

HPD was not considered culpable and has been cooperative in the whole investigation.

Other neighbors supported the providing of full information about the past events at Luna Park including the role of the HPD. This newsletter wants to be fully reporting information. HPD is a mixed bag. M-L co-ops need the HPD to help them keep carrying charges low. The HPD's approval is needed for every major expense and carrying charge increase and HPD rules are meant to give current residents and those on the waiting lists an appeal mechanism if something seems wrong. But one of the problems is that HPD is underfunded and might not have sufficient personnel to accomplish all of the oversight tasks. In addition, HPD has not been innovative in searching for new administrative solutions and methods of accomplishing the oversight. An example is HPD's resistance to establishing an online waiting list for all affordable housing.

Those committed to privatization will use any misstep by HPD to criticize its inefficiencies. But the solution of self government by a self serving private board is the opposite side of the coin. All of these methods require diligence on the part of shareholders. HPD has its flaws. However, affordability can only be protected by oversight. Even if it is flawed, that oversight is subject to political pressure from the City Council and, by extension, from the voters. With more involvement, shareholders can exert pressure to move the agency to be more responsive.

Undeserved \$50 Late Fees

RNA monthly carrying charges are due on the first of the month. There is a 10 day grace period. Payments made after the 10th of the month can bring a \$50 late fee. Recently, four or more cooperators found \$50 late fees on their carrying charge invoices which they did not deserve, some for the second time. They complained to management. Eventually they got the erroneous late fees removed. It is probably wise to watch your carrying charge invoices carefully until the cause of these undeserved late fees is found and corrected.●

Submissions or notes can be left for Jay Hauben at the front desk
or sent to RNA4ML@gmail.com

RNA Cooperators to Preserve Mitchell-Lama

RNA HOUSE M-L INFO NEWS

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These Are My Thoughts

by Claudette Woods

Dear Neighbors:

I have a few questions/concerns and hope I can get some honest feedback. It seems that since the January election, we the Shareholders have not had a meeting with the Board to discuss our concerns. I was wondering as to whether this was the new norm or are there other obstacles that are preventing this from happening. Before living here, I lived in Mitchell-Lama and other Board-directed developments where Quarterly meetings were held with the Board to discuss concerns and have civilized dialogue. We were always able to come up with some compromise. I have heard that at RNA House there were such meetings and committees which were also helpful.

Please pardon my usage of "civilized". I used the term "civilized", as unfortunately, my experience with the meetings that I have attended since moving into RNA House have been horrific. I don't see us screaming and interrupting each other as being productive. I strongly believe if we are able to put our heads together and think of this as our home, we will be able to get much more accomplished. It should not be that the disruptive behavior by some during previous meetings is used by the Board for the total absence of the regular meetings between the Board and the Shareholders..

We are all adults, and it is my hope that any meetings moving forward, need to be done respectfully. In essence, we need to truly work on the concept of being able to "agree to disagree." In some past meetings, I have observed Board members making facial expressions when they disagreed with someone's statement and at times yelling out their frustrations at shareholders. I have also observed shareholders interrupt and yell at each other and the Board. This should never be the "norm".

Shouldn't shareholders have input in all decision-making pro-

cesses? Or is it the Board's role is to make decisions and then share? I'm just asking as this is confusing to me. My understanding was that the Board was put in place to represent us after we have had some discussions. How can the decisions it comes up represent us if they are not based on discussions at meetings between shareholders and the Board? What rights do we have as shareholders, if we are afraid to share our feelings or are viewed or labeled as "trouble makers" or are "black listed"? Since this is known as a friendly, neighborly co-op, then we need to begin to show it as such. The latter was one of the major reasons I moved into this co-op. Prior to my moving here, I had several friends going back to the early 1980's who lived here and thrived on the friendly and dyadic, family oriented relationships between Board and shareholders. Are we becoming so complacent and self absorbed that we are forgetting this focus?

Please let us return to focus on fighting our cause based on Democracy. It's time we begin to work together to get our building looking like other neighborhood Mitchell-Lama buildings.

I also need some clarity regarding the responsibilities of Management, the Board and Shareholders. Is decision-making done between Management and the Board or Shareholders and the Board and then discussed with Management? There seems to be some confusion recently. Some of the recent memos that in the past were handled by the Board seem now to be being sent by Management.

Finally, I think the gardens are beautiful. Thanks for the umbrellas. However, is there a way that we could make the backyard a more inviting place for our seniors, and the children who play and use the space? Now that the winter is over, could we form a committee or utilize the current Garden Committee to also paint and brighten up the colors on the pillars and scrub the moss and grime on the ground area? Also, some of the chairs and cushions need to be discarded, as they do not appear to be safe. Most importantly, could the Board encourage the shareholders and their children to clean up after themselves and not leave their unfinished food and garbage lying on the tables or ground? This becomes a hazard as it attracts vermin and roaches? As it is, the building is old and in need of repair. Let us all work together to at least keep it clean and inviting.

Remember, as mentioned above, these are some of my observations and concerns. No attacks please! I am open to assist as needed. Thank you in advance for a kind response. ● -----

St Martin's Tower Cooperators Turn Down Their Red Herring

by Jay Hauben

St. Martin's Tower (SMT) is a 179-unit Mitchell-Lama co-op at 90th St. and Columbus Ave. For the last 15 years, successive board majorities have wanted the co-op to go private. The latest effort was a feasibility study started in 2016. As a result of that study, on May 30, 2019 the SMT cooperators voted whether or not to allocate \$250,000 (almost \$1500 per apartment) for the preparation of a red herring draft of a privatization offering plan. Based on 170 occupied units, 113 Yes votes were needed to pass. Honest Ballot certified that there were: 95 YES votes, 62 NO votes, and 13 not voting. The YES votes were 18 short of the 2/3 majority needed. The red herring was defeated. The president of the board said they can try again in one year.

Along with St James Tower in Brooklyn and RNA House in Manhattan, all three of the latest efforts to prepare red herring draft offering plans at M-L co-ops have been defeated.

Also within the last few years, M-L cooperators at Ruppert House (652 units) on the UES, Village View (1236 units) in lower Manhattan, and Jefferson Towers (189 units) on the UWS have defeated or avoided feasibility study votes.

For now the city-wide M-L co-op communities are holding firm to stay in the M-L program. Still some have boards that want to go private. Those boards are trying to avoid getting the financing they need from the HDC which offers the best terms but requires in exchange a commitment to stay in the M-L program. The contest over privatization is whether enough candidates who respect the M-L program and see the value of HDC refinancing can get elected to become a majority. Until then, privatization efforts are likely to continue.

What about the HPD?

In the May issue of this newsletter there was an article about corruption at the Luna Park M-L co-op. One neighbor thought it painted the HPD in an unnecessarily negative light. She thought the article downplayed the greed of the three accused co-op insiders and instead painted the failures of the HPD too strongly. At his news conference, Brooklyn DA Gonzales went out of his way to say the