



Housing Justice League Newsletter December 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check www.housingjusticeleague.org/events/ to confirm time, location, and event details!

December 19, 8:30am - Redlight The Gulch Goes to Court **Courtroom 9G at Fulton County Superior Court.** We are fighting the Gulch scheme through litigation - join us as we go to Court! Please wear red and stay quiet in the courtroom.

Thursday, January 10, 6:30 pm - Tenant Organizing Training **1040 Crew St SW 30315.** How to start a tenant association, protect tenant rights to quality, affordable housing, and build power to stop displacement! Please email housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com for location and to RSVP!

Tuesday, January 15, 7:00 pm, 6:30 pm for orientation - HJL Mass Meeting **1040 Crew St SW 30315.** We will present 6- Month Work Plans for our campaigns, including the Eviction Defense Campaign, City-wide Tenant Union, HJL Board development, and BeltLine4All. Come find out how you can plug in!

Thursday, January 24, 7:00pm - Dinner and Dialogue **684 John Wesley Dobbs Ave NE 30312.** Join us for a conversation about the BeltLine over a warm meal! Come learn more, ask questions, and discuss the effects of this development. Hosted by Tim Franzen.



Housing Justice League (HJL) is a community-led organization. Our mission is:

"to empower renters and homeowners to self-organize and defend their right to remain. We fight to preserve affordable housing, prevent gentrification, and build neighborhood power for an Atlanta-wide housing justice movement."


We are always looking for ways to work with and support community members dealing with housing issues. We are excited to hear your ideas and for new leadership. Come to our monthly meetings to join or start your own tenant association, volunteer for a campaign, or help with community outreach.

Go to www.housingjusticeleague.org to sign up to volunteer, make a donation, learn about membership, or check out our upcoming events!

Stay in the loop here:

 facebook.com/HousingJusticeLeague

 @housingjusticeleague

 @HJL_Atlanta



Contribute to HJL's Newsletter!

We aim to have a collaborative, network-oriented and community-centered writing process that pairs impacted or involved individuals with volunteer writers/editors. We hope the stories we publish can thread together individual, building-wide, and city-wide struggles and explore their connections to broader systems of oppression and public policy. Some examples of this include commentary on policing, incarceration, housing instability, environmental justice, privatization of education and large-scale development, and the selling out of communities.

We are looking for: volunteer editors/writers to work with impacted individuals to tell their stories, individuals who are directly impacted by housing injustice to write their story or work with a volunteer to do so, written commentary on relevant issues, photos/ drawings/ comics/

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter in any capacity listed above, please consider the following guidelines:

OUR NEWSLETTER'S PRIMARY PURPOSE:

1. Deepen dialogue, understanding and awareness on issues of gentrification, housing affordability, and displacement among HJL's membership and throughout the city
2. Amplify the voices of folks most impacted by the housing crisis — those marginalized by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, housing/immigration status, etc.
3. Encourage political/community organizing work with HJL and within other communities to fight gentrification and displacement and build community power
4. Illustrate the scope of HJL's work, broaden engagement by highlighting opportunities to fit into said work, and encouraging community members to create initiatives of their own.

CONTRIBUTOR GUIDELINES:

1. HJL's Code of Conduct (found on our website)
2. Education AND action are both important and interdependent
3. True change is systemic and requires fundamentally dismantling dominant power structures (i.e. white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, and exploitative economic and political systems) through resisting and challenging these systems.
4. We understand the housing crisis and issues of displacement and dispossession as rooted in the exploitation and oppression of the Black and Indigenous communities on whose backs the United States was built. Contributions should reflect this legacy.
5. Low-income and Black folks have the right to self-determination and community control. Having wealth does not give someone the right to force them out of their community.

To contribute, go to housingjusticeleague.com >> "News">> "Contribute to the Newsletter" and fill out a short form to get in touch. Thanks!

We Can Still Redlight The Gulch!

Written by Livvy Feeney



On the morning of Monday, December 10th, the Redlight the Gulch Coalition took the first public step towards legal action aimed at preventing the Gulch development plan. The Coalition's lawyer filed 30 legal objections to the City-CIM Gulch financing package, effectively intervening at the Gulch bond hearing; representatives of Atlanta public schools also joined the Coalition at this hearing to levy an intervention dedicated towards halting the Gulch plan. In the absence of these efforts, Atlanta public schools would have lost at least \$312 million without their consent as a result of the deal.

The Coalition's lawyer exposed multiple aspects of the deal that are unconstitutional, which have been highlighted in a recent press release from the Redlight Coalition. Some examples:

1. Atlanta Public Schools never agreed to the use of school taxes in the Westside TAD beyond 2023. Yet the City's bond filing was poised to acquire at least \$312 million in school taxes over

an additional 15 years to 2038. This is a blatant disregard for the school board's legal authority over school tax dollars and would amount to fraud were it done by a citizen and not the City.

2. When the Fulton County Commission agreed to extend the Westside TAD to 2038, they required Commission approval for any new projects developed in the TAD after December 2018. Again, the City's bond filing ignores this. In the absence of intervention, the bond filing would have removed the County Commission's authority over using County property taxes for projects both in the Gulch and in the rest of the Westside TAD.

As the legal process is underway, the Coalition has been raising funds for legal expenses. On Thursday Dec 6th, at the Georgia Beer Garden, community members came together to build grassroots fundraising momentum. Concerned residents brainstormed strategies for raising donations to fund the \$30,000 legal fee.

In addition, attendees shared why they are upset with the Gulch plan, how many people they hope to involve, and their plans for engagement.

One attendee who preferred to remain anonymous shared, "I am mad about the Gulch because the Mayor and City Council are selling out public tax dollars, giving away public space, and 8,000 parking spaces, and I'm paying for it."

TAKE ACTION:

Join us at the next hearing! See the "Upcoming Events" section for more details.

To donate to fund the litigation fees, go to redlightthegulch.com and follow the link to the GoFundMe page.

BeltLine For All Hosts Dinner and Dialogue

Written by Sanae Lahgazi-Alaou

Even though the weather has gotten colder and we are approaching the winter solstice, there are still plenty of signatures to collect for the Beltline4All Campaign's petition drive!

Accordingly, members of the Beltline4All team have taken the petition drive indoors by hosting Dinner and Dialogue events. These events will bring together people who are informed and those who are new to this issue for a conversation about development and displacement along the Beltline. The dinners will also secure additional signatures for the petition drive.

The inaugural Dinner and Dialogue, hosted on December 12th by Livvy at the Quaker Voluntary

Service house, was a smashing success! Using presentation material from our previous popular education workshops, Emma and Livvy facilitated a conversation over a warm meal. These dinner and dialogue events make for a great space to have more in-depth conversations about the Beltline4All petition drive and the Beltline's purposes and effects on communities. Although we hope these events will engage people who are not yet involved in, or knowledgeable about, the Beltline4All campaign, everyone is welcome. The ultimate goal is to keep the petition drive going by having several people host their own dinner and dialogue events throughout the winter. If you are interested in hosting your own event please reach out! Informative materials such as flyers or the educational presentation can be given to you to create your own dinner and dialogue event. **Email us at housingjusticeleague@gmail.com if you can think of a few people who need to talk more about the Beltline and have space to host!**



Gentrification Bingo		
	Overpriced juice shop that is not owned by anyone living in the neighborhood	Rapid change in racial and cultural dynamic of neighborhood
Cops called for the first time on annual neighborhood barbecue		"Up and coming neighborhood"
People in neighborhood have had developers knock on their doors not once or twice, but three times	Newly moved in neighbors don't say "hello"	

Created by Sanae Lahgazi-Alaou and Livvy Feeney

Invitation: Redefining Affordable Housing Collective (RAHC)

Written by Stephen Mollidrem

Members of HJL are invited to participate in meetings of the Redefining Affordable Housing Collective (RAHC). RAHC has been meeting every other week since September 2018. The next meeting is Wednesday, January 9th at 5pm at The Phillip Rush Center (1530 DeKalb Ave NE) and every other week thereafter. RAHC is a diverse group whose mission is "to fight for affordable housing in Atlanta by building community power through political education."

RAHC is currently planning a major event in February to discuss the eviction crisis in Atlanta and is seeking additional partners. For more information, email Stephen Mollidrem mollidrem@umich.edu or join the RAHC Google Group at <http://tinyurl.com/RAHCGoogleGroup>

City-Wide Tenant Union Discussions

Written by Natalie McLaughlin

On Thursday, December 6, HJL held a meeting to begin a conversation about building out a city-wide tenant organization. This idea has been an "unofficial" topic of discussion for several months within HJL, but this

meeting was the first concrete step towards beginning to map out what this process could and should look like. It was exciting to imagine the uplift and development of tenant leaders as community leaders building renter power. Moreover, the insight shared by Briarcliff, Veranda, and Trestletree residents describing their experiences of living and organizing in subsidized housing proved invaluable.

We began the meeting by sharing what brought us to the space and why we believe this work is important. Many had stories of unexpectedly happening across HJL's work and feeling emboldened by the collective approach. We then asked ourselves what would be needed to build a city-wide tenant body and how we could make that a reality.

We also spent a lot of time discussing the importance of grounding our work in the histories and present-day manifestations of racialized and classed oppression that have produced the violence of dispossession and housing instability. In order to overcome the systemic racial oppression uprooting low-income communities of color, we will need a collective



process of deepening our understanding of the slavery and genocide this country was founded on and how that continues to shape our reality today.

More to the point, many of the institutions that we depend on for our material needs (like public housing) are set up to fail us and, as one tenant leader put it, push a “systematic program designed to control and contain and encourage people not to fight.” Specific examples raised were the systemic neglect and cordoning off of communities from resources in public housing projects of the past century, and current institutional failures of HUD’s “public-private” Section 8 program to hold landlords accountable to the requirements of maintaining “safe, healthy, and affordable” housing.

Another important point of emphasis emerged when a tenant leader expressed her challenges around some residents wanting to “tear down” organizing efforts. She tied this tendency to the individualistic mindset so many of us revert to in a money-centered, materialistic world, as well as our nation’s historically-rooted trauma and the fear people have of being “cut down” in the daily struggle of getting by. She posed the question: How do we reconcile different perspectives/mindsets to work as a collective whole through our thoughts and actions?

With this question as our guide, we talked about the importance and challenge of seeing our differences as a source of strength that can be tapped into for the good of building a collective vision and common narrative around which to organize. Along the same vein, a frequent focus

was the importance of actively working with those who want change and accepting that a uniform, consensus, and simultaneous approach is unrealistic. That organizing work takes time and requires humility came up as a recurrent theme was comforting, especially because people are so often looking for the quick fix. Our role is to trust the people, do our best to build understanding of the immense structures we face and come together to dismantle them.

The meeting also provided HJL leaders with the chance to be honest and open about some of the challenges we face in our tenant organizing efforts due to a lack of capacity that makes strong follow-through and sustained leadership development volatile. We discussed launching a tenant organizing internship to expand our work while also supporting community members. Moving forward, we decided to focus on strengthening and connecting the tenant associations already involved in HJL, meeting as tenant leaders and HJL organizers once a month, and bringing discussions back to tenant association meetings and buildings for input.

If you work to organize tenants in your apartment complex and are interested to participate in these conversations, please email us at housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com.



HJL January Mass Meeting: 6-Month Work Plan Presentations

HJL's January mass meeting will be an especially important one to attend! The meeting will include the presentations of several 6-month work plans for review and input by HJL's membership. It will be a great time to get a picture of where we are going in 2019 with important changes to our leadership and organizational structure, as well as the rolling out of the long-awaited eviction defense project. Our biggest goal for these presentations is to help HJL members think about where they fit into the work and collect feedback.

HJL Sponsored Event:

December 19, 2:30 - Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) Community Meeting City of Atlanta Office of Human Services, 818 Pollard Boulevard SW, 1st Floor Training Room

TAKE ACTION:

Looking for a fun way to get involved with HJL? **Sign up to host a BeltLine for All petition drive!** As a volunteer, you will have conversations about the gentrification caused by the BeltLine and the need for affordable housing, and collect signatures for our BeltLine for All petition.

We just created an easy way to sign up online: Go to housingjusticeleague.org, click the "Get Involved" tab, click "Host a BeltLine for All Petition Drive" and follow a link to sign up. There, you can fill out a short form and we'll get in touch with you about hosting the drive. You can choose the time, place, and location that works best for you.

Want to stay warm inside instead? Contact us about hosting a dinner and dialogue event!