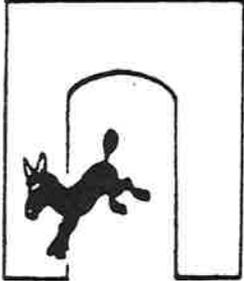


INDEPENDENT
VILLAGE  DEMOCRATS

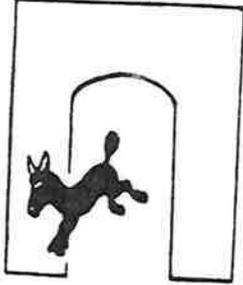
TO: Small Business Commission, Public Hearing on January 31, 1986

FROM: Sherri Donovan, Community Affairs Chairperson and Vice-President of the Village Independent Democrats; Board of Directors, Coalition for Fair Business Rents; Member, Ad Hoc Committee to Preserve Small Business.

The survival of small businesses and artists in New York City is extremely shaky. Skyrocketing commercial rents have forced out our dentists, dancers, photographers, printers, cleaners, and shoemakers. Many more are on the brink of eviction. The loss is enormous. When we lose our businesses and artists we are deprived of essential services, affordable goods, jobs, culture, moderate-priced restaurants, and long-time neighbors and friends. New York City is the most expensive city for commercial space, and unlike other cities, rents continue to increase at exorbitant rates in the outer boroughs and towns. We are losing the best of New York- the most creative, dedicated, and gutsy people and individuals due to exorbitant rents. New York City depends on small business and artists for its vibrancy and economic health. The landlords have gotten out of control. Knowing that there is a shortage of commercial space, greedy speculators have increased rents 300-500%. Without some form of fair business rent legislation for businesses and artists a handful of large developers will continue to make millions of dollars at the expense of the stability of our neighborhoods.

In Greenwich Village the typical scenario is that a real estate speculator, i.e. Trump, R.K.O., or Helmsly-Spear will buy up whole blocks, triple and quadruple the commercial rents, and force out long-time, competent businesses and artists. I have personally spoken to shopowners who are facing 3000 - 5000 dollar rent increases. They have told me they will have to move out, and most doubt if they can afford to reopen. These are people who have invested their lifetime savings, labor, and energies into their businesses, and have been a vital part of our community. Some of the specific places in the Village hit by developers' exorbitant rents include 8th Street between University Place and Broadway, and Greenwich Street between Bleeker and 11th Street, where only one small business survives out of an entire block. On 6th Avenue the delis have faced over 3000 dollar increases. We have lost our supermarket chains like Sloans on 8th Street, and our favorite restaurants like the Orichedia on 2nd Avenue and St. Marks Place. The Community Affairs Committee of the Village Independent Democrats has collected 100's of signatures of people who are fed up. The character of the Village and the welfare of our residents depend on the businesses and artists who serve the area. Why should we be forced to live with inflationary prices and a deteriorated quality of life? All New Yorkers have a right to essential services, affordable goods, moderate-priced restaurants, artistic expression and stimulation, and businesses who care about the community. The City government has the power and obligation to bring some rationality to this chaotic and inhuman situation. There is a solution. The solution calls for a moratorium on the eviction of commercial tenants until fair business rent legislation is passed.

INDEPENDENT
VILLAGE DEMOCRATS



CALENDAR LISTING

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CAN NEW YORK CITY SURVIVE WITHOUT
COMMERCIAL RENT PROTECTION TO BE HIGHLIGHTED AT FORUM
Community Discussion Open to Public

NEW YORK, N.Y. (February 19)... The question as to whether New York City can survive without commercial rent protection, will be the subject for a community-wide discussion hosted by the Village Independent Democrats (V.I.D). on Thursday, March 6 at 8 p.m.

"We are losing the best of New York, due to exorbitant commercial rent increases," said Sherri Donovan, VID community affairs chair, "and when we lose our local businesses and artists, we are all weakened without affordable services, without cultural activities, neighbors or friends."

Speakers scheduled to address the forum include New York City Council representative Ruth Messinger, Steve Null from the Coalition for Fair Business Rent and Margot Lewitan, Artistic Director of the Women's InterArt Center.

"Commercial rent protection will not only assure the vitality of business and the arts, but will be a driving force in order to stabilize our many diverse and special neighborhoods, the very fabric of the city," Ms. Donovan said.

The session at VID headquarters, 224 West 4th Street is free.

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at Fourth Street, New York City 10014 • (212)CH3-6555

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