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Symposium Preps Advocates for Albany Housing Rally

Added by **Scott Stiffler** on June 3, 2015.

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Panelists discussed the future of affordable housing in New York City, at a May 30 symposium hosted by Councilmember Corey Johnson. Photo by Winnie McCroy.

BY WINNIE McCROY | On a day when the sun shone brightly over happy children playing in a bouncy castle at the street fair on W. 26th St., few people would have opted to stay indoors. But for the 70 individuals who gathered at Hudson Guild's Elliott Center on the afternoon of Sat.,

May 30, the promise of affordable housing offered an even brighter option.

FROM OUR SISTER NEWSPAPERS

Most of the food, the clothing and clothing are going up, but people who've lived in this neighborhood for their entire lives are wondering how long they can hang in there, especially on the West Side." said the symposium's host, Councilmember Corey Johnson.

THE VILLAGER
Became a city of luxury housing for part-time residents, or a city of families. the fabric of New York?"

Challah back! B&H dairy restaurant reopens on 2nd Ave.

Johnson hosted a panel of housing experts — including Sarah Desmond of I (New York's nightclub queen was as big as Texas

NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development. Brian Honan of I Back to busking: Now I'm singing a different tune

I Evan Forsch, Week of Aug. 13, 2015

With law breaking and law coming up for a vote, landlords are hawking in Letters, Week of Aug. 13, 2015

led to these predatory practices.

DOWNTOWN EXPRESS

Boalists discussed the future of affordable housing in New York City, a subject given urgency by the impending June 15 date for the expiration of current rent laws. Advocate

Sliding instead of biking

I Seaport Report, Week of Aug. 13, 2015

City Landmarks rains on South Street Seaport plan

Desmond: "The narrative that degrades the apartment when it's vacant. The

I Survey shows some satisfaction, but also garbage problems

Under the current system, it is quite easy for unscrupulous landlords to get City: Less glass, adds class to Chase Plaza redesign

ar, then raise rent to the legal limit in the following year, driving that tenant out. Then, they can make "improvements" and raise the rent 1/40th of those costs. Before long, the rent reaches \$2,500, at which point the apartment is no longer regulated. This has resulted in the loss of 400,000 rent-regulated apartments in the past 20 years, said Desmond.

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"We want reform in the rent guidelines for the city's 2.5 million rent stabilized tenants," Johnson said, adding, "It's high time for a rent freeze or rollback."

An apartment is rent controlled if the tenant has lived there since 1971, and is rent stabilized if they've lived there since 1974. Rent regulation allows tenants to remain in the apartment as long as they don't violate the lease, and to have their rent hikes set by the Rent Guidelines Board, a nine-person board appointed by the mayor to determine the permitted rise in rent for one- and two-year leases. Even though this usually maxes out at 2.75 percent for a two-year lease, advocates say it is too much.

"We're pushing for rent rollbacks, because every year the board rubber-stamps rent increases while landlords reap incredible profits," said Goldstein. "In the next month, there will be public hearings in each borough. Tenants must testify, because landlords are saying they are not making enough money."

Weithman pointed to her work securing a zero percent increase for Single Room Occupancy tenants as proof that testifying could make a big difference, and could be very empowering.

The city is divided into public housing, affordable housing and market rate housing. Public housing is for those living below the poverty line.

Affordable housing is calculated by a formula that figures the area median income (AMI), and allots 30 percent of that for housing. Market rate housing is housing with any rent that the current market will allow and that a tenant will pay.

Johnson also noted that public housing was at risk, adding, "We must ensure the stock administered by NYCHA [New York City Housing Authority] is sustained for the next generation of New Yorkers. We must improve the quality of life for the half million New Yorkers in public housing."

A New York without NYCHA, Honan added, "is unimaginable. We are only getting 80 cents on the dollar of what we need. Eventually, the camel's back breaks."

Honan noted that Mayor Bill de Blasio has helped matters by transferring 100,000 workers to other city agencies, and forgiving NYCHA's \$70 million in police services and \$30 million payment in lieu of taxes.

But there aren't just problems with private landlords. Local resident Jean Sullivan spoke candidly about her battles with NYCHA, telling the crowd that she has been submitting requests for a paint job for upwards of six years. Honan said he would work to help her.

GAY CITY NEWS

"Are we going to

Haul of Nearly \$11,000 for Ron Johnson, Anti-Gay Wisconsin Senator, at Reisner-Weiderpass Bash

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NYC St. Pat's Parade to Add Second LGBT Group

Slow Start on Equality Act

Ali Forney Expands Services for Trans Clients

June 9 to lobby for an

EAST VILLAGER NEWS

subject given urgency by

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y single item, said

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De Blasio seems on same page with evicted news vendor

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In a Facebook posting on the late afternoon of June 3, Councilmember Corey Johnson wrote, "I was arrested in the Capitol for demanding Albany to strengthen rent regulations and protect New Yorkers in our last remaining affordable housing stock. We will not give up!"

The afternoon saw attendees break off into small workshops covering Tenant's Rights and Repairs, Senior Citizen's Rent Increase Exemption, Rent Law and Rent Guidelines, and Finding and Applying for Affordable Housing.

But as Lillian from The Actors Fund noted, what constitutes affordable housing is determined by calculating the AMI, then allocating 30 percent for housing. The result basically excludes middle class families from ever qualifying.

"Almost one third of New Yorkers pay more than half their income to rent," she said. "This means that if you are making \$35-60K per year, there is absolutely no subsidized housing for you."

Join advocates and tenants when they rally in Albany on June 9. Buses leave at 7 a.m. at 135th St. and Fifth Ave. in front of PS197 and return to NYC at 6 p.m. Transportation is free (breakfast and lunch are included). Reserve your seat by calling Darren at Tenants & Neighbors at 212-608-4320 x316 or email Darren@tandn.org. Also visit tandn.org.

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