



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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LOWELL D. KERN
Chair

JESSE R. BODINE
District Manager

February 11, 2021

Thuy Pham, President
2324 Chelsea Tenant Association
XXX West 23rd Street #XXX
New York, NY XXXXX

Re: 2324 Chelsea Tenant Association Residential Housing Ventilation Forum

Dear Ms. Pham,

Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) thanks Thuy Pham, President of the 2324 Chelsea Tenant Association for presenting at our January 21, 2021, monthly Housing, Health, and Human Services (HHHS) committee meeting. Ms. Pham requested MCB4's support for a Residential Housing Ventilation Community Forum that will be held on February 27, 2021, to educate the public about the importance of adequate ventilation in residential buildings to prevent Covid-19 and to reduce the effects of dust and toxic paints from non-essential housing renovation and construction. MCB4 at its regularly scheduled Full Board meeting on February 3, 2021, voted, by a vote of 41 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstaining, and 1 present but not eligible to vote¹, to support this forum.

Background / Existing Conditions

The Association President stated that there are approximately 250 tenants at 225 W. 23rd St. and 220 W. 24th St. (2324 Chelsea). During the course of the pandemic, Management has proceeded with a renovation on every floor that replaced all the common hallway windows with sealed window replacements that do not allow for an opening for air circulation. Also, the construction workers and electricians performing non-essential construction were observed to not be wearing masks on a continual basis. As a result, on at least five occasions, tenants or staff of the residence were tested positive for Covid. At 308 W. 30th St. is also being impacted by construction workers as rent-stabilized units are being converted to condominiums. The concerns regarding the health and well-being of the tenants and staff have been raised with Management. Tenants voiced their concerns about ventilation issues and the associated health hazards since the summer of 2020. Management claims they are in compliance with Covid-19 guidelines when in fact they have been indifferent and in violation. Ms. Pham has asked if the HHHS Committee could recommend architects, medical experts, attorneys, or journalists who have had experience and exposure to the ventilation issue.

¹ Thuy Pham, President of 2324 Chelsea Tenant Association and member of Housing, Health & Human Services Committee voted Present Not Eligible on both Committee and Full Board meetings.

Plan / Response

In order to educate the public and propose permanent legislative reform to conform to CDC Guidelines, there will be a Residential Housing Ventilation Forum held on Saturday, February 27, 2021. The panel is expected to include expertise in different fields such as architecture, medicine, law, and journalism. The Forum will be hosted by Housing Conservation Coordinators, a tenants rights non-profit organization, and sponsored by (1) New York City Chapter of the American Planning Association, a professional organization representing the field of urban planning in the U.S., (2) 2324 Chelsea Tenant Association, and (3) 308 West 30th Street Tenant Association. At this forum, there will be no elected officials on the panel. They will attend a follow-up panel hosted by Housing Conservation Coordinators two weeks later on March 13, 2021 where they may respond at length and to outline specific possible solutions that conform to the CDC Guidelines and based on the information presented at the Residential Housing Ventilation Forum. Those elected officials and New York City Department of Buildings staff would have attended the February 27th forum. The HHHS Committee has also recommended for the 2324 Chelsea Tenant Association to contact the Ryan/Chelsea Health Center and the Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater New York for support and will follow up on sending referrals for the panel.

Conclusion

The HHHS Committee and MCB4 understands the important nature of this forum and its impact on a wider community. Therefore, we endorse the upcoming community forums on how to maintain safe residential building ventilation.

Sincerely,



Lowell Kern
Manhattan CB4, Chair



[signed 11/13/2020]
Maria Ortiz, Co-Chair
Housing, Health & Human Services
Services

Joe Restuccia, Co-Chair
Housing, Health & Human

