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NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF
HOMES AND COMMUNITY RENEWAL
ROCKLAND COUNTY RENT GUIDELINES BOARD
MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022
7:03 P.M.

Transcriber: Kathryn Reed

1 [START RECORDING]

2 MR. PETER A. STECKER: Okay. It's 7:03 p.m. I'm
3 just going to admit the two speakers who signed up
4 tonight first.

5 MS. KAREN RODRIGUEZ: Thanks, Peter.

6 MR. STECKER: Okay.

7 MS. PATRICIA CALDWELL: Thank you. Good evening,
8 everyone.

9 We can start now, Peter?

10 MR. STECKER: Yeah, please go ahead.

11 Okay. Good evening, everyone. I want to take this
12 opportunity to welcome you to our final Zoom meeting for
13 a while. June 7th, 2022. It's 7:04 p.m.

14 At this time, would you, Karen, please call the
15 roll?

16 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. The roll call is as follows.
17 Patricia Caldwell.

18 MS. CALDWELL: Here.

19 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Kim Foskew?

20 MS. KIM FOSKEW: Here.

21 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Milagros Guzman?

22 MS. MILAGROS GUZMAN: Here.

23 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Jane Jacob (phonetic)? Alejandra
24 Silva Exious (phonetic)?

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Alejandra called. She is

1 unable to make this evening's meeting.

2 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay. Jarrett Oats (phonetic)?
3 Rabbi Hersh Horowitz?

4 MR. HERSH HOROWITZ: Here.

5 MS. RODRIGUEZ: And Willie Trotman?

6 MR. WILLIE TROTMAN: Here.

7 MS. RODRIGUEZ: That concludes the roll call.

8 MS. CALDWELL: We have a quorum?

9 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. We do.

10 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Thank you.

11 Hello, everyone. We'll get this meeting started.

12 Right now, we will open for public testimony. I
13 understand we have two participants who wish to be heard.

14 I don't know the order in which they sent in their
15 request, but I'm sure you do, Karen. So who was the
16 first person?

17 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Actually, Peter has both of them.

18 MR. STECKER: Yeah. I chaired. So the first
19 speaker is Dan Freeman. So he is here, and I'm asking
20 him to unmute right now so he can address the Board.

21 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Mr. Freeman, would you unmute
22 yourself?

23 MR. DAN FREEMAN: Yes. Yes, ma'am. Thanks for
24 allowing me to participate tonight.

25 I am the principal of Palisades Gardens in Pomona,

1 New York. It's in the town of Haverstraw. It's a
2 condominium development, and we have 40 rent-stabilized
3 condominiums that have been occupied by the same
4 occupants for many, many years. The -- the complex, as
5 all complexes, has experienced a lot of cost increases
6 due to the labor. We have supers and so on and so forth.
7 In our complex, we include hot and cold water, as well as
8 gas -- cooking gas and heating. And as you know, all of
9 those commodities have also increased dramatically. So
10 we've just experienced incredibly higher operating costs.

11 I was reviewing the historical rental increases,
12 which is part of your paperwork and I'm sure you have.
13 And I was looking specifically from October 2016 to
14 present. And I really found that it was -- there was a
15 great disparity between Rockland County and the
16 neighboring counties. Most often, Rockland is compared
17 to its neighbor, Westchester. And for an example, during
18 that term from 2016 to -- till today, the cumulative one-
19 year increases in Westchester County have been a total of
20 7.25 percent, which I'm sure the Westchester folks would
21 tell you is not enough.

22 But in any event, in Rockland, we've gotten less
23 than 1 percent. It's been 0.0 all five. One half of 1
24 percent increase over all the six years. And comparable
25 with regards to the two-year increases. So this has been

1 overlooked year after year after year. And you know, we
2 just can't keep up with these increased heating costs and
3 water costs. We provide the water. The water company
4 was just sold again. I'm sure that's not going to result
5 in any savings. And we have -- we have staff, and
6 they -- these folks have to get raises every year. They
7 have to pay their bills. And to go for a zero increase
8 year after year, it's just not -- we're not able to --
9 we're not able to -- it's a real challenge to provide the
10 services that we need to provide, you know, when -- when
11 people's air conditioning goes, we have to get them a new
12 one. And a refrigerator goes, we have to get them a new
13 one. And it's just impossible to keep up.

14 I would respectfully request that all of this be,
15 you know -- (indiscernible). You know, I would be
16 requesting a one-year increase, given the fact that we --
17 we're seven points behind as is with incredibly higher
18 costs to go to a one-year increase for 10 percent. And
19 for a two-year to be a 12 percent, and that would make up
20 for some of the -- some of the -- the ones in the past,
21 and just -- it's -- it's fair. It's a fair increase,
22 given our operating expenses.

23 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Freeman.

24 MR. FREEMAN: Does anybody have any questions or
25 comments?

1 MS. CALDWELL: No, I think you pretty much gave us
2 an overview of your concerns and the reasons therefore.

3 MR. FREEMAN: Yeah, I had one -- one further
4 comment. One of the observations that I've encountered
5 over the last 18 months was one of the reasons that is --
6 you know, Rockland's been overlooked is that nobody asks.
7 Okay. And I can only gather that -- I'm not even sure in
8 the town of Haverstraw if anybody participates or if they
9 pay attention to it. I think it's ignored, outside of
10 me, of course.

11 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Would you mind if I asked a
13 question?

14 MR. FREEMAN: Sure.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I mean, you don't have to
16 give me the exact number. What's your, like, average
17 rent that you charge?

18 MR. FREEMAN: You know what? I don't have the
19 average, but I have one-bedroom condominiums, and these
20 are -- this is luxury housing with pools and workout
21 rooms as low as \$900 and two-bedrooms as low as \$1,200.
22 And of course, as the owner, we have to pay the property
23 taxes which go up every year and the HOA fees which go up
24 every year because the HOA fees include in addition to
25 the -- you know, the staff and all of the subcontractors

1 that we have, it includes the heat and the water and all
2 that other stuff. Lifeguards, and you just go right down
3 the list. They're dramatically -- really, really badly
4 below market.

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Thank you.

6 MR. FREEMAN: You're welcome.

7 MS. CALDWELL: You said that you have 40 units that
8 are rentals?

9 MR. FREEMAN: Yes, ma'am, 40 -- 42. Right around
10 40. Yes.

11 MS. CALDWELL: And those are one and two bedrooms,
12 or more?

13 MR. FREEMAN: No, no. They're one and two bedrooms.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. And you're saying the average
15 on those are \$900 to \$1,200?

16 MR. FREEMAN: No, no. That's not the average. I
17 have one bedrooms as low as \$900, or actually \$899. And
18 two bedrooms as low as \$1,212. And you know, out of that
19 gross rent, I have to pay the taxes. I have to pay the
20 HOA fees. And in addition to that, I have maintenance
21 costs with these units as -- as we all do. So you know,
22 things break. They need paint. They need -- their deck
23 needs to be redone. Their -- their stoves go. Their air
24 conditioners go. I mean, there's just no money to do
25 these things.

1 MS. CALDWELL: Thank you again.

2 Does anyone else have any questions for Mr. Freeman?

3 Hearing none, thank you, Mr. Freeman.

4 MR. FREEMAN: Thank you. Thank you very much.

5 MS. CALDWELL: (Indiscernible) concerns under
6 consideration in our decision.

7 MR. FREEMAN: Thank you.

8 MS. CALDWELL: Thank you.

9 The next speaker?

10 MR. STECKER: Okay, Chair. The next speaker is Mary
11 Pagolou, who I'm going to ask to unmute now.

12 MS. MARY PALOGLOU: Hi. Good evening.

13 MS. CALDWELL: Hello.

14 MS. PALOGLOU: Hi, how are you?

15 MS. CALDWELL: We're good. How are you?

16 MS. PALOGLOU: We're good. Thank you. Thank you
17 for allowing me to speak.

18 I just heard, you know, the gentleman speak, and as
19 far as Rockland County, those kind of numbers, I've -- I
20 haven't seen. I mean, I live in a rent-stabilized
21 apartment, and they go between \$1,600 and \$1,800 in a
22 rent-stabilized. So maybe I should go move to where he
23 is because it's very high. I've been here for 30 years,
24 and -- not in this -- not here at the rent-stabilized,
25 but in Rockland County. And for the last 15 years, I was

1 able to work and stay in this apartment because it is
2 rent stabilized, and I can't afford -- and I can't go to
3 a 55 and over. They say I make too much money.

4 There's not many rent-stabilized apartments in
5 Rockland County. First of all, they're not listed as
6 rent-stabilized, so if you look for an apartment like --
7 and you were here in Rockland, and it is rent stabilized,
8 it doesn't even say that it is. I only knew about it
9 because a friend of mine had said to me that it was. And
10 that's how I got this apartment.

11 MS. CALDWELL: Excuse me< Mary.

12 MS. PALOGLOU: Yes.

13 MS. CALDWELL: Where are you?

14 MS. PALOGLOU: I am in Mountainside (indiscernible).

15 MS. CALDWELL: Okay.

16 MS. PALOGLOU: Mountainside Apartments.

17 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Thanks. Go ahead. I'm sorry.

18 MS. PALOGLOU: So I understand the gentleman, what
19 he's saying, you know, in respect of with costs and
20 things like that. But also we -- I have my costs also.
21 Things are -- are -- are rising up very steadily, and I
22 just wished that we can either get more affordable
23 housing or keep the ones that are, you know, in effect to
24 keep them at a lower, you know, raise percentage.
25 Because I'm not going to be able to live here anymore. I

1 mean, a lot of people here have moved out. I mean,
2 because they just can't afford it either. So it's not
3 like it's cheaper to live in a rent-stabilized apartment.
4 It's not. I mean, I never heard of \$800, \$900. Not here
5 in Rockland County. But this gentleman says it is. I
6 have to believe him, but it's -- if you look at any of
7 the rents around here, they're sky high any time. You
8 know, (indiscernible) all -- any other places around
9 here. I mean, next door to me, Crystal Run, the Henrys,
10 or whatever, they go for 25. Harbors go for over 6.
11 Some of them are \$6,000 to rent. It's crazy.

12 So we're not able -- I'm not even going to be able
13 here to stay here, and I work here. And I love this
14 county, and I want to stay here. I raised my kids here,
15 and I would -- you know, my kids couldn't afford to stay
16 here. So I thank you very much, and I hope that, you
17 know, we can keep it at a low percentage so this way we
18 can keep on living here.

19 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. Thank you, Mary.

20 MS. PALOGLOU: Thank you.

21 MS. CALDWELL: I want to thank both of our speakers
22 for attending tonight. Our next meeting as we know is
23 next week, and it's a regular meeting, and it's going to
24 be held in Spring Valley at the Finkelstein Memorial
25 Library, and it is open to the public. And it starts at

1 7:00. And that's Wednesday, June 15th. At that time, we
2 will presented with additional data regarding the
3 meetings and the rental -- and we'll make some
4 determinations on some other kinds of things. That's
5 basically all we have for tonight's meeting.

6 Is there anyone on the Board who wishes to address
7 the Board at this time?

8 Hearing none, is there a motion to adjourn? Hello?
9 Board members?

10 MR. TROTMAN: So moved. Willie Trotman.

11 MS. CALDWELL: Willie Trotman moved to -- who
12 seconded it?

13 MS. GUZMAN: Second.

14 MS. CALDWELL: Millie (phonetic) seconded. Okay.
15 Thank you.

16 MS. GUZMAN: Yes.

17 MS. CALDWELL: Okay. And I look forward to seeing
18 all of us in person on Wednesday, June 15th, at
19 Finkelstein Memorial Library. The address, I'm sure you
20 have, in Spring Valley at 24 Chestnut Street. Thank you
21 all for attending. Good night.

22 IN UNISON: Thank you. Good night.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: See you next week.

24 MS. CALDWELL: Yes.

25 [END RECORDING]

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

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

Signature

Kathryn Reed

Date June 12, 2022

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