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

Westchester RGB Public Meeting
Thursday, March 4, 2021
7:15 p.m.

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. PETER STECKER: Okay. So Good evening. It's
3 March 4th. It's approximately 7:15. This is the
4 Westchester County Rent Guidelines Board public meeting
5 for the scheduling of the June 2021 meetings.

6 I have to read the introduction first. And then
7 I'll hand it over to you, Elsa.

8 MS. ELSA RUBIN: Okay.

9 MR. STECKER: In response to the governor's
10 directive to take every effort to keep New Yorkers safe
11 and mitigate the spread of COVID-19, pursuant to
12 Executive Order 202-1 and its updates, the Westchester
13 County of Rent Guidelines Board will be conducting a
14 public meeting to, among other things, schedule dates for
15 public hearings and meetings to determine the guideline
16 rates of rent adjustment for housing accommodations,
17 subject to the ETPA for leases commencing between October
18 1st and September 30th, 2021 to 2022, via teleconference.
19 Instructions for the members of the public to listen to
20 the meeting have been posted to HCRs website. Afterwards
21 the meeting will be transcribed. And the public will
22 have the ability to view the transcript.

23 So with that being said, I'll hand it over to you,
24 Elsa.

25 MS. RUBIN: Good evening, everybody. It's very nice

1 to see all of you. It's been a tough year. I can't wait
2 to see you in person, all of you. It's -- it's been a
3 try -- trying year. And I'm glad we are all here, and
4 we're healthy, and there's light at the end of the
5 tunnel.

6 I'm going to take the roll now.

7 Velene Acquah.

8 MS. VELENE ACQUAH: I'm present.

9 MS. RUBIN: LaMont Badru?

10 MR. LAMONT BADRU: Here.

11 MS. RUBIN: Eddie Mae Barnes, which is supposed to
12 be on the phone, right?

13 MR. STECKER: Yeah.

14 MS. ACQUAH: She's probably trying to get on.

15 MR. STECKER: Yeah. She -- she is here. I just
16 asked her to unmute herself, so.

17 MS. EDDIE MAE BARNES: Hello?

18 MS. TAMARA STEWART: Hi. Eddie Mae.

19 MS. BARNES: Hi. I'm sorry. I am on. I'm here
20 now.

21 MS. RUBIN: Okay. Glad to hear you.

22 Eliot Cherson?

23 MR. ELIOT CHERSON: I'm here.

24 MS. RUBIN: Kenneth Finger?

25 MR. KENNETH FINGER: Here.

1 MS. RUBIN: Evelyn Santiago?

2 MS. EVELYN SANTIAGO: Here.

3 MS. RUBIN: Tamara Stewart?

4 MS. STEWART: Present.

5 MS. RUBIN: And I'm Elsa Rubin, public member and
6 chair of the board.

7 And as I said, this is a meeting to establish the
8 scheduling for the month of June 2021. And I hope
9 everybody has the schedule handy and has the month of
10 June available too because that's important. We need to
11 all be in sync.

12 I don't know if I - Peter, if you have any other
13 comments or?

14 MR. STECKER: I guess the only thing that I'll bring
15 up is that I know at the last meeting and in the interim
16 you had asked me about the new member for the Rent
17 Guidelines Board. I just wanted to let the board know I
18 reached out to the new chair of the appointments
19 committee for Westchester Board of Legislators, Tyra
20 Woodson Samuels. I know that they're working on getting
21 someone over to us. So I don't know how long that
22 process is going to take. But it is in progress. And
23 we've reached out to them.

24 So once we get that individual sent over to us we'll
25 be able to interview them. And if acceptable, you know,

1 they'll be appointed as a member of the board. I'm not
2 sure, at this point, whether that will happen before
3 June. But at this point, that's where everything stands.

4 MS. RUBIN: Okay. And who's the chair of the
5 committee?

6 MR. STECKER: It's Tyre Woodson Samuels.

7 MS. RUBIN: Okay. So that's -- anybody else has any
8 comment or question?

9 MR. FINGER: My only question of Peter is when are
10 the surveys going out or have they gone out?

11 MR. STECKER: Yes. We did hear from Guy. So the
12 notices via USPS have begun. They're going -- they went
13 out, I guess, February 22nd, 2021. And that informs them
14 that the submission period begins March 1st, 2021. So
15 that process is already started.

16 I know that the question always is, you know, how
17 early can you get the research presentation, and the
18 numbers, and all that. What we're hearing from Guy is
19 that it's, you know, going to be the same as it has been
20 in the past. So therefore the earliest that they'll be
21 able to hold the research meeting, that they're willing
22 to, is June 9th which is the exact same date that the
23 research meeting was held last year. And that's a
24 Wednesday -- the second Wednesday in June.

25 MS. SANTIAGO: I had a question about the previous

1 topic. The member, if you -- if we don't have someone by
2 June, in terms of the vote, I guess because we have an
3 even number of people there's a possibility of a
4 deadlock?

5 MR. STECKER: Well, in order to have a valid move by
6 the board, there would have to be a majority of the
7 members, you know, voting in favor of something. So in
8 other words, if there's not a majority then it -- it
9 simply doesn't -- it doesn't pass. So you know, the
10 majority of the board is still five. And if its just got
11 four members then -- does that answer the question?

12 MS. SANTIAGO: Yes. I -- I'm just concerned that we
13 have one less voting member. That's all.

14 MR. STECKER: Uh-huh.

15 MR. FINGER: It's been that way for a while.

16 MS. BARNES: Yes, it has.

17 MS. RUBIN: So you mentioned the date, June 9th?

18 MR. STECKER: Yeah. It's June 9th. Yep.

19 MS. RUBIN: That is for?

20 MR. STECKER: That would be the earliest that the
21 research unit is willing to hold the meeting for the
22 presentation of their tabulations based on the survey
23 that went out to the owners. It's all --

24 MR. FINGER: I still --

25 MR. STECKER: -- done online now.

1 MR. FINGER: I still have a problem with that. It's
2 supposed to be in 45 days. That means April 15th. That
3 means that the two months, although it's computerized,
4 they can't put it together. To me, that -- that's crazy.

5 MR. STECKER: Uh-huh. Well --

6 MR. FINGER: For whatever it's worth, that's my
7 point.

8 MR. STECKER: Okay. Well, you know, we did reach
9 out to them. And we, you know, requested what the
10 absolute earliest would be if anything would change this
11 year. That's what we've heard from them. I guess my
12 suggestion would be to bring it up at the -- at the
13 research meeting in hopes that maybe next year it'll be
14 a -- you know, there would be an update. But I know this
15 is a conversation that happens every year. And it's been
16 happening much longer than my involvement with the board.
17 So you know, at this point, they're saying June 9th is
18 the earliest they can give it to us.

19 MR. FINGER: Actually we used to get it in May, if I
20 remember correctly.

21 Eliot, do you remember that? No?

22 MR. CHERSON: Yeah. No, I think you're right.
23 Yeah. Yep. Hey, it's a new world, Kenny.

24 MR. FINGER: Yeah. The more computerized they
25 become the less efficient.

1 MR. CHERSON: Whole new world.

2 MR. FINGER: All right. I will -- I will maintain
3 my peace.

4 Thank you, Peter.

5 MR. STECKER: All right.

6 MR. CHERSON: So is that -- are we having a meeting
7 June 9th? Is that what you're proposing?

8 MR. STECKER: Well, what I'm saying, for the
9 research meeting is that's the absolute earliest. I know
10 the board wants it as early as possible. So since you
11 are the first board to meet to set the meetings for this
12 year, June 9th would seem to be what you guys would
13 probably want to set that meeting for. Because it's not
14 going to get any better than that. So --

15 MR. FINGER: Okay with me.

16 MR. STECKER: -- you know --

17 MS. RUBIN: So we have --

18 MR. STECKER: -- and -- and again, that was the
19 exact same date that you set it for last year as well.

20 MS. RUBIN: So we have first choice for the meetings
21 and the hearings?

22 MR. STECKER: That's right. Yep.

23 MS. RUBIN: Okay. Good.

24 MR. FINGER: Move we have it June 9th.

25 MR. STECKER: Move we have on June 9th?

1 MR. FINGER: No, I'm -- I'm suggesting --

2 MR. STECKER: Oh, move -- move that you have it on
3 June 9th?

4 MR. FINGER: -- make a motion that we'd have the
5 research people June 9th. We can start with the hearings
6 before that. And we can go after that.

7 MS. RUBIN: Yeah.

8 MS. BARNES: Second.

9 MR. CHERSON: Do we need to vote on each day?

10 MR. FINGER: I don't know. Do we? Do we?

11 MR. CHERSON: I don't think so.

12 MS. RUBIN: I don't think so.

13 MR. CHERSON: I think we just stick -- you know,
14 agree on the days.

15 MS. RUBIN: Right.

16 MR. CHERSON: It's how we've done in the past. I
17 don't think we voted on.

18 MS. RUBIN: Okay.

19 MR. FINGER: Okay with me.

20 MS. ACQUAH: I have no objection to the research
21 meeting on June the 9th.

22 MS. SANTIAGO: Nor do I.

23 MS. BARNES: Neither do I.

24 MR. CHERSON: Okay. So that's at DHC --

25 MS. RUBIN: I'm fine with it.

1 MR. CHERSON: -- at DHC office.

2 MR. STECKER: I guess that's something that --

3 MS. RUBIN: No. It's going to be Zoom.

4 (Indiscernible).

5 MR. CHERSON: All right. What am I saying. Silly
6 me.

7 MR. FINGER: Yeah. I'm --

8 MS. RUBIN: Yeah. I know you want to see us.

9 MR. CHERSON: Well maybe, you know, by then maybe
10 things will --

11 MS. ACQUAH: Be a little different?

12 MR. CHERSON: -- by May 30 -- I hoping by Memorial
13 Day no more masks, you know. Everybody's vaccinated.

14 MR. FINGER: I'll be frank. I'm going to probably
15 do it virtually.

16 MS. SANTIAGO: Yeah. I'd -- I'd bet money on that.

17 MS. RUBIN: Yeah.

18 MS. ACQUAH: Yes. Probably.

19 MR. FINGER: All right. Do we get some days? What
20 are we, three hearings again?

21 MS. ACQUAH: I propose Monday, the 7th for hearing
22 number one.

23 MR. CHERSON: I'm -- I'm okay with that.

24 MS. ACQUAH: Anybody have a problem with Monday the
25 7th for number one?

1 MR. FINGER: Nope.

2 MS. SANTIAGO: Nope. I'm good.

3 MS. RUBIN: This is the first -- it's the first --

4 MS. BARNES: (indiscernible).

5 MS. STEWART: First public hearing?

6 MS. RUBIN: Hearing or meeting?

7 MS. ACQUAH: Hearing or --

8 MR. CHERSON: Public hearing.

9 MS. SANTIAGO: Oh. But will we have public hearing.

10 MR. FINGER: Public hearing.

11 MR. STECKER: Public hearing.

12 MS. STEWART: So this is the first public hearing on
13 the 7th?

14 MR. FINGER: How about the 14th and 15th for the
15 next two?

16 MS. STEWART: I could go with the 15th for number
17 two. But I would like to have -- see number three the
18 week after.

19 MR. FINGER: 21st? What day?

20 MS. STEWART: 21st or 22nd.

21 MR. FINGER: 21st is better for me. Mondays are
22 better for me.

23 MS. STEWART: All right. So number two on the 15th.
24 Number three on the 21st?

25 MS. RUBIN: Sounds good.

1 MS. STEWART: Does that work for other people?

2 MS. BARNES: Works for me.

3 MS. RUBIN: Yes.

4 MR. FINGER: Yeah. It works for me too.

5 MR. CHERSON: It's fine.

6 MR. FINGER: Now, I -- I -- that leaves us only
7 with -- in my calendar I only have the 22nd, 23rd, and
8 28th left. I'm busy the 24th, and 29th, and 30th. So
9 the 22nd, 23rd, and 28th any -- any one or two of those
10 days depending on how many days we want for argument. Or
11 can we do it all in one day? Or what?

12 MS. STEWART: What about the 23rd for the
13 presentation then?

14 MR. FINGER: All right. And 28th for the vote?

15 MS. RUBIN: What day is -- what day is the 28th?
16 It's a Monday?

17 MR. CHERSON: A Monday.

18 MS. STEWART: That's a Monday.

19 MR. CHERSON: I'm good.

20 MS. RUBIN: That -- that sounds good to me.

21 MS. BARNES: Sure.

22 MR. STECKER: So I do have the question about the
23 dates. Last year there was a presentation meeting. And
24 then there was a rebuttal and vote meeting. So is the
25 idea on the 23rd to have the presentation and rebuttal?

1 Or would it be like last year with the rebuttal followed
2 by the vote meeting on the 28th?

3 MR. CHERSON: Well, if we --

4 MS. RUBIN: I think that would better, the 28th,
5 have the rebuttal and the final vote.

6 MS. STEWART: And then the vote? Uh-huh.

7 MS. RUBIN: Yes.

8 MS. ACQUAH: Agreed.

9 MS. SANTIAGO: I -- I'm -- I'm agreed with that --
10 in agreement.

11 MS. STEWART: Uh-huh.

12 MR. CHERSON: Well, then --

13 MR. FINGER: I still think we can do it all in one
14 night. But if you guys want two, obviously, we --

15 MR. CHERSON: And that -- that train has left the
16 station.

17 MS. STEWART: (Indiscernible).

18 MR. FINGER: (Indiscernible).

19 MS. ACQUAH: We're still having a meeting. So that
20 should be fine, right?

21 MR. FINGER: My trains never leave the station.

22 MR. CHERSON: What? I didn't hear you. What? All
23 right. So --

24 MR. STECKER: Okay. Just to recap, I have June 7th
25 for the first public hearing, June 9th for the research,

1 June 15th for the second public hearing, June 21 for the
2 third public hearing, June 23rd for the presentation, and
3 June 28th for the rebuttal and vote?

4 MS. ACQUAH: Yep.

5 MS. BARNES: Yes.

6 MR. CHERSON: Wait a second. I just thought of
7 something. I have a question, Elsa, if it's okay?

8 MS. RUBIN: It's okay. Go ahead.

9 MR. CHERSON: Assuming it's a Zoom meeting --
10 assuming it's a Zoom meeting, from my recollection, and I
11 may be wrong, from last year not too many people,
12 especially the tenants did not -- for what -- and I'm not
13 getting into reasons, it doesn't matter -- there weren't
14 too many people participating. And of course when we did
15 these things live going to Mt. Vernon and then going to
16 Yonkers and New Rochelle, White Plains, that made a lot
17 of sense. But obviously, if we -- if we're not going to
18 the physical places do we have to have this many
19 meetings? Can we do it in a shorter -- do we have to
20 have three public meetings first before we vote? Or even
21 have the presentations?

22 MS. RUBIN: Yeah. I think Eliot -- Eliot has a
23 point. If -- if we have to be physically there, it's one
24 thing.

25 MR. CHERSON: Yeah.

1 MS. RUBIN: Because we want the neighbors in -- in
2 that area to be present. But now things have changed.
3 It's a -- it's a different world. Anybody can
4 participate from anywhere.

5 MR. CHERSON: We don't have to be anywhere.

6 MS. RUBIN: Exactly.

7 MR. CHERSON: We're just going to be right where we
8 are right now.

9 MS. STEWART: Uh-huh.

10 MS. SANTIAGO: Sure.

11 MR. FINGER: That's what I - so can we -- may I
12 suggest then that instead of the third meeting on the
13 21st we have that meeting as the presentations? And then
14 we go to the 28th and skip the 23rd.

15 MS. STEWART: Nope. Not interested in doing that.

16 MR. CHERSON: Why.

17 MS. ACQUAH: So I'm like --

18 MR. CHERSON: Can I ask why? I'm just asking, why
19 not?

20 MS. STEWART: Well, because I know that there are --
21 what I'm -- what I'm anticipating, and I don't have a
22 date for it yet -- unfortunately I could not get a date
23 from the National Low Income Housing people for when they
24 are going to release the out-of-reach report, but I
25 really want to see what they have to say. They've been

1 tracking how the pandemic has been affecting the housing
2 market and tenants. And I really would like to have the
3 opportunity to hopefully have them release that
4 information which is supposed to come out towards the end
5 of the month of June in order to be able to include that
6 in my presentation.

7 MS. RUBIN: So Tamara --

8 MS. STEWART: I see.

9 MS. RUBIN: -- are -- do you agree on having just
10 two public hearings?

11 MS. STEWART: We can get rid of the one on the 7th
12 if you prefer. I don't have a problem with that.

13 MS. RUBIN: Okay.

14 MR. FINGER: I'd rather -- I'd rather get rid of the
15 one on the 15th. And just go from the 7th to the 21st.

16 MR. CHERSON: I have no preference.

17 MR. FINGER: It's -- the Mondays are much better for
18 me for whatever reason. So would you --

19 MS. RUBIN: Would you - do you agree with that,
20 Tamara?

21 MS. STEWART: If you would prefer to get rid of the
22 one on the 15th, that's okay.

23 MS. RUBIN: Yeah.

24 MR. FINGER: All right. It's just --

25 MS. STEWART: So we would just do the 7th and then

1 the 21st?

2 MS. RUBIN: Correct.

3 MS. STEWART: For the public hearing?

4 MS. RUBIN: Right.

5 MR. FINGER: And 23rd for presentation. And 28th
6 for the vote?

7 MS. RUBIN: Yeah.

8 MS. STEWART: Okay.

9 MR. CHERSON: Makes sense.

10 MS. STEWART: I'm willing to do that.

11 MR. FINGER: And I think the -- the state ought to
12 take our \$800 stipends that were saving them and get the
13 full -- a good dinner.

14 MR. CHERSON: You're --

15 MS. STEWART: Pardon me, Peter. Is there any
16 reason, from your understanding of, you know, schedules
17 and everything why it might be problematic if we were to
18 shorten the schedule?

19 MR. STECKER: No. I was actually, you know, kind of
20 thinking the same thing myself. Last year, if --

21 MS. STEWART: Okay.

22 MR. STECKER: -- you'll recall, the first two
23 meetings there weren't really too many speakers. The
24 third meeting, it was several hours of speakers. So I
25 don't -- I don't know if, you know, shortening it and

1 only have two will change that. But in any event, you
2 know --

3 MR. CHERSON: Could I just ask, Peter, if you -- if
4 you don't mind, if you could check to -- and I don't know
5 the answer -- are we -- it's always been three public
6 meetings. Is there a requirement that there be three
7 public meetings?

8 MR. STECKER: No. I can tell you that I checked
9 the -- the ETPA before we came on.

10 MR. CHERSON: Okay.

11 MR. STECKER: There's nothing in there that requires
12 you to have a specific amount of public hearings.

13 MR. CHERSON: Okay. Good.

14 MR. STECKER: There's really no issue with deleting
15 the one this year. And --

16 MR. CHERSON: Oh. Good.

17 MR. FINGER: Okay. Rockland only has one.

18 MR. STECKER: Rockland has one. Nassau has two. So
19 you'd be in line with what Nassau is doing this year.
20 And they're doing theirs, you know, there -- there's --
21 from what I've told -- I've been told, there's no
22 possibility this is a proceeding anything other than
23 Zoom. So it will be via Zoom. It's not going to be
24 in-person hearing. So --

25 MR. CHERSON: Maybe next year.

1 MR. STECKER: -- hopefully.

2 MS. RUBIN: Yeah.

3 MR. FINGER: Hopefully not.

4 MR. CHERSON: Hopefully. That would be -- if it's
5 not we're in a lot more trouble than I thought.

6 MS. STEWART: Okay. So for clar -- I'm sorry. For
7 clarification, are we having two public hearings or one?

8 MS. RUBIN: Yes. Two.

9 MR. STECKER: So my understanding is --

10 MS. RUBIN: So Peter can you --

11 MR. STECKER: -- public hearing one on the --

12 MS. RUBIN: -- can you do a summary again, please?

13 MR. STECKER: Sure.

14 MS. RUBIN: Okay.

15 MR. STECKER: My understanding is June 7th, public
16 hearing number one; June 9th, research; June 21st, public
17 hearing number two; June 23rd presentation; June 28th,
18 rebuttal and vote meeting.

19 MS. STEWART: Oh. Okay.

20 MS. RUBIN: Yes.

21 MS. ACQUAH: Okay.

22 MS. RUBIN: And you're going to send an email out
23 with that --

24 MR. STECKER: Yeah. Sure.

25 MR. FINGER: Well --

1 MR. STECKER: Well, I'm going to be putting together
2 the public notice which will -- it has to go out a few
3 weeks before the meetings actually occur. But I can send
4 a summary to the board if you want -- if you want that
5 too.

6 MS. RUBIN: Yes.

7 MR. STECKER: Okay. Sure.

8 MS. RUBIN: Please. And Eliot, that was a good
9 point that you brought up. And I'm glad you --

10 MR. CHERSON: Thank you.

11 MS. STEWART: Uh-huh.

12 MR. CHERSON: So motion to adjourn or what?
13 Anything else?

14 MS. STEWART: Oh dear.

15 MS. RUBIN: Yes.

16 MS. STEWART: Ready to say goodbye?

17 MR. CHERSON: We're all set? Right?

18 MR. STECKER: Yeah. Just one more thing --

19 MS. RUBIN: Yes. I think so.

20 MR. STECKER: -- I haven't sent the voucher forms to
21 the board yet. So I'll be sending those shortly to
22 everyone. So you can sign those and get those back to
23 me, please, like, with the past Board meetings.

24 MS. RUBIN: Okay. Great.

25 MS. ACQUAH: You got it, Peter.

1 MS. STEWART: Thank you.

2 MR. CHERSON: Thank you, everybody.

3 MS. RUBIN: So do we have a motion to adjourn?

4 MR. CHERSON: Motion to adjourn.

5 MS. ACQUAH: Motion to adjourn.

6 MS. STEWART: Second.

7 MS. ACQUAH: Second.

8 MS. RUBIN: This meeting is adjourned. Thank you,
9 everybody.

10 MS. ACQUAH: Everybody, stay well.

11 MS. STEWART: Thank you.

12 MR. FINGER: Stay safe and healthy, everybody.

13 MS. RUBIN: We'll see you in June.

14 MR. CHERSON: See everybody in June. Hopefully by
15 then everybody's vaccinated and we're on the road to
16 recovery.

17 MS. STEWART: Recovery. Exactly.

18 MS. ACQUAH: There you go. Take care.

19 MS. STEWART: Stay healthy.

20 MS. RUBIN: Bye. Thank you, Peter.

21 MS. BARNES: All right. Good night, everybody.

22 MS. RUBIN: Bye-bye.

23 MR. FINGER: Bye everyone.

24 [END RECORDING]

25

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

1
2 The prior proceedings were transcribed from audio
3 files and have been transcribed to the best of my
4 ability. I further certify that I am not connected by
5 blood, marriage or employment with any of the parties
6 herein nor interested directly or indirectly in the
7 matter transcribed.

8
9 Signature

10 *Anne Manscill*

11
12 Date May 1, 2021

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