

Electricity Billing

Many tenants have contacted IPNTA regarding their electric bills. We have been on the case, working with Management, Quadlogic, The Public Service Commission, elected officials' offices. We now have an "Energy Committee," headed up by John Scott and assisted by Nelson Marty and the Exec. Board members.

Here are your (and our) concerns:

- Why do our current electric rates seem too high? Why did the owners switch to Con Edison Solutions instead of Hudson Electric, which had the lowest rates? Are other buildings paying less?
- Yes, cost of energy has gone up, but in a number of apartments, the billing still seems too high.
- Is it possible some apartments have shared wiring?
- Did we always pay tax included in our billing, or is this something new?
- Are original refrigerators or replacements that are not "energy star" wasting a lot of electricity that we are paying for? How about the dishwashers?
- Are some meters malfunctioning? If so, how do we check? Quadlogic is charging if they come down and find no problem, so what are our choices?
- Why haven't malfunctioning meters been fixed for months on end?

To help solve these problems, the Public Service Commission needs us to show we tried to resolve the problems first with the owners of the building. To that end, we need your information. Attached to this newsletter are (1) Public Service Commission complaint form (adapted for our needs) and (2) a Refrigerator Survey.

Taking into consideration that our last two bills were for the summer months, and air conditioning uses a high amount of electricity, if you still feel you are being over-charged please fill out the Public Service Commission form as quickly as possible. If you do NOT have energy star appliances, (refrigerator and dishwasher) please fill out that survey immediately as well.

We are planning a tenant meeting to discuss and collect these forms. The meeting date will be posted.

Only, if you cannot attend this meeting and cannot pass it to someone who is attending

contact your Building Vice President.

J51 Update from Our Attorney, Seth Miller

The J-51 case is coming to a point where there will likely be some kind of decision. The landlord moved for "summary judgment" and we cross-moved for "summary judgment." What that means is that both sides are telling the judge that there are no real factual disagreements, and we each want a legal ruling. Argument is scheduled for October 23. Argument is also scheduled for the "LAP" case for that day.

The judge has not made a decision on the previously-argued motion to have DHCR decide the issue of whether the J-51 makes IPN rent stabilized. She does not have to decide that issue before hearing argument on October 23. On October 16, 2008 at 9:30 we attended a mandatory mediation session in court. The landlord's attorneys have already indicated that they are unwilling to discuss settlement of either case.

Please note: although we say there will "likely" be a decision, Judge Friedman has made it clear that this is a big decision and she will take her time making it. Again, we will let tenants know as soon as something significant occurs.

Voucher Tenants — Family Self-Sufficiency Program

Your rent increases are put into a special fund for you to use later.

The Family Self-Sufficiency Program (FSS) assists households receiving Section 8 subsidies from HPD to become economically independent. The FSS Program offers participants the opportunity to accumulate substantial savings that result from earnings increases, and are available to participants upon successful graduation from the program. In addition, the FSS Program provides referrals for vocational education, GED and English as a Second Language classes, continuing education, and employment counseling.

The FSS program is helping many HPD Section 8 tenants move towards financial independence and even homeownership. For more information on how to participate in HPD's FSS program, please visit the FSS page on the Residential Tenants section of the NYC website: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/hpd/html/buyers/>

Or, if you do not have internet access, call HPD and ask for information. Additionally, if tenants are interested, we will invite HPD to a special tenants meeting to explain this program. Please let us know if you would attend by emailing info@ipnta.org or putting a note in the tenant box in your lobby.

If You Are Having Problems with Your Voucher, HPD, etc., contact us. Some tenants who had past problems were given "amnesty" through IPNTA's constant discussion with HPD. (At least five tenants had vouchers saved THIS YEAR via our intervention; others are pending.)

We can also now recommend another lawyer, formerly an IPN tenant, who would like to meet with voucher tenants who have problems. (He would be hired by individual tenants if IPNTA cannot help resolve the situation.)

M22 Bus Report The M22 bus has had schedule problems for quite some time. We spoke to the DOT, MTA and CBI's Quality of Life Committee. Research uncovered that aside from construction in Battery Park City, traffic police were also holding the bus up at Chambers and West Streets near Stuyvesant High. Things have gotten a bit better. In the future, lodge your complaint with 311 and/or write to Community Board I. (www.cbi.org) They need to hear from more of us. There has been some improvement but we urge you to lodge your complaint with 311 and if you can, copy CBI.

Please fill out even if you have already emailed or contacted us.

The Rebate: After questioning high bills, IPNTA was told that tenants would receive a refund for being charged for something that was not supposed to be passed on to tenants in the September bill. We are still trying to find out what that charge was. Tenants then received a letter from Management and should have gotten a refund in the Oct. rent statement. We assume this was for LAP and voucher, not sure about Free Market tenants. If you did not get refund, let us know. Note in tenant lobby box or Info@IPNTA.org

Ways to reduce costs:

- Vacuum refrigerator dust on motor/fans.
- Keep unused appliances unplugged.
- Shut down computer and printer if not using.
- Use energy efficient lights; turn lights OFF.
- Shut TV's off, especially newer models.
- Air conditioners use a lot – ceiling fans use less. Hair dryers or any fan-based appliances use more energy.
- Be frugal with track or Halogen lighting.
- Extra refrigerator or freezer – enormous usage.
- Dishwasher rates are lower at night.

IPN CLUBS: We would like to start a few clubs at IPN. Suggestions so far are: Mah Jong, Knitting, Book Clubs (12 per group); Mother's Club (young children); What are your suggestions or skills? Let's talk.

HOUSEKEEPING

Management responded to some of our questions as follows:

- Lobby entrance doors will be replaced with a revolving door adjacent to an ADA compliant door.
- The buzzers to open the door from the street will be added in the near future.
- Any tenant who has drafts coming in through their windows should call management's 800 number for help. If you have this problem, call NOW before winter.

Laundry Update: 80 No Moore is complete. 40 Harrison is scheduled to begin renovation on 10/28 with completion 11/13.

Dave, Our Doorman

Gulcharan "Dave" Sahadeo was a beloved doorman at IPN for almost 25 years, most recently at 80 N. Moore.

On February 13th, 2008, he was fired for what tenants believe was an excessive punishment for the mistake he was accused of making. Since it's been in the local papers, we won't repeat the story here. Suffice it to say tenants were irate, not only to lose Dave for supposedly making one mistake in 25 years and getting fired, but also because he was fired just months before he was entitled to retire with a full pension. (The punishment didn't fit the supposed "crime.") Here's a current update:

The IPNTA has been working on this issue with Local 36BJ, Stellar Management and of

course Dave. Currently, the union is trying to find Dave work to compensate for his missing "points" for full retirement. Tenants feel Stellar is wrong, but at the very least, we want Dave to get what he deserves after serving Independence Plaza loyally for so many years.

Among other things, Dave put up with two years of lobby renovations, with dust, freezing temperatures in winter, and noise and confusion only to be fired when the lobby was completed. The whole situation is shameful and many tenants feel it is age discrimination.

We will continue to support Dave and will let you know next steps. We've asked tenants who want to rally, etc. to wait until we find out if Dave is taken care of properly.

SEPT 11 PEDIATRIC/ADOLESCENT HEALTH REGISTRY

The 9/11 Health Registry Survey was very important to show the long term effects and obtain possible help for all of us who were affected by the destruction of the World Trade Center.

IPN tenants gave a good response to the first survey, but not as much for the follow up. Most importantly, many parents did not follow up for their children. This information is crucial! The health effects are being studied. Your sons and daughters may not think this is important now, but you must make that decision.

We were told by the Dept. of Health that 80

N. Moore had the lowest follow-up rate for family members downtown. The **deadline has been extended to Dec 1, 2008.** If you or your child is an enrollee, your participation is essential - not only for tracking health issues but for future funding to help those who were exposed. **ALL TENANTS: WE URGE YOU TO COMPLETE YOURS OR YOUR CHILD'S SURVEY immediately.** If you need a copy, please call 866-692-9827. If you did not participate in the original survey, you cannot participate in the follow up. If you want to talk to our environmental committee members, please email INFO@IPNTA.ORG quickly with your name, email, and phone..

Verizon Info: if you are having problems with your wireless internet service, it could be your wireless phone interfering. Try moving your router away from main phone hookup or even neighbor's wall.

Wireless technology is still relatively new. We looking into the possibility of Verizon's FIOS installation conflicting with our electric meters, though we believe they are on different frequencies.

Verizon claims that the electrical usage of their equipment which allows tenants to have FIOS

is minimal. Do be aware that they must install equipment in your home.

(Ask to see a neighbor's installation to get an idea of what it looks like. And ask about the entire procedure.)

As always, for maintenance issues - first call management: 800-313-0611. If not being addressed by management, contact us by note in lobby tenant box, or email info@ipnta.org. Print clearly and give name, phone, AND email! Thanks.

IPNTA Executive Board: Pres: Diane Lapson Secretary: Judy Bernstein Treasurer: Jean Hartman Vice Presidents: Ed Rosner, Diane Stein, Kathleen McGovern, Alan Howard, John Lynch and Marnee May. **Committee Heads:** John Scott, Elissa Krauss, Harriet Grimm, Mariette Bailey
The Independence Plaza North Tenants Association is staffed entirely by volunteers. Contact us to become a Captain.