just think that in this year,
15 we've done freezes for the past however many years. In
16 this year of the pandemic, we have to do something
17 different.

18 MS. ROBLES: That you are assuming all the landlords
19 are rich people and all the tenants are the ones
20 suffering.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Right.

22 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Well, we have nothing else to show
23 as different, Jain.

24 MR. JACOB: I know for a fact a lot of landlords are
25 suffering, too.

1 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Yes, I agree. There are some
2 landlords who are suffering, but not quite in the same
3 way as tenants, especially in this county. Look, we're
4 all --

5 MR. JACOB: That's why --

6 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: -- we have a roof over our heads.
7 We don't have to worry about these things, but there are
8 people in this county who are really, really struggling,
9 and I wouldn't put landlords at the top of the list of
10 those who are suffering, and I think that if you really
11 look at it, you would agree.

12 MR. JACOB: Even in the past when things were good,
13 the economy was good, everybody was against an increase,
14 they were freezing. So and now, you know, the economy's
15 in bad shape, you want to go a rent reduction. So for
16 the last few years, if you are agreeing to increase the
17 rent, you know, then I could understand it, but you know,
18 when things are good, there was other reasons not to
19 increase because they're not behaving right, they're not
20 doing right. So either way, the position is not to give
21 any incentive to landlords to do this.

22 So I personally think that is moving towards a
23 socialistic society. That's --

24 MS. ROBLES: I wouldn't go that far. I wouldn't go
25 that far.

1 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I just think --

2 MS. ROBLES: I understand your point, but I also
3 understand how much worse it is for the people in the
4 community, and one of the things that Alex pointed out is
5 the level of the undocumented people that are living in
6 these horrible conditions, because these apartments are
7 not in the greatest conditions. A lot of them will never
8 speak up as Alex told you, and they have absolutely no
9 recourse. Where someone else may be able to go to
10 Catholic Charities, or they could go to DSS, these folks
11 can go nowhere. Nowhere. No one's going to help them.

12 MS. ROBLES: So you think reducing the rent will
13 give landlords the incentives to take care of them? No.
14 They will reduce their maintenance less. They will do
15 less to keep these places, you know, in a sanitary
16 condition. So it's my personal -- I mean, like I said,
17 I've been in this Board for a little while and what I've
18 seen is when things are good, there will be other reasons
19 not to increase. When things are bad, you know, I agree
20 if we increased the rent in the last couple of times,
21 then now you say reduce it, that makes sense. But now --

22 MS. ROBLES: All right.

23 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: The problem is, Jain, that we
24 haven't heard from any landlords. We don't know what
25 their position because none of them have showed up, none

1 of them had said how --

2 MR. JACOB: Because they lost their --

3 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: But let me -- please let me --

4 MR. JACOB: -- their credibility in this Board.

5 That's what's happened.

6 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Please let me finish.

7 MR. JACOB: Yes.

8 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: And what we have heard, the
9 testimony that we have heard -- you weren't actually here
10 yesterday, but we did hear from two people who were
11 talking about how they were struggling. So you're asking
12 us to freeze the rent --

13 MR. JACOB: But why not -- why a five percent
14 reduction?

15 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: They have failed to show and
16 advocate for why they should -- at the minimum, why we
17 should freeze the rent. In fact, we have heard from
18 tenants who have said, one today and two yesterday, why
19 we should take into consideration that we are in a
20 pandemic right now. That has to count for something.

21 MS. ROBLES: If we're not going to agree, then what
22 would be the next alternative?

23 MS. CALDWELL: That was my question earlier. We --

24 MS. ROBLES: (Audio interference) --

25 MS. CALDWELL: -- (audio interference) a rent

1 reduction, so what do you propose in lieu of that?

2 MS. ROBLES: To freeze the rents. Then I would
3 freeze the rents. I wouldn't -- you know what, I do
4 understand what he's saying and I do know that some
5 landlords are better than others, and some of them are
6 probably having hardships. If we can't agree on that, I
7 would definitely propose then a freeze.

8 MS. CALDWELL: And I --

9 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Is that a motion?

10 MR. JACOB: I can agree with the freeze.

11 MS. ROBLES: For one-year and two-years.

12 MS. CALDWELL: I can make that --

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: A freeze? What, you mean zero
14 percent?

15 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

16 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Jain, is that -- did you second
17 that motion?

18 MR. JACOB: Yes.

19 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay.

20 MS. CALDWELL: We properly moved and seconded to
21 have a zero percent increase for a one-year or a two-
22 year. Would the Clerk please call (audio interference)?

23 MS. ROBLES: For both. I'm proposing one-year and
24 two-years.

25 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

1 MR. JACOB: Yes.

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. For one and two years, zero
3 percent?

4 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

5 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Thank you.

6 MS. CALDWELL: Would you please call the roll?

7 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay, yes. Martha Robles, please?

8 MS. ROBLES: I'm for it, for a rent -- zero and
9 freeze.

10 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay, yes. Milagros Guzman?

11 MS. GUZMAN: I'm for a zero increase for one- and
12 two-year rent freezes.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Jain Jacob?

14 MR. JACOB: I am for it, zero percent
15 (indiscernible) --

16 MS. ROBLES: What was that?

17 MR. JACOB: -- one- and two-years, yes.

18 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Alejandra Silva-Exias?

19 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: I'm for a rent freeze for both
20 one- year and two-year leases.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Kim Foskew?

22 MS. FOSKEW: Reluctantly, I will vote yes for the
23 one- and two-year lease, but I challenge the landlords to
24 start showing up next year and advocating for themselves,
25 because the next year, we're going to try again for a

1 reduction.

2 MS. ROBLES: I know we're doing roll call, but
3 April, is it true that the same landlords that fill out
4 the forms are the same ones filling it out every year?

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: My understanding from when you
6 asked (indiscernible) to research, yes, that's correct.

7 MS. ROBLES: Right, right. What is it that makes
8 them fill it out and others not, because it's not
9 mandatory?

10 MS. CALDWELL: Excuse me, we're --

11 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: We've got to get back to the
12 motion first, and then we can get back to that.

13 MS. CALDWELL: -- we're in the middle of a vote. We
14 need to take care of that first.

15 MS. ROBLES: All right, sorry, sorry.

16 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Patricia Caldwell, please?

17 MS. CALDWELL: Yes, I'm in favor of zero for one-
18 year and zero for two-year.

19 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: All right. The motion passes six
20 to zero.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Now, Martha, you had a
22 question you wanted to ask?

23 MS. ROBLES: I'm curious to know why -- what would
24 make the 12 or 15 people fill it out every year and
25 others not, when it's not mandatory?

1 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Honestly, I can't answer for
2 them. I mean, I can't say it's always the same people.
3 If you remember the way research explained it --

4 MS. ROBLES: But for last year, it was the same?

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Right, but even if a new owner
6 came in this year and wanted to do it, they need to have
7 three years' worth of (indiscernible) in order for that
8 to work.

9 MS. ROBLES: Right.

10 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: So there may have been some
11 people that weren't included.

12 MS. ROBLES: I was just curious.

13 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yep. Okay.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Well, can I just -- in that same
15 vein. What would a landlord owner have to do to have
16 themselves removed from ETPA's guideline? I mean --

17 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: The ETPA is applicable only in
18 the towns or cities that have opted into ETPA. Landlords
19 can't opt out of ETPA. It's slowly done by the county.
20 So Spring Valley itself would have to opt out.

21 MS. ROBLES: The county of -- the village?

22 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: The Village of Spring Valley
23 would have to opt out, and I believe the second one is
24 Haverstraw, and it would have to opt out.

25 MS. CALDWELL: Yeah.

1 MS. RODRIGUEZ: It's not (indiscernible).

2 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Yeah.

3 MS. ROBLES: Right.

4 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Well, that's frightening. I'm
5 hoping they had to do it on an individual basis, because
6 if it (audio interference) Spring Valley, I would not be
7 surprised if at some point, that doesn't occur.

8 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Well --

9 MS. CALDWELL: And yes, I said that publicly.

10 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: So in order for -- just to be
11 clear, that in order for them to opt out, they have to go
12 through a process also. So if they're willing to go
13 through the process -- I can tell you what the process
14 has been to opt in because we've had a couple of places
15 in Westchester do that, and there's upstate county --
16 upstate towns and villages that are looking to do it, at
17 least that are doing it.

18 It requires a vacancy study. It requires a lot of
19 other information to be obtained before they can do it.
20 Anything's possible. I'm never going to say no.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

22 MS. ROBLES: I'm only going to be on this call
23 another ten minutes, because I have to leave.

24 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay.

25 MS. CALDWELL: Quite frankly, Milly, we have

1 finished. We have concluded our meeting. We're just
2 having discussions at this point, so any time you wish to
3 move --

4 MS. ROBLES: Okay.

5 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: If you guys want to make a motion
6 to end the meeting, someone can do that.

7 MS. CALDWELL: Absolutely.

8 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Realize that the next meeting
9 will be in September, so Karen will send out something to
10 everybody to try to coordinate a date.

11 MS. ROBLES: Okay.

12 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Okay?

13 MS. ROBLES: All right.

14 MS. GUZMAN: Okay.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'll send the email out.

16 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Is there a vote to adjourn?

17 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Vote to adjourn.

18 MS. ROBLES: Yep. Vote to adjourn.

19 MS. CALDWELL: Is there a second?

20 MS. GUZMAN: Second.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Properly moved and seconded. All in
22 favor?

23 MS. GUZMAN: Aye.

24 MR. JACOB: Aye.

25 MS. SILVA-EXIAS: Aye.

1 MS. CALDWELL: The meeting is adjourned. Good
2 (audio interference), everyone.

3 MS. GRAY-HUERTAS: Have a lovely summer.

4 MR. JACOB: Good night.

5 [END RECORDING]

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

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