



Housing Justice League Newsletter

July 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Wednesday, July 18 11:00 am - Forest Cove Tenant Association Rally To Demand Improved Conditions Now and Right To Return After Renovation. 900 New Town Cir SE, Atlanta, GA 30315, Building # 420

Friday July 20 10:30 am - Rally for Real Affordable Housing on the BeltLine. City Hall 68 Mitchell Street SW Atlanta, GA, 30303.

Tuesday July 24 6:00 - 8:00 pm BeltLine4All Petition Drive at Ponce City Farmers Market. BeltLine Shed, Eastside Trail Atlanta, GA, 30308. Join us to collect signatures for the #Beltline4all campaign. See HJL website for more information.

Tuesday August 9 6:00 pm - Tenant Association Training. Build a Tenant Association, Stop Displacement! How to start a tenant association and protect tenant rights. Please email housingjusticeleagueatl@gmail.com for location and to RSVP!

Tuesday August 21 7:00 pm, 6:30 orientation for newcomers - HJL Mass Meeting. 1040 Crew St SW 30315. We will discuss the current status of all campaigns, the organization, and have breakouts for tenant associations, the BeltLine for All campaign, and more!



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!

Follow us at facebook.com/housingjusticeleague to keep up to date with what's going on in the organization and housing-related politics.

TENANT ORGANIZING

FOREST COVE TENANTS ORGANIZE TO DEMAND IMPROVED CONDITIONS NOW, RIGHT TO RETURN AFTER RENOVATION

The tenants of the Forest Cove Apartments, a part of the Atlanta community of Thomasville Heights, are organizing to demand immediate action be taken to better the condition of their apartments. On Wednesday, July 18 at 11:30 am the tenants will hold a rally outside of building # 420 to broadcast their message and struggle to the rest of Atlanta and the nation, and then march to the management office on-site to present their demands. Among these demands are the Right to Return at full affordability after a long overdue renovation of the complex, scheduled to begin in October of this year. For too long, residents of the complex have had to deal with life threatening issues. These include rampant mold, rat and insect infestations, multiple holes throughout their unit, leaking pipes, broken AC units and other appliances, sewage seeping up from the ground, and even carbon monoxide leaks. Many tenants have lived in these conditions for years, despite consistently reporting issues with the property to its management.

Forest Cove, formerly known as Four Seasons, has long been the subject of attention due to the number of violent incidents that have occurred on the property. The tenants organizing and demanding change now seek to take back that narrative. They want Atlanta to know that these incidents do not represent their community as a whole, and are a direct result of the systemic oppression and disenfranchisement to which their community has been subjected.

Forest Cove is on the cusp of radical change. Global Ministries Foundation, the current owners of the property, have allowed their buildings all over the country to fall into decline and neglected the basic needs of their tenants for too long. Due to slum-conditions in all of their HUD properties across the nation, GMF is being forced by HUD to

sell their entire portfolio. Forest Cove's current manager, Millennia Housing Management of The Millennia Companies, is seeking to acquire GMF's properties. Millennia has proposed a \$30 Million renovation plan for the 396-unit complex, as required by HUD. Residents of Forest Cove want the much-needed renovation, but they also want a Right to Return at full affordability guaranteed to them by Millennia. So far, Millennia has failed to promise to do so.



During this process, tenants at Forest Cove have been subject to many forms of harassment by Millennia. They have been subjected to constant illegal inspections by the management, often involving out-of-state police raiding their apartments without a legally-required 24-hour notice. They have received constant unenforceable eviction notices meant to intimidate them into leaving their homes. They have endured all of this while continuing to live in deplorable conditions that remain unaddressed by GMF and Millennia. The tenants of Forest Cove have built collective power, and they are coming together to demand that GMF and Millennia fulfill their obligation to

make reparations for the violence they have inflicted.

This fight is by no means exclusive to the Forest Cove Apartments in Atlanta. Residents of a complex in Palm Beach County, Florida called Stonybrook, also owned by GMF and managed by Millennia, have started a national campaign against Millennia. The tenants of Stonybrook are experiencing the same slumlording practices at the hands of Millennia that those at Forest Cove are, and the organized tenants of the complexes are standing together to make their struggle known. Tenants of Stonybrook have also faced managerial harassment for their actions. Their on-site

management has even gone so far as to vandalize the car of a tenant leader of the complex. They are calling upon all those living in apartments under Millennia's management or control to rise up, protest their conditions, and demand the decent and safe communities that they deserve.

As Atlanta and every city across the US is facing a housing crisis, tenants everywhere are organizing to preserve their housing and demand the humane conditions that have been denied them for so long. As Forest Cove and Stonybrook sound the alarm for the rest of Millennia's properties throughout the nation, they are hoping that others answer the call.

HJL TENANT LEADERS ATTEND NAHT CONFERENCE IN DC

Earlier this month we had the opportunity to travel to Washington DC with tenant leaders from the Housing Justice League for the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) national convention. This has been our fourth year attending the conference which is a gathering of HUD tenant leaders from around the country along with tenant/community organizers and representatives from ally organizations. The conference is an excellent opportunity for tenants to share and develop strategies to preserve, improve, and expand affordable housing in their complexes and communities. Here in Atlanta we've learned so much over the years from the amazing HUD tenants that helped form NAHT. Several of them have organized such strong tenant associations that they have actually collectively negotiated with complex owners to purchase the building they live in.

This year's conference was year was a highlight for us as both Housing Justice League and the American Friends Service Committee received awards in recognition of our victories over the last year.

It was also special because we had the opportunity to join the Poor Peoples Campaign for their day of action. Many of us marched to HUD and witnessed over a dozen committed faith and community leaders block the doors of HUD's office demanding better living conditions and more people-centered policies. It was truly inspiring to be surrounded by

so many people with such deep commitment to real economic justice.

The following day NAHT held a rally against Trump's proposed HUD cuts on the steps of the MLK memorial statue. If passed Trump's HUD budget would include deep cuts and much stricter work requirements. The cut's impact would put over 5k Georgia families at risk or homelessness and rent hikes that would be difficult to survive for those on fixed income. From there we went to visit congressional members and lobbied against the proposed cuts before saying our goodbyes and heading back to Atlanta.



Conferences like NAHT are important. They give us the opportunity to compare notes, inspire and be inspired by each other, to celebrate our work, explore how to work more effectively, and leave with our imaginations on fire!

Big thanks to all who contributed to Housing Justice Leagues tenant training crowd source fundraiser as it helped cover the cost of three tenant leaders attending the conference!



OTHER NEWS UPDATES

ATLANTA RESIDENTS TO HOLD RALLY/PRESS CONFERENCE AT CITY HALL TO CALL FOR REAL INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON THE BELTLINE

On Friday July 20th at 10:30 am at the Mitchell street entrance to Atlanta's City Hall hundreds of Atlanta residents affected by Atlanta's housing crisis and their allies will hold a rally/press conference calling on city policymakers to make major investments in real affordable housing on the footprint of the Beltline. Please spread the word!

At the rally we will let the City know that we demand the housing crisis be treated as a CRISIS. As of right now, the BeltLine's affordable housing promise of 5,600 units will only replace the same

amount of affordable housing it has already wiped out in the Old Fourth Ward. We demand that the City invest in affordable housing at least as much as they are eager to invest the destruction of neighborhoods through mega development like the Mercedes Benz Stadium and Carter Developers' Georgia State Stadium. The city must invest in the needs of communities, not just billionaires like Arthur Blank. We will not stand for the displacement of one more person as a result of BeltLine development.

RALLY! O4W NEIGHBORS FOR DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT!

What: Zoning Review Board meeting – support residents at risk of displacement

When: TBD – See Facebook event: "Rally! O4W Neighbors for Development WITHOUT Displacement!!"

Where: City Hall, Council Chambers, Second Floor

Old Fourth Ward residents are standing up against the development of a massive luxury condominium that will use public land and cause displacement and traffic congestion. You can sign their petition and come out to rally in front of City Hall before the next Zoning Review Board meeting! Atlanta doesn't need another super luxury complex, especially one that aims to use park property.

"I'm worried that this development will force me out of Old Fourth Ward," says Carolyn, an O4W

Resident. Like Carolyn, many residents in Old Fourth Ward are concerned. We welcome development, but not at the expense of displacing our neighbors. We demand development WITHOUT displacement.

On Monday July 9 O4W residents held a canvassing event with the support of HJL to collect signatures for their petition titled "Support O4W Neighbors for Development Without Displacement" in order to build support for the campaign and stop the developer. They are also circulating the petition online through Action Network.

The development would consist of 17 luxury condos, each for sale starting at \$1 million. The developer is trying to secure zoning approval for this project to be located at 687 and 693 Angier



Avenue, right behind Anthem apartments and next to Historic Fourth Ward Park. This property is in between a single, family home and an older apartment building with two floors. This would be the tallest building in the neighborhood, rising 21 stories (i.e., 225 feet) on a .16-acre property – a “cigarette” tower built on a postage stamp, just so millionaires can have a nice view. This project FAILS to provide value for the community:

- NO street-level retail
- NO office component
- NO community space
- NO affordability
- Traffic and congestion will be WORSE
- Trees will be CUT DOWN

The developer is also using shady practices to get the neighborhood board to approve the project. The project was voted on three times at last month's NPU meeting. After it failed to get support the second time, the President of the Old Fourth Ward Business Association proposed the idea of having the developer make a donation to a non-profit. The developer quickly latched on to that idea and came up with a fixed donation in the

amount of \$170,000 using the in-lieu formula from the Inclusionary Zoning Ordinance. His math is wrong based on the formula; and simple math shows that \$170,000 is just 1 percent of \$17M that he stands to earn from this project! This pay-to-play approach sends the WRONG message to developers – they need to know that our neighborhood values are not for sale. Despite his “offer,” residents were deadlocked and the final outcome was to not provide a recommendation to the Zoning Review Board.

With all the neighborhood resistance to the project, the developer pulled out of the July 10 City Council Zoning Review Board meeting in order to take an extra month to talk with neighborhood leaders build support for what they are “really” trying to do for the neighborhood. But organized residents will not back down or be bought out. After the developer pulled out of the meeting, residents rescheduled a planned press conference for the next month's Zoning Review Board meeting during which we will let Atlanta City Council and the Zoning Review Board know that we do NOT support this harmful development project!

HJL-SPONSORED EVENTS

Thursday July 25 3:00 pm Online Tenant Union Training with Homes for All:

Are you and your neighbors facing rising rents? Is your landlord threatening you with eviction, deportation or retaliation? Are you and your family forced to live in bad conditions? Now is the time to organize a tenants union to fight back! Join Homes For All's Monthly Tenant Union trainings. Each month we'll dive into the basics and next steps of organizing tenants unions in your building, your neighborhood and across your city!

Each training will have space to take your questions about how to organize with other tenants, and have other renters and organizers on to provide peer feedback and advice!

These trainings are ideal for tenants and/or local organizers who are either just starting to organize or who have been organizing tenants unions and want to get support and training.

go to <https://homesforall.org/tenantuniontrainings/> to register!