

BRONX, NY (April 10, 2024) - On Monday, rent-stabilized tenants residing at 1187 Anderson Avenue, 1195 Anderson Avenue and 1230 Woodycrest Avenue filed a new contempt motion against their landlord over its failure to make agreed-upon repairs.

"For years, we have endured this landlord, this building, and this situation. We have done everything to work with this landlord, and when that hasn't worked, we have taken him to court to demand justice," said Julius Bennett, a tenant leader at 1230 Woodycrest. "We have worked hard and diligently, and still fallen short. We want and need relief, but we have our sights set higher. We will take the building and fight to form a co-op and make it a decent place to live!"

Attorneys with Bronx Legal Services have brought back a 2022 case to court, seeking to hold Isaac Kassirer's Emerald Equities, the landlord, responsible for negligence and civil penalties. This comes more than six months after a settlement reached with Emerald Equities, in which the landlord agreed to make extensive repairs within 30 days "or face stiff civil penalties.

Since then, tenants have faced shoddy repairs and dangerous conditions, such as inconsistent heat and hot water, as well as elevators that remain out of service for weeks at a time, forcing some tenants to be housebound.

"It's time for Emerald Equities to take responsibility for their mistreatment of these tenants," said Alex P. Ellefson, a staff attorney for Legal Services New York City's Bronx office. "Isaac Kassirer must deliver on the agreed-to repairs, and until he does we will urge the court to administer necessary damages."

Read settlement agreements [here](#)
See photos of building conditions [here](#)

"The tenants of 1187 Anderson Avenue and 1230 Woodycrest Avenue formed a tenants association to give a voice to the tenants and take action against an absentee landlord," said Samantha Diaz, a tenant at 1187 Anderson Ave. "After a long and arduous court battle, tenants from both associations have won a 50% rent abatement and an agreement signed by the landlord to complete years worth of repairs. Since that settlement was signed, the landlord has not fulfilled his lawfully ordered obligation to tenants, even after he was provided with access dates to make repairs and numerous phone calls to the property manager. Now, we are taking the landlord back to court to continue the fight for tenants rights for a safe, clean, and hospitable place we can call home."

Though the settlement awarded tenants more than \$400,000 in rent abatements due to the poor conditions, the buildings have seen no measurable improvements since it was signed. The agreement required Emerald Equities to provide adequate heating and hot water; exterminate cockroaches, mice, rats and other pests; remove mold; address plumbing issues and repair a leaky roof; provide janitorial services across the buildings; and fix the elevators and intercom systems.

The contempt motion will ask the judge in the case to determine criminal and civil penalties, at the judge's discretion.

Tenants are also announcing their demand for the landlord to sell the building to the tenants, following Bronx tenants in Port Morris who worked with the Urban Homesteading Assistance Board (UHAB) in 2022 to purchase their building and form a limited equity HDFC co-op. These demands add to calls from tenants across New York City to pass legislation called the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) and Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA), which would help tenants purchase their buildings when they go up for sale.

Tenants were organized with the help of New Settlement's membership-driven tenant organizing project, Community Action for Safe Apartments (CASA), and are represented by Bronx Legal Services' Tenant Rights Coalition Unit.

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