

City's 'worst' landlord calls leafy R'dale his home

Posted April 4, 2012

By **Graham Kates**

A Riverdalian whose company, 1071 Home Corp., was labeled New York City's worst landlord by Public Advocate Bill de Blasio and who was the target of a New York City Department of Investigation inquiry, may now be investigated by other city, state and federal departments.

Josh Neustein, who owns 1071 Home Corp., and is behind the multi-million dollar purchases and sales of several Riverdale properties, insists he's addressed the vast majority of the 741 violations listed last year on Mr. de Blasio's list.

However, HPD currently lists 666 open violations for Mr. Neustein's portfolio of five rental buildings. Seventy-seven of those violations are Class C, which are considered immediately hazardous.

Recently the city leveled fines ranging from the hundreds to thousands of dollars for unaddressed violations in Mr. Neustein's buildings. And in its most major legal salvo to date against Mr. Neustein, called a comprehensive case, HPD is demanding that Mr. Neustein fix every infraction listed for his building at 720 W. 180 St.

At 3034 Grand Concourse, Mr. Neustein's worst building in terms of HPD violations at 245 as of Tuesday morning, he has been cited for issues ranging from leaks and broken windows to peeling lead paint and vermin.

"He takes time when you have a problem. Like, a couple of months ago I had a leak. Yeah, it was a big hole leaking into our bathroom," said the teenage son a resident, translating for his mother. "It took weeks. We called him the same day and it was weeks before it was fixed."

However, Mr. Neustein said complaints about his buildings and business have less to do with maintenance than they do with sibling rivalry.

In a prepared statement given to *The Riverdale Press*, through his attorney Julie Hyman, Mr. Neustein said his "estranged" sister is behind allegations ranging from hundreds of housing code violations to a recent media report that drug sales are a problem in one of his buildings.

"He's indicated that these are false reports to an agency by his ... estranged sister," Ms. Hyman said. "Pure allegations. With respect to the drug allegations, he participates in the safe halls program, which permits police to enter his complex."

Mr. Neustein's sister, Amy, acknowledges that she helped tenants complain to the DOI and New York City's Department of Housing and Preservation, but said that doesn't invalidate the complaints.

"The DOI vetted my complaint. The complaint was backed up with tenants' complaints about having to give cash payments for subdivided apartments. It was backed up by newspaper reports and tenants' associations about unfixed locks that allow drug dealers to operate out of the building," said Ms. Neustein, who has previously faced off against her brother in court in an estate dispute.

According to a recent report on DNAInfo.com, the DOI turned over its probe, which was instigated by Ms. Neustein's complaints, to police, the Internal Revenue Service and three other state and federal agencies last month.

Through his attorney, Mr. Neustein said he has made the Grand Concourse building a priority.

"They do take care of their buildings. With respect to the Norwood building, he has a new manager taking care of that building in particular. That building, specifically, to spruce it up," Ms. Hyman said.

Keywords

graham kates, landlord, josh neustein, bill de blasio, public advocate, worst landlord, amy neustein, housing, violations