

# BOROUGH OF RIDGEFIELD

## BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY

RENT LEVELING COMMISSION  
604 BROAD AVENUE  
RIDGEFIELD, NJ 07657



TELEPHONE  
201-943-5215 EXT. 446

### RENT LEVELING COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 9, 2023

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Jerry Ross called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. Adequate notice was published.

#### **Pledge of allegiance**

“This meeting is being held pursuant to the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231 of P.L. 1975. In addition, adequate Notice was published in the Bergen Record and posted in the Ridgefield Borough Hall.”

#### **Roll call**

For the tenants:	Jerry Ross - Present
	Gail Winter – Present
For the tenants (alternate):	Anna Guacci–Present
For the homeowners:	John Binetti–Absent
For the homeowners (alternate):	
For the landlords:	Scott Russo - Present
For the landlords (alternate):	Joey Kerzner - Absent
Tenant Advocate	Anthony Suarez, Esq. - Absent
Board attorney	John Ferraro - Present
Board council representative	Lauren Larkin - Present
Board secretary	Joyce Schultz - Present

Jerry Ross and Gail Winter were sworn in by John Ferraro, Esq.

Elections were held for 2023 officers:

Jerry Ross – Chairperson  
Gail Winter – Vice Chairperson

**Minutes**–Scott Russomade a motion to accept the January 2023 minutes. All were in favor. Minutes were accepted.

**New Correspondence**- none

## **Old business**

Removal of screen doors – The removal of screen doors has been completed in Ridgefield Gardens. Jerry asked if anyone was aware of removal of screen doors in the other complexes.

## **New business–**

Rent increases for the garden apartments – there is a problem with the notification by the landlord to the tenants because there are some fairly strict requirements as far as the ordinance is concerned that there should be a minimum of 30 days notice to the tenant by US mail or hand delivered to the tenants. Tenants were told by management they could not receive a printout because there was no ink in the printer.

John Ferraro requested that any tenants that have an issue with their lease file a complaint with the board via the hearing form. It is important to have all the facts about where they think the landlord is deficient. Every case is factually dependent on a case by case basis before we start making assumptions or accusations about any landlords and how they are managing their building

Gail asked if they should go ahead and sign the lease. John Ferraro recommended to file an objection complaint if tenants do not agree with the lease.

**Open meeting to the public** – Scott Russomade a motion to open the meeting to the public. Gail Winter seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Sean Shilinsky – discussed the landlord of the garden apartments breaking laws at will. He stated the landlord is exploiting the elderly and disabled. He requested the resolution to Vinko's hearing.

Tenant [name inaudible] – Tenant discussed that she received an email with the lease which needed to be signed electronically. She has lived here 8 years and asked why they haven't painted her apartment. Her rent is paid on time every month. She feels that everything is against the tenant and there are no rights for the tenant. Jerry told her that she has the right not to sign the lease and if she feels the landlord is in violation of the ordinance, she can file a hearing. She said if she wants to move, she would have to pay the rest of the contract if she signs the lease. Jerry said we are here to make sure the requirements of the ordinance are carried out. John Ferraro said he would reach out to the attorney of the landlord and discuss the compliance of the notices with the ordinance.

Karen Walden – there are tenants where she lives that are elderly and are refusing to sign the lease. These are people that are living here for 25 years and are being told that they will be evicted if they don't sign the lease. The renewal was sent by DocuSign where the lease is sent by email and requires a signature online. She said this is not fair because she wants to print it and read through it. Jerry suggested that tenant ask for a copy of the lease to be delivered to her. She spoke about the doors and they are unsafe because there are no windows/screen door and it is dangerous to open the doors. There is a peep hole in the door. Section 322-6(g) states the lease must be delivered to the tenant by mail or hand delivery. Tenant asked if she can pay month to month. They told her she had to give 2 months notice in order to break the lease. John Ferraro

states that lease renewals and cancellations and penalties are things that are negotiated between the landlord and the tenant and are not part of the jurisdiction of the commission. Jerry suggested if she wanted to be connected to the tenant advocate that she should reach out to Secretary Joyce Schultz who will connect her.

Tenant [name inaudible] been a resident for 29 years and would like two clarifications if he can get them. His understanding is the landlord upon purchase inherited the current leases which were month to month. Last year they threatened eviction if they do not sign the lease. He ignored that and it is happening again this year. He feels this is intimidation by the landlord to either sign the lease or be evicted. Tenant asked if he doesn't sign it, does he have to pay the increase. And if he pays the increase, and doesn't sign the lease, can he be evicted? Jerry said this should go to the tenant advocate. Gail said she found many inaccuracies in the lease and she finds the print too small to read. She does not feel comfortable signing the lease. John Ferraro said if tenants do not agree to the terms of the lease, landlord can file a proceeding for eviction and tenant would go before landlord/tenant judge to adjudicate the matter. John Ferraro suggested contacting and speaking to the landlord.

Tenant [name inaudible] discussed the peep hole in the door and having the storm doors taken away. John Ferraro asked that if a tenant has a complaint about removal of services, they should file a complaint.

Tenant [name inaudible] tenant discussed the increase of 3% and that it is a burden. They don't have proper heat, the windows have air coming through. He was also on month to month and is now thinking of moving from this area. He can't sleep at night because of the pressure of being evicted and it is not fair. Jerry stated that the 3% increase is legal.

**Close public portion of the meeting** – Scott Russo made a motion to close the public portion of the meeting. Gail Winterseconded the motion. All were in favor.

Last meeting, we had three hearings. One was resolved and the other was a landlord that said he did not receive a notification for the hearing. We will give him an opportunity to hear his side of the matter at the March meeting.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Community Center.

**Close meeting** – Scott Russo made a motion to close the meeting at 7:55 pm. Gail Winterseconded the motion. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Schultz  
February 28, 2023