

Epiphany, 13th Pct. honor memory of Sgt. Kirwan



Joining the memorial were Msgr. Walter, Arlene Harrison and Annie Kirwan, sister of Maureen.



Dep. Insp. John Healy, Msgr Harry Byrne and Det. Owen Hughes take part.



Photo of Sgt. Maureen Kirwan.

Tenants

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association attorney. "Now we're fighting this MCI over the roofs."

Lester told the audience that the costs MetLife are putting down for the roof replacements "are far beyond anything that reflects the industry standards in New York City for similar roof replacements."

"These roofs have been bad for many years. People have complained and now MetLife decides to make massive repairs and increase the rent. Landlords are not allowed to pass on rent hikes for just repairs; only for improvements. And this isn't that."

Lester added that, according to the tenants' association, MetLife has added on "extra, unnecessary costs" to this MCI -- involving extra employees and security personnel.

He also told the audience -- to enthusiastic cheers -- that in any potential court battle in this area, tenant names will remain confidential. "We will file any court papers, if it comes to that, for the complex as a whole."

The confidentiality of the ST/PCV Tenants Association membership list was a key topic earlier this year in court, but Lester stressed that, due to the group's legal efforts, confidentiality will be adhered to. A federal judge had ruled this spring, to the dismay of tenants, that the association would need to reveal the names of its members when filing MCI appeals. This, Lester said, will not be the case now.

Lester said the tenants' group had argued successfully that revealing a membership list when taking part in a legal proceeding violated constitutional rights and defeated the purpose of a tenants' group.

In another key sticking point, association president Al Doyle told the crowd

there's "a big discrepancy in the prices for different roofs. All the roofs are pretty much the same. That's one of the issues we have to look into."

In some cases, Doyle said, similar roof applications have differed by as much as \$80,000. He said the association will be asking the state Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DH-CR) why some jobs are cheaper than others. "We had one application seeking \$121,000 and another for about \$200,000 and we want to know why. There seems to be no reason for it."

The sole guest speaker, State Senator Roy Goodman -- Assemblyman Steven Sanders was ill and could not attend -- backed up the sentiments of the association, but also tempered those words with a "let-cooler-heads-prevail" speech.

While Goodman characterized an MCI as a "Major Creeping Indigestion" and pledged to "fight to the death" for the right to affordable housing, he also stressed that "MetLife shouldn't be used as a football to be kicked around."

"Let's not make them out to be the villain here," he said. "They are, after all, one of the best landlords in the city. They have problems too."

Goodman said he will "keep up the good fight" for Town and Village tenants, promising to "stop this MCI if we possibly can. If this goes through, the landlord will be able to raise your rent in perpetuity if they so desire."

Goodman also addressed the issue of Rent Protection Laws, saying that "we'll have the same battle we have had in another two years. An increase in rent should never exceed the rate of inflation."

"The elderly, one of our city's greatest resources, would be forced to leave the city to find affordable housing if this happens."

Dealing with other issues

In other matters, the tenants' association made a plea to residents for the "Rent 2000 Campaign", asking for volunteers to make sure the rent control and rent stabilization laws are renewed by the City Council by March 31, 2000 without any weakening amendments.

Susan Steinberg, vice president of the tenants' association, also mentioned that a violation recently was handed out for 3 Peter Cooper Road for no hot water. Tenants there would be able to file for a rent reduction if this problem happens again, she said.

On another front, resident John Marsh told the audience that the tenants' association is considering starting a website and that he would be willing to offer his services to that end.

Marsh, a Web designer and Internet consultant, said such a website would be a "very, very good tool for giving out information and for fundraising."

Marsh, who offered to donate the services necessary to get the site up and running for a year, said this site would then have its own e-mail address, which would make it "easier and faster" for tenants to get in touch with the association.

When the forum opened to the public, one resident asked about the recent "infestation" of rats in the Town and Village area. She said this "has become a very serious problem lately."

Steinberg acknowledged the problem, saying she has heard that the rodents "have been spotted around local recycling bins lately."

She stressed to people in the audience "to not ignore this problem. Report it to the proper authorities when you see it and contact us."

Photos by Arlene Harrison

The Epiphany Parish and 13th Pct. honored the memory of Sgt. Maureen Kirwan recently. Kirwan, the creator of the Community Policing Unit at the precinct, died recently after a long illness. She was charitable to seniors, the church and community.



Pictured are Sgt. Mike Loughran, Annie Kirwan, Lt. Dennis Gannon, Mary Ellen Kirwan, and Det. Owen Hughes.



Officers from the precinct join for the memorial gathering at Epiphany Church.



Gathered were Msgr. Harry Byrne, PO Rick Rodriguez, Business Manager of Epiphany Joan Fealy, PO Mike Hnatha, Msgr. Walter Niebrzydowski, and Det. Owen Hughes.