

New York Note – Nonprofits, City Legislation, Rent Guidelines Board

Adams Appoints New Executive Director of Nonprofit Services

Mayor Adams has appointed a new Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Nonprofit Services, Johnny Celestin. Celestin most recently served as Deputy Director for the Mayor's Office of Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprises and will be taking over the agency for Karen Ford, who left in December 2023. The Office of Nonprofit Services was created in 2022 to bridge the gap between city agencies and the vast nonprofit network in NYC.

NYC Council Introduces and Passes Legislation

Last Thursday, the NYC Council convened a Stated meeting, where they passed and introduced multiple pieces of legislation. The Council passed a bill that will form a proactive, risk-based inspection program to identify hazardous buildings. The Council introduced a bill that would require HPD to create a number of homeownership opportunity units, at least 6% of all affordable units in the city. A bill was also introduced prohibiting discrimination based on a person's employment history, including their participation in legal sex work. You can find all of the legislation that was passed and introduced [here](#).

Rent Guidelines Board Approves Increase

The New York City Rent Guidelines Board, who oversee the rent for rent-stabilized apartments, voted to allow rent increases of 2.75% for one-year leases and 5.25% for two-year leases. The 5-4 vote was contentious, and eleven demonstrators were arrested in protests taking place outside the voting session at Hunter College. This final vote followed several months of meetings and discussions on the range of rent adjustments.

City & State NY's Who's Who in Casinos & Sports Betting

Stuart Shorenstein has been named to City & State NY's Who's Who in Casinos & Sports Betting. The inaugural list honors key players in the evolving casino and sports betting industry, including executives at major companies, government officials, and government relations experts. Shorenstein noted the lobbying work he is doing on behalf of gambling company Evolution, who are looking to legalize online gambling in New York.

NY Court of Appeals Affirms New York City's Approval of Senior Housing Project

An effort to block affordable housing for seniors brought by a commercial gallery that had been renting a vacant lot from the City of New York was dismissed by the New York State Court of Appeals on June 18, 2024. The lot was branded as the "Elizabeth Street Garden" and opened it to the public by the gallery owner when he learned the City intended to develop the property. Plans to build about 125 units of affordable housing, and a new office for Habitat for Humanity, were approved by the New York City Council in 2019 but held up by two lawsuits challenging the environmental review done by the City for the rezoning. Because of court delays exacerbated by the pandemic, the initial decisions weren't issued until November 2022 when a lower court judge threw out all of the claims except how the City had calculated whether there would be a significant "open space" impact. The following June, the Appellate Division, First Department reversed the decision and ordered that all claims be dismissed, holding that the City had followed its environmental technical manual and had taken "a hard look" at all of the potential impacts. They



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did, however, give the petitioners the opportunity to appeal to New York's highest court, the Court of Appeals. In a 6-1 decision the Court of Appeals agreed and affirmed the dismissal.

Cozen O'Connor's Ken Fisher and Jesse Loffler represented Pennrose, the designated developer of what will be known as Haven Green, and Habitat was represented by Kerry Cooperman who was with another firm and has since joined Cozen.
