



PHILADELPHIA

HAPCO NEWSLETTER

JULY 2023

Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

Message from the President:

Will a Cherelle Parker Administration Be Good for Rental Property Owners?

Philadelphia's one hundredth mayor will be installed in less than six months from now, on Monday, January 1, 2024.



Greg Wertman

As the City has not elected a Republican mayor since 1947, it's a near certainty that Democratic nominee Cherelle Parker will defeat Republican David Oh. It is notable that

see "Cherelle Parker" on page 5

New National Coalition of Sheriffs Forms to Address Border Crisis

Excludes key Texas sheriffs who've been combating cartel crime for years

read story on page 4

Hapco Philadelphia's Exclusive Online Forum Overhaul Being Planned!

read story on page 8



Unpaid PECO Tenant Bills Continue to Haunt HAPCO Philadelphia Member

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

"This all stinks to high Heaven."

That's not what Wanda Walker wanted to think after years of taking in at-risk tenants from various Philadelphia agency shelters.

"I wake up every morning wondering if my electricity will be turned off because of un-

see "Wanda Walker" on page 9



Wanda Walker

Philly Renames Street in Honor of a HAPCO Philadelphia Legend:

Willie Seward!



read story on page 2

Philly Renames Street in Honor of Willie Seward!

He is one of the earliest members of HAPCO Philadelphia and he's now been honored with a street in his name!

Willie Seward is one of HP's charter members and has been a community advocate for affordable rental housing in the city for decades.

And that community service and dedication has been recognized along with Willie's 95th birthday by the renaming of the 2800-block of North 22nd Street.

In a ceremony and birthday celebration, that North Philadelphia block will forever be known as "Willie Seward Realist Way!"

Friends, family, and community members gathered to congratulate Willie on 95 amazing years and to celebrate his commitment to preserving low-to-moderate-income housing.

From all of us at HAPCO Philadelphia, a huge congratulations, Happy Birthday, and Thank You for your guidance, dedication, and caring over the years!



Historic Preservation Committee

Chair: Jenine Sanzari & Justin McDaniel

Members: Sylvia Hamerman-Brown & Julie Bush

The Historic Preservation Committee is open to all laypeople and professionals that support historic preservation of buildings and historic sites in one of the country's first cities and particularly in Spruce Hill, which was built as a streetcar suburb for Center City in the second half of the 1800's. Beyond protecting aesthetic and artistic architecture from the past, historic preservation maintains ancestry and cultural values that are priceless and provide a sense of community. Responsibilities of this committee are to provide public awareness and to promote appreciation and benefits that historic preservation has in an evolving urban community such as Spruce Hill.

PROPOSED SPRUCE HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION

New Date: Proposed Spruce Hill Historic District Panel Discussion Tuesday, June 27 @ 7pm 410 S. 42nd St (Chapter House just south of Resurrection Church)

Please send comments and queries to: SHhistoricPreservation@gmail.com

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Accepting donations to support the historic district nomination OR https://venmo.com/code?user_id=3803462965921696459

OR send checks to **PO Box 31958, Philadelphia, PA. 19104**

Q & A

What is a historic district?

Local historic districts recognize the historic, cultural and architectural importance of a neighborhood or area with the goal to preserve the historic fabric of that place. The definition listed in the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Ordinance is as follows: "A geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of buildings, structures, sites, or objects united by past events, plan, or physical development. A district may comprise an individual site or individual elements separated geographically but linked by association, plan, design, or history."

Listing on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, designated by the Philadelphia Historical Commission, does offer protection from demolition or insensitive alterations. Currently, there are ~250 properties within the Spruce Hill neighborhood that are already protected and listed on the "local", Philadelphia Historic Register of Historic Places. If your home or property is currently listed on the local historic register, a historic district nomination/designation would bear no effect to the owner.

Spruce Hill is already within the boundaries of the West Philadelphia Streetcar Suburb National Register Historic District. What's the difference between National Register designation and "local" Philadelphia Register of Historic Places designation?

A listing on the National Register of Historic Places indicates that a strong case has been made for the historic nature and character of a place and that its story fits into the narrative of the diversity of American life. It is an incredible honorific and inclusion on the National Register can open properties for rehabilitation using Historic Tax Credits at the state and federal levels, giving a developer 10-20% back as long as they meet criteria set by the National Park Service (NPS) and administered through their State Historic Preservation Office

continued on page 6



Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

The Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter

Published as a member service by Hapco Philadelphia

2101 Chestnut St. #1615
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: (215) 684-1684, Fax: (215) 684-1683
www.hapcophiladelphia.com

*Office Hours: 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM
Monday through Friday*

President

Greg Wertman

Vice Presidents

1st – Brian Jackson

2nd – Howard Bernstein

3rd – Robert L. Jackson

Treasurer

Syed Maz Alam

Secretary

Vincent J. Bakanauskas

Immediate Past President

Harvey Spear

Legal Counsel

Paul Cohen, Esq.

Office Administrator

Priya Boben

Board of Directors

Erik Bronstein; Robert C. Levin;

Jim Sims; Wanda Staples;

Albert Taus; Joseph P. Thomas;

Victor H. Pinckney, Sr.; Paul Badger, Jr.;

Stanley Lassoﬀ, Emeritus;

Carolyn Smith, Emeritus

Newsletter/PR/Marketing Committee

Claudia Christian – Newsletter Editor

Greg Wertman; Victor Pinckney, Sr.;

Robert C. Levin; Syed Maz Alam;

Brian Williams; James Sims

Publication & Advertising Sales

University City Review, Inc.

406 S 43rd Street

Philadelphia, PA 19104

Tel: (215) 222-2846

Fax: (215) 222-2378

editor@pressreview.net

Printing & Mailing Services

Engle Printing and Publishing Company, Inc.

1100 Corporate Blvd, Lancaster, PA 17601

Tel: (717) 892-6035

Cell: (717) 278-1404

www.engleonline.com

New National Coalition of Sheriffs Forms to Address Border Crisis

Excludes key Texas sheriffs who've been combating cartel crime for years

By **Bethany Blankley**
The Center Square contributor

Following through on a **pledge** he made during his first border security summit in Arizona and ahead of his next **border trip** to Texas on Monday, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis on Thursday announced the creation of a new national coalition of sheriffs committed to working together to combat crime stemming from the border crisis.

More than 90 sheriffs from 24 states are part of the coalition. Notably absent from the list are Texas border sheriffs who've been combating border-related crime for years.

Participants in the coalition include sheriffs from Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

"Illegal Immigration has not only ravaged communities along the southern border, it has harmed states across the country with the deadly influx of cartel-trafficked fentanyl and higher rates of violent crime," DeSantis said. "I'm proud to work with this growing group of law enforcement leaders and bring Florida's dedicated resources and leadership to bear on this national problem."

In an undated and signed **letter**, the sheriffs express their commitment to securing the border.

"As elected law enforcement officers, we must uphold our oaths of office and protect the legal residents of our jurisdictions. While we are committed to upholding the law and maintaining public safety, the federal government has failed in its responsibilities to secure our nation's borders. During the 2022 Fiscal

Year, encounters at the Southwest Border hit record numbers, and encounters in Fiscal Year 2023 are nearly twenty percent higher than in 2022," they write.

"The consequences of the federal government's abdication are being felt across the nation. Cartels and gang members are bringing record levels of fentanyl and other drugs into our communities as our officers work around the clock to battle these criminal institutions. As Sheriffs, we are thankful that Florida has recognized the crisis at our border and we are partnering with the Sunshine State to bring law and order back to our streets.

"It is unfortunate that the federal government has effectively abandoned border states ... We can no longer sit by and watch our nation become overrun by gang activity and drug-related violence."

The sheriffs pledged to "join together to partner with Governor DeSantis and the state of Florida to preserve the safety and well-being of the citizens we serve."

Notably absent signees are key Texas border sheriffs and one of the most influential sheriffs in the state who **created** a multi-agency Texas Operation Lone Star Task Force to combat cartel and border-related crimes, Goliad County Sheriff **Roy Boyd**. One Texas sheriff who signed the letter from Lavaca County has refused to participate or join OLS task force operations over the last two years and is currently being challenged in his reelection bid.

Boyd, who didn't sign the letter, told The Center Square that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott has done more for Texas and provided more support for border security operations than any other governor in the state's history.

Others have pointed out that it's Abbott and Texas that are leading on border security ef-



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis addresses media in Arizona after announcing he would coordinate with border sheriffs to aid in stemming illegal immigration.

forts. Florida has been supporting Texas' OLS border security operations as well.

Last fall, Abbott **met with** Texas sheriffs to discuss efforts to combat cartel-related crime stemming from the southern border.

"Texas has done more than any state in the history of America to respond to this challenge," Abbott said at the time. "We're the only state to build our own border wall. We have the National Guard on the border that are involved in turning back people who are trying to cross the border illegally." Some who get through are interdicted and arrested by Texas Department of Public Safety officers and sheriffs, he added.

"We were drowning in work and we could not keep up until Gov. Abbott stepped up and provided us with Operation Lone Star funding," Boyd said. "That funding gave us the personnel, gave us the overtime, the equipment, to be able to go out and proactively fight the cartels and their operatives right in our jurisdiction."

Every Texas sheriff involved in interdicting cartel crime The Center Square has spoken to credits Abbott and Operation Lone Star funding for enabling them to be more effective. Jackson County Sheriff Kelly Janica, a member of the OLS Task Force, told The Center Square it is because of OLS funds that they're using new technology and have access to other resources.

Cherelle Parker *continued from page 1*

Parker would become the first woman to serve as mayor. We wish her all the success in the world. Her success is our success.

Surely, she faces huge challenges. While the city's homicide rate is down about 20% compared to this time last year, we're still averaging well over one homicide per day. High crime is a quality-of-life issue that impacts all of us, and in 2023, no large city is immune. We're the sixth largest, but we're also the poorest large city in America. If we want the city we love to reverse course, prosper and grow, we can't expect the same old failed policies to produce different results. It simply doesn't work that way. More than ever, we need fresh, big-picture thinking.

We reached out to Parker's campaign office for an interview and haven't heard back yet. We get it. On the surface, talking to an association of rental property owners may not be a high priority. Unless you're thinking big-picture. Whether the issue is crime, poverty, lack of good jobs, schools, a shortage of city services ... you name it, doesn't a course change begin with a safe, affordable place to live?

Indeed, thanks in part to Hapco Philadelphia, topics like affordable housing and the Philadelphia Land Bank have become campaign issues. Of course, they have. The City is at a critical stage. Small mom and pop rental owners are calling it quits en masse due to city rules, regulations, and red tape. Big developers and gentrification are pushing low and moderate income folks out of their homes. And the city, in past efforts to solve a "today" problem continually kicked the "tomorrow" problem — a growing shortage of affordable housing — down the road. Well, tomorrow is here. The time is now.

To be clear, housing policy shouldn't be a "landlord versus tenant" issue. It has been for too long. Yes, Philadelphia families need safe, affordable homes, and Hapco Philadelphia members are a big part of the solution. But we need to be treated fairly. We hope a Parker Administration will make the right choices, including:

continuing to oppose rent control. Studies have repeatedly confirmed that rent stabilization actually destabilizes the housing market. We've heard from the experts and have written ad nauseam on this topic.

dropping the mandate allowing district council members to have final say on the Land Bank. Let's bring transparency to the process of repurposing vacant, tax-delinquent properties into affordable housing. Start with a mandate of converting no fewer than a thousand properties per year.

pushing legislation that actually *encourages* investment in rental property. Support city tax incentives (gross receipts, real estate, etc.) for investment in low income housing. And develop other creative and focused legislation that offers



Cherelle Parker. Courtesy of Wikipedia

real incentives for small landlords to want to do business in the city.

shortening the time it takes to evict and make the city's Eviction Diversion Program voluntary. Forcing small mom and pop investors to delay renting their properties and lose months of income while deadbeat tenants abuse the system and live rent-free is the number one

reason why many mom and pops are leaving.

The priorities above will be a measure of what we hope a new and energized administration can accomplish. We welcome fellow members to join in our push for positive solutions, including becoming active within our organization. There are committee positions opening all the time. Your energy and fresh ideas can make a difference!

**B
M
C** **Installation & Service
for Fire Protection**
RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL

- Fire Sprinkler Systems
- Plumbing
- Inspections
- Violations Corrected
- Backflow Testing



215.978.8888

R&B
**Philly Lead
Inspections**
Fully Licensed and Insured

ASK ABOUT OUR
MULTI-UNIT DISCOUNTS
215cleaning@gmail.com

Beverly Matthews **267.259.9690**
www.rnbphillyleadinspectionsllc.com

Terra Insurance Service



Seriously Good
Insurance



Auto
Home • Life
Business

Colleen Terra
Colleen@InsureMePhilly.com

1879 Cottman Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19111
(215) 742-ERIE • (215) 742-3743
www.TerraInsuranceAgency.com

Historic Preservation Committee *continued from page 3*

(SHPO), in PA called the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. The historic tax credit project is directly linked with many successful reuse projects for housing, affordable and otherwise.

What advantages does a historic district bring?

The creation of a historic district does not stop change. Rather, designation provides a mechanism to maintain the basic physical and visual character of a district. Many cities, including New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, New York, Boston, and Baltimore, as well as many smaller municipalities in Pennsylvania, have adopted historic districting successfully as parts of their planning, economic development, and historic preservation programs. Studies demonstrate that local historic districts contribute to the stabilization of property values and the fostering of community pride. By taking care of your property, you play a role in preserving Philadelphia's

history. Further, the Philadelphia Historical Commission provides expert advice on maintaining historic properties at no charge.

How does a historic district prevent demolitions?

Demolition permits in historic districts are reviewed by the Historical Commission. There are some circumstances in which demolitions are allowed, including those benefiting the public interest or in instances of financial hardship where it has been demonstrated that a sale of the property would be impracticable or cannot yield a reasonable rate of return.

Impact on Property Owners

If my property is designated a historic district, as a property owner, what is my responsibility?

The Philadelphia Historical Commission regulates designated properties. The property owner will need the commission's approval if:

- Alterations to the property requires a building permit, or
- Alterations are to be made to the exterior of the building or site features

These reviews focus on changes to facades and other exterior features. Protecting public views of historic properties is the Philadelphia Historical Commission's primary goal. The Historical Commission's job is to manage change, not prevent it. When you're considering alterations, contact the commission staff for advice. They can help with preservation techniques and building materials.

Does designation affect my property taxes or insurance?

No. Inclusion on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places is not a factor in property tax assessments and will therefore not result in higher taxes.

Can the Historical Commission require me to do something I cannot afford?

No. There is a hardship clause in the ordinance so that the commission cannot make you do work that would cause economic hardship. The Philadelphia Historical Commission staff are committed to working with property owners to meet mutual objectives of cost and appearance. Further, the commission's advisory Committee on Financial Hardship evaluates claims of hardship at public meetings; however, these claims typically have to do with proposed demolition of historic buildings.

Would becoming a historic district require me to restore all of the historical details on my property?

What if repairs have already been done to my home in a non-historic way (e.g.vinyl windows)?

Being listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places does not obligate a property owner to replace elements or materials that are already in place at the time of listing. The Historical Commission cannot enforce an owner to perform work on a property, except in cases of extreme neglect.

Spruce Hill Nomination

What would a nomination for Spruce Hill look like?

Recent nominations of other properties and districts can be viewed at the Historical Commission's website. The University City Historical Society also links to recent nominations within West Philadelphia on their website, www.uchs.net, including the most recent historic district in our area: Powelton Village Historic District, accepted onto the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places in 2022 and inclusive of 935 properties.

continued on page 7

ATTENTION: Landlords

**“Are You Sick and Tired of Long Vacancies?
Do You Have Tenants who Never Pay on Time
and Damage Your Investment Property?”**

Del Val Realty & Property Management is Philadelphia's leading FULL service residential property management company. Our philosophy is to manage and lease your property professionally, economically and efficiently. Our managed properties experience extremely low vacancy rates, often moving new tenants in just days after the old tenants have moved out.

Call 610-240-9885

First Month FREE if You Mention This Ad

www.DelValProperty.com

*** 90 Day Better Than Money Back Guarantee ***

PDS FIRE & SECURITY

- ✓ Fire Alarms • Certifications • Upgrades
- ✓ Emergency Light & Exit Signs • Monitoring
- ✓ Camera Systems • Door Entry & Intercoms

**10%
Stimulus
Discount**

Stuart Rosenberg, CET, ME
President

5319 Oxford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19124

www.pdsfiresecurity.com

CALL TODAY: 215.744.3500

Historic Preservation Committee continued from page 7

What is the methodology for creating and submitting a historic district nomination?

There are nearly 2,000 properties within Spruce Hill.

The strategy for the Spruce Hill Historic District is to divide the area into quadrants and submit one nomination for each quadrant as resources and community support merit, ideally in quick succession. The southeast quadrant will be the first to be submitted. Dividing the district into four areas accomplishes two goals: 1) it respects the Spruce Hill Community Association's resource allocation and 2) it takes into account the limited capacity that the Philadelphia Historical Commission is currently operating under. The same Statement of Significance will be submitted for each quadrant but each quadrant will have a different set of photographic and descriptive inventories for each property within each quadrant. Once all quadrants are submitted (at the pace the SHCA decides) then the full Spruce Hill Historic District will be designated historic.

How does historic designation affect the amount of affordable housing in a given neighborhood?

Historic designation in no way impacts the amount of affordable housing in a given neighborhood. Historic designation does not make it any more difficult to create affordable housing. In fact, listing on the National Register may open the door for tax credits which make affordable housing more financially viable.

Where can I learn more?

University City Historical Society: The University City Historical Society advocates for the preservation of the history, architecture and cultural heritage of West Philadelphia. This site provides numerous resources on existing historic districts within West Philadelphia, which were led or supported by the University City Historical Society.

Philadelphia Historical Commission Rules

& Regulations: This document contains all of the rules, regulations and processes that are followed and enforced by the Commission.

Philadelphia Historical Commission Ordinance: This document is the underlying piece of legislation created by City Council to form and govern the Commission.

Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia: The Preservation Alliance is an independent, nonprofit advocacy organization for historic preservation, unaffiliated with the City of Philadelphia. It is a go-to resource for the preservation community and owners of historic buildings. Their Marketplace Directory has a wealth of contractors and resources for preservation, and their Philadelphia Historic Preservation Task Force: Organized by the Mayor's Office and Philadelphia Historical Commission, the Task Force is a new initiative of the City to improve its approach to preservation policy and advocate for greater, preservation-related owner/developer benefits. Its website has a wealth of resources for owners of historic buildings, notably its Neighborhood Preservation Toolkit; Resources for Homeowners, and its Historic Designation FAQs.

Philadelphia Historical Commission: The Commission is the City-created agency responsible for overseeing historically designated properties and districts. Its website publishes the schedule of Commission Meetings & Agendas. It has a number of resources, such as: Information for Property Owners.



©2013 Spruce Hill Community Association
Valid CSS | XHTML



Save Your Place at the Next Virtual "Ask The Attorney" July 6th!

Hundreds of dollars in rental & real estate legal advice FREE to HAPCO Philadelphia members!

Register For "Ask The Attorney!"

American Vinyl Products, INC

SAME DAY INSULATED GLASS REPAIRS

24 sizes in stock

1426 N FRONT ST. PHILA P.A 19124
215-425-8970
Americanyvinyl1426@gmail.com

STOCK SIZES:	
24 1/4 X 37 1/2	31 1/4 X 45 1/2
24 1/4 X 45 1/2	31 1/4 X 53 1/2
24 1/4 X 53 1/2	31 1/4 X 57 1/2
24 1/4 X 57 1/2	31 1/4 X 61 1/2
24 1/4 X 61 1/2	31 1/4 X 65 1/2
24 1/4 X 65 1/2	31 1/4 X 69 1/2
24 1/4 X 69 1/2	
28 1/4 X 45 1/2	34 1/4 X 53 1/2
28 1/4 X 53 1/2	34 1/4 X 57 1/2
28 1/4 X 57 1/2	34 1/4 X 61 1/2
28 1/4 X 61 1/2	34 1/4 X 65 1/2
28 1/4 X 65 1/2	34 1/4 X 69 1/2
28 1/4 X 69 1/2	
	44 1/4 X 61 1/2
	44 1/4 X 65 1/2



HAPCO PHILADELPHIA NEWSLETTER ADVERTISING POLICY

The Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter is a medium for transmitting information to and exchanging ideas among rental housing providers who are members.

Advertising relevant to investment in and operation of properties is accepted. The advertisements help defray the cost of producing and distributing the publication. They are also a valuable resource for members, who own and manage more than 30,000 small and mid-size rental buildings in Philadelphia, by helping them identify vendors who offer goods and services relevant to their business interests.

Hapco Philadelphia reserves the right to decline advertising inconsistent with rental property acquisition, sale, maintenance, and management.

Hapco Philadelphia reserves the right to decline advertising, including cancelling of advertising contracts, with refund of any prepayments, based on conclusions reached in investigating complaints by members of unsatisfactory vendor performance or reliability.

Members having complaints about the performance or reliability of advertisers will be requested to describe their grievances in writing, on forms provided by Hapco Philadelphia. The relevant vendor will be advised of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. The complaint and response will be reviewed by the Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter Editorial Committee and forwarded with a recommendation to the Hapco Philadelphia Board of Directors for a decision. This decision will be considered final; the complaining member and the vendor will be so notified.

An advertisement in the Newsletter does not imply endorsement by Hapco Philadelphia. Members are urged to request and consult references as they consider prudent.

For advertising information contact:
Claudia Christian
Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter
C/O University City Review
406 S 43rd Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Tel: 215.222.2846, Fax: 215.222.2378
cchristian@pressreview.net

Hapco Philadelphia's Exclusive Online Forum Overhaul Being Planned!

Members' opinions and suggestions matter! Forum platform to be better & more user-friendly

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

No trade organization is perfect; however, we believe the good ones are continually looking for member input to evaluate the services they offer. To that end, we sent you a brief survey in June asking for your thoughts on how HP members communicate with one another. Specifically, we wanted your input on the Hapco Forum: whether you use it, how you like it, and most importantly, whether it serves your needs for idea-sharing and problem-solving. The Forum — as those who use it know — uses the Google Groups email platform that gives members the opportunity to ask questions of other members. In June alone, members discussed such issues including laminate countertops, stained glass windows, lead abatement, landscaping, utility notifications, fire extinguishers, apartment rentals, lease breakers, and much more.

First, thank you to all who spent a few minutes answering our eight questions; unfortunately, only one out of every 12 members responded. We encourage you to respond to our future surveys. It is the best way we're able to gauge member likes and dislikes.

As the saying goes, help us to help you! We're pleased to see that more than seven in ten are using the Hapco Philadelphia website. The same number read the monthly digital Hapco Newsletter, about 40% read our bi-weekly news email blasts, and 20% have already checked out the brand new Hapco Handbook (which has just been updated!) Additionally, about 40% of those responding say they'd be in favor of creating a Hapco Philadelphia litigation fund.

But back to the Hapco Forum: 85% of respondents said that member-to-member communication is either extremely or very important (which explains why you responded to our survey in the first place — thanks again!)

About 50% of you said you use the Forum, and when asked what you liked about it, here are some of the comments:

- “the current setup is fine”
- “it works very well”
- “reading other members problems is an extremely valuable learning experience”
- “very important”
- “pick up ideas from listening”
- “able to increase my expertise and knowledge”

But when asked what you *didn't* like about the Hapco Forum, we heard:

- “Responses to a topic may arrive weeks (later). It's a very disjointed process.”
- “difficult to navigate”
- “What is annoying is that a long thought-out response could be rejected if we forget to put a signature”
- “hard to follow the conversations”
- “people change topics without making a new post”

For regular Forum users, don't worry; it's not going anywhere for now. But we're always looking for better ways for members to communicate, which got us thinking about social media. (By the way, if you're not following us on Facebook, you should, @HapcoPhiladelphia; we post great info about a dozen times a month!) Our survey told us that more than eight in ten of you do NOT use Facebook to engage with fellow rental property owners and managers. However, if Hapco Philadelphia created a *closed members-only Facebook group* as a way to communicate privately among members, nearly 70% said they'd use it. Such a group might allow for improved interaction and real-time response. Stay tuned.

Our goal, as always, is to provide you with the information and connections you need to make your job as a rental property owner or manager easier. Learning what you like and what we can improve upon is critical to our mission and your success.

paid tenant bills from at-risk tenants,” Walker worries. “I thought I was doing a good thing and I got burned.”

When HP Newsletter profiled Walker’s case in 2022, she thought she was finally getting to the end of a long-running battle with PECO.

The utility told her it was going to charge off the tenants’ unpaid balances and Walker would get credit for the 96 documented payments she had made to PECO totaling more than \$5,600, along with a check she says she sent them for \$3,044.36.

“Suddenly, I started getting harassing calls and mail from a collection agency hired by PECO to recoup that charged-off balance. They were coming after me again, and this time at my personal residence. I couldn’t believe it.”

Walker says when those at-risk renters from the Philadelphia Housing Authority and another city re-housing service for the homeless couldn’t pay their PECO bills, she paid the balance as a good faith gesture, expecting to be reimbursed.

“I didn’t want to lose service to my 9-unit building in West Oak Lane, so I paid,” remembers Walker.

Not long after, she says PECO claimed it couldn’t find where those many payments went, despite itemized receipts Walker had kept.

She filed a complaint with Pennsylvania’s Public Utility Commission and got a ruling in her favor for \$4,000 for some of what was owed by her tenants.

Walker says the balance PECO is erroneously claiming is approaching \$10,000 and she can’t afford to pay off anymore of her at-risk tenants’ bills. She says PECO also tried shutting off utility service at her own home.

“This whole ordeal is jeopardizing my ability to keep my rental property,” complains Walker.

Walker says she called PECO about the harassment by the collection company and was told they still couldn’t tell where her nearly \$8,700 in payments had been applied. And the utility told her they don’t control who the collection company goes after. As a result, Walker says PECO has now placed a lien on her rental property for her renters’ unpaid bills.

Walker feels she’s the one being penalized for at-risk tenants who were poorly screened by the housing agencies and were somehow allowed to get utility service in their names without showing proof of a lease.

She’s also asking other rental property owners who are facing the same problem of unpaid utility bills from at-risk tenants referred by housing agencies to get in touch with her at wandaleolady@aol.com

“I want to take this issue to City Council and let them know it’s going to force more Mom and Pop rental owners out of the Philadelphia affordable rental housing market,” warns Walker. “It’s like the City is trying to get us to sell to developers.”

“It’s predatory. It’s illegal. It’s confusing. And it’s harassment.”

Utility Advice from Hapco Philadelphia’s General Counsel

Making sure your tenants have the utilities in their name can be a daunting task for both rental owner and tenant.

HP general counsel Paul Cohen has some quick tips to help.

For gas service in Philadelphia, Cohen advises rental property owners to enroll in the **PGW Landlord Cooperation Program** so tenants are responsible for gas service.

If your tenant is low-income or at-risk, Cohen recommends helping them apply for the **City of Philadelphia’s Tiered Assistance Program (TAP)** to lower their water bills.

And rental owners should direct their tenants to **PECO’s Bill Assistance Programs**.

Cohen urges rental owners to help tenants fill out any paperwork that’s required to ensure it gets done and renters get the help they need.

And whether or not a rental owner is participating in an at-risk tenant program, Cohen recommends rental owners should require tenants to put the utilities in their name before they move in.

Advertising Rates and Information about the Hapco Monthly Newsletter

Claudia Christian | 215.287.5345 | cchristian@pressreview.net
The deadline for each issue is the last day of each month.

Election officials wary of open primary logistics



A bicyclist passes a Count Our Votes sign near the Allegheny County Election Division Warehouse on Pittsburgh's Northside where votes continue to be counted, Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2020.
Gene J. Puskar / AP photo

By Anthony Hennen | The Center Square

Pennsylvania remains one of the few states without open primary voting, but some lawmakers say the potential change isn't as straightforward as it seems.

Some legislators want to reform the status quo, but others worry that the complexity of the state's electoral code is too convoluted for the switch to be a wise choice.

On Thursday, the House State Government Subcommittee on Campaign Finance and Elections met to discuss two proposals to create open primaries: **House Bill 979** from Rep. Jared Solomon, D-Philadelphia, and **HB 976** from Rep. Marla Brown, D-New Castle.

"Estimates are that by 2030, the grouping of independent, unaffiliated voters, third-party voters will be between 16%-18% of all elected voters in the state of Pennsylvania," Solomon said. "They pay for the primary system. Their hard-earned tax dollars go towards ensuring that primaries function in

Pennsylvania. Yet they have no voice."

Both bills would let unaffiliated voters cast ballots in a Democratic or Republican primary of their choosing.

"In many communities, the primary election is the only real competitive stage," Brown said.

Over recent decades, states have mostly moved in the direction of more-open primaries, Ben Williams of the National Conference of State Legislatures told the committee.

Pennsylvania is one of ten states with a closed primary system, while open primary states tend to be in the South and Upper Midwest.

Election officials, however, worry about the burden of more work.

"Counties will have to be prepared for every unaffiliated registrant to vote in one party primary or another," Mercer County Director of Elections Thad Hall said. "In Mercer County, I would have to order 19,000 additional ballots for every primary election ... Adding 19,000

ballots to ballot bags has an array of downstream effects and it affects my ballot security, my ballot accounting, and my ballot storage."

Polling places would become "more chaotic and contentious," Hall argued.

For Montgomery County, Director of Voter Services Dori Sawyer noted such a change would mean another 191,000 ballots.

"Adding two more ballot types would increase either the amount of time or the number of qualified staff members needed to ensure that there are no mistakes," Sawyer said.

Ballot proofs in Montgomery County would rise from 852 to 1,704, she noted.

Despite the potential difficulty, advocates argued that the task isn't insurmountable.

"Forty-one states do this," Jeremy Gruber, senior vice president for Open Primaries, said. "I spend a lot of time reading through electoral codes; unfortunately, Pennsylvania's not the only state with a(n) antiquated and challenging electoral code. There are plenty of other states that have done so and they managed their way through it."

Before an expansion would begin, some legislators want to address existing problems in the code first.

"We have a lot of work to do before we try to add one more layer onto it," Rep. Dawn Keefer, R-Dillsburg, said.



Anthony Hennen

Version 2.0 of the Hapco Handbook — more than 180 pages of everything a Philadelphia rental property owner or manager needs to know — is now available!

You'll find new chapters on the Landlord Gateway Program, Reasonable Accommodation Request, Home Protection Programs, and new Forgivable Loans. You'll also find updated information on the Hapco Leases and Addendum Package, Certification of Rental Suitability, Lead Paint Certification, and an updated City Council Directory. We've also made a variety of tweaks throughout the Handbook and ensured the hundreds of clickable links have been updated. Best of all, the Hapco Handbook is FREE for members, available to view in a flip-page format. Go to hapcophiladelphia.com and click "HAPCO HANDBOOK" at the top of the page. You will then be prompted to sign in.

VERSION 2, Revised June, 2023

What's New:

- New chapters on the Landlord Gateway Program, Reasonable Accommodation Request, Home Protection Programs, Forgivable Loans
- Updated information on the Hapco Leases & Addendums Package
- Certification of Rental Suitability update
- Lead Paint Certification update
- City Council Directory update
- other minor revisions & link updates

See something missing or incorrect? Let us know at hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com

Welcome



A complete guide for the Philadelphia Investment Property Owner & Manager

An exclusive benefit to members of Hapco Philadelphia

Welcome!

On behalf of the Officers, [Board of Directors](#) and Trustees of Hapco Philadelphia, thank you for being a member of one of the oldest and largest rental property owners' organizations in the United States! Whether you are a new rental property owner looking for general advice or a veteran owner seeking specific information, you've come to the right place.



Hapco Philadelphia is a 501(C)(4) Not-For-Profit organization, comprised of entrepreneurs, teachers, police officers, lawyers, architects, and other industry professionals, representing various levels of experience: from startup investors to multi-generational firms. Our board is all-volunteer.

This is a living, breathing document that will be regularly updated and enhanced to ensure you have the most complete and comprehensive information at your fingertips. How you utilize the Hapco Philadelphia Handbook is up to you. Sure, we'll be mightily impressed if you read this document from cover to cover; in fact, we encourage you to take our ["pop-quiz"](#) when you're done! But we also won't be offended if you're here to simply search for information on a specific topic or regulation, document or tip. It's all here. And if it's not, [let us know](#). (We will regularly add new information when needed!)

HAPCO Handbook

1

[Table of Contents](#)



Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

Help us spread the word, **Hapco Philadelphia** is the oldest Philadelphia area association advocating for landlords. We are looking to expand our membership, and we hope that you will tell your other landlord friends how helpful **Hapco Philadelphia** has been for you and how important it is for them to join. **Hapco Philadelphia** is a first source for information about our industry. Check out our website at www.hapcophiladelphia.com

Philadelphia Landlords: With the new Lead Safe laws, get your lead inspections done now. Lead safe Certificates must be given to new tenants.

"The goal is to keep kids safe & have the lowest cost affordable for landlords."

EPA-HUD Certified

TO HAVE YOUR RENTAL PROPERTY INSPECTED,
PLEASE CALL US AT 215-200-7090



F&L LEAD DUST INSPECTORS Est. 2013



Over the Transom

Edited by Claudia Christian

Some recent traffic on Hapco's Online Forum:

Names have been withheld to protect the innocent. Responses reflect the views of the Forum respondents and not necessarily those of Hapco Philadelphia.

COUNTERTOP REFINISHING

Post: Has anyone ever done a countertop refinishing over an old counter? This is where you put an acrylic coating over an existing counter.

Response: Yes, it worked pretty well. I don't think it lasts long but it's held up for a year.

Response: I'm in a situation where I'm either going to replace a previously painted-over Formica countertop with granite or perhaps do what you're explaining here. My gut tells me to spend the money on the granite as I'm selling the place.

Response: I did epoxy over 3 of my Formica countertops using a product called Famowood clear coat epoxy over the past few years and still haven't had to replace it yet. I try to make a marble look and it doesn't disappoint. One has even stood up to two different tenants. Its longevity depends on the quality of base paint & finish paint used. Also, the layers of epoxy you install will make a difference. It's super cheap and easy to install yourself.

Response: Do Granite. Paint strictly for rentals was cheap at Home Depot have to buy foam rubber roller also.

Response: We've done countertop refinishing and it turned out well. There was some slight wear after a few years, but my wife ordered another kit off of Amazon and touched it up.

OPINION REGARDING TENANTS WITH LICENSE TO BARE FIREARMS

Post: As a curiosity, does anyone have any experience, or advice with regards to renting to tenants who are licensed to carry firearms, as self-defense, and bringing arms to the premises? Also, any examples of policies with regards to this would be helpful.

Response: About 1 of every 14 people in the United States has a concealed weapons permit. It's about the best character reference you'll find since they've gone through extensive checks and have clean criminal records. Studies show their odds of offending with a firearm are absolutely microscopic, far less than any other group including law enforcement members. There are also about 400 million firearms in the United States so there's a good chance you already have guns in your properties, licensed or unlicensed. Some here may claim there are liability issues with knowingly renting to gun owners. I don't know about that, but personally I'd regard a concealed carry licensee as a better risk than 90% of the tenants I deal with in the low to moderate income range.

Response: Thank you for this information and thoughtful response.

Response: Hey guys, I'm serious about the beer and the conversation. Nothing better to open the mind than a well thought out dis-

cussion of a topic on which reasonable people can disagree. Love those debates. And I absolutely always learn something.

Pick a place to share some experiences and perspectives – so long as it's not online.

RENTAL SUITABILITY LICENSE

Post: I just printed one and it says it is only good for 3 months. I don't understand. Please explain.

Response: It was explained to me that it means a "three month window" that you have to provide it to a tenant. Meaning that if you printed it today and your tenant was moving in or renewing **after** August 23, 2023, it would not be valid. I understand that there is a lot of controversy about the wording on the certificate. If anyone has additional or different information, please let me know.

HOUSECLEANER RECOMMENDATION FOR GRADUATE HOSPITAL AREA

Post: Looking for someone to come in between tenants for a townhouse.

Response: I strongly recommend George Callicut, georgesmovingcleaningcompany@gmail.com.

Response: I highly recommend Ashley Anderson 267-760-4413. Her business name is Monty & Co Cleaning LLC. And she is Insured! She's worked for me for over a year with Vacant Clean-outs; and more regularly with my Rooming Business. Her email is: smart-choice259@gmail.com

FINANCIAL PLANNER

Post: Does anyone know about any professional financial planners?

Response: Danny Weiss daniel.weiss@WFinancialAdvisors.com is a fantastic finan-

continued on page 13

Over the Transom continued from page 12

cial manager. Super smart, resourceful, and really listens (and adapts his advice) to what you need. He will tell you honestly if he thinks your money is better off invested in real estate rather than in more traditional products like stocks/bonds/mutual funds/annuities.

✍️ Response: Bruce Sham, Bala Cynwyd, Fabulous VP Mass Mutual. I use him and referred several now happy people. 215-295-9597

✍️ Response: I have two very good ones: Tim Pippet: 267-304-9277, and Grant Holden: 215-718-8225

MORTISE LOCK

✍️ Post: I have an entry door inside an enclosed porch that has an old mortise lock on it. I would like to make it functional. I tried to dismantle, but I'm having a little trouble. Can anyone recommend someone to repair this old mortise or replace it. I would easily take the door off and bring it to a shop. Any recommendations would be appreciated.

✍️ Response: I've used Van's Lock shop in Glenside for this in the past.

✍️ Response: I just had the locksmith from Monarch Hardware come to my location and look at the mortise in the same location, entry door inside closed porch. It had non-working doorknobs and was taped open. He was able to take the tumbler in and make a key for it, then bring out the correct size spindle, I found doorknobs from my collection and he reinstalled everything. I think the locksmith's name is Dwayne. Ah older gentleman who has been there forever. 4502 Walnut Street 215-387-4199.

✍️ Response: Thanks for the recommendation, I called Monarch at 45th and Walnut. He told me how to pop the lock out. I brought it over to him and he fixed it for me. Good work.

WATER EMERGENCY

✍️ Post: We are evicting a tenant in Phila-

delphia. I was in court this past Thursday and the tenant signed an agreement to leave on July 16th (I don't expect her to leave). I filed the writ of possession and got that ball rolling so that I can eventually do a lockout. We have been using the HAPCO Eviction service and Ken Baritz for this process. My problem now is that I received a water bill for \$757.23, about 10 times the normal water bill. It appears that the tenant has turned the water on and has left it on. Is there anything I can do about this? What are my options?

Any suggestions would be appreciated.

✍️ Response: Either get someone with a key & shut it off or call the water company and tell them that they need to cut off because you have a major leak in the property. Frankly, I think I'd just cut it off because "there was a major leak and you need it off to fix" unless you can get the water Dept. to shut off immediately!

✍️ Response: If that doesn't work, every standard lease includes a clause that allows landlord access to the property without the usual 24 hrs notice in cases of emergency. A credible report of a leak, like a sudden sky high bill, would be just such an emergency.

You suspect running water, but really, it could be a burst pipe or some other thing, that's why you need access to find out.

I'd send a text and call and then just show up, knock loudly, and use my key to enter. Take someone with you, ideally a plumber for additional credibility should you end up in front of a judge and videotape the whole encounter for the same reason.

✍️ Response: Several years ago, I had a tenant I was in the process of evicting, and before he left, he cut the water line to his hot water heater, shoved a garden hose over the end, and after flooding the unit, put the hose out the window. This was in January and ice formed over the entire sidewalk. The bill was over one thousand dollars. I called the Water Department and explained what had happened, and although it was some time, I got full credit.

✍️ Response: That's the best idea if she can get access.

✍️ Response: This has happened to me in the past as well.


You don't realize that the toilet has been run-


continued on page 14





ning until the bill arrives which could be over a month's rent.

I wonder how difficult it would be to install a sensor on these new meters that would notify the account holder as soon as the usage reaches a certain point?


 **Response:** The new water meters from PWD have the ability to help you track that and they send an email if the water is running for 3 days straight.


 **Response:** This service already exists. Check your settings on your account page on the PWD website.

 **Response:** How do they find a running toilet in a multi-unit building? Is it because the water never stops running? Not sure how this would work with a multi-unit building? Isn't the water always being used by someone for something?


 **Response:** The way you find a running toilet in a multi-unit building is by observing the cold water (darker) pipes in the basement. When water runs constantly, the pipe sweats.

The sweating pipe will tell you what tower has the running toilet. After that, check the toilets in that tower, until you find the leaking one.

 **Response:** I just read an interesting tip about testing for leaking toilets: Pour a Kool-Aid packet into the tank and wait about an hour or two to see if the water in the bowl has changed color. I'm gonna try it in a property with five bathrooms to see if I can identify the culprit.


 **Response:** Have a plumber install a flow restriction device.


SECURITY


 **Post:** I have a tenant who broke the lease and snuck a dog into the house. In the lease it states if she gets a dog I need to know and she is to pay additional money each month. She never told me; My contractor told me.


Can I keep her security? There are minor re-

pairs. Her security is 1/2 month's rent. There originally was another roommate.

 **Response:** IF you can prove when the dog first appeared, AND if you clearly communicated to her how much extra the rent would be each month with a dog in the home, AND if she signed paperwork consenting to this up-charge, you MIGHT be able to deduct that exact amount from her security deposit. I do not think you can just take someone's security deposit without provable damages for their breach. Plus, she may fight you on it. This is not legal advice btw.


 **Response:** That is what security deposits are for. Yes, I would keep it. You answered your own question, you put it in her lease. She broke the lease.

 **Response:** Why does she have to prove when it first appeared? As long as it's there, she broke the lease.


 **Response:** Yes, she signed the paperwork with the amount.


DO I NEED A NEW RENTAL CERT AND NEW CITY BROCHURES TO RENEW EXTEND A RESIDENTIAL LEASE?


 **Post:** Or will just the lease extension do? Do I need to provide new bedbug docs?

 **Response:** According to our attorney, you should be getting a new rental suitability certificate every year for every unit if you have annual leases. Landlord-tenant court is not currently enforcing this but they could start at any time.

I do not believe you need to provide the bedbug pamphlet again.


 **Response:** I believe if you go by the "letter of the law" it states for any new or lease extensions, the landlord must provide a new lead cert, bed bug addendum and certificate of suitability. Best to err on the side of caution in my opinion.


 **Response:** Lead certifications are good for 4 years. HAPCO fought to get those 4 years as opposed to what Gym wanted, which was yearly inspections. You have to give the new tenants the lead certificate along with the analytical report. Everything else written is correct.

 **Response:** Re the lead safe certificates, I agree with you that as long as the certificate is valid, you do not need to provide it at renewal time. The regulation itself does not appear to require landlords to provide tenants with the lab report. I think tenants would actually have a hard time understanding what the lab results mean and in cases where a property fails the first time, it might cause some concerns to tenants.

For the other two items, I think HAPCO should be consistent with their information and if that is the case *correct your handbook*. See attached FAQ for the Certificate of Rental Suitability. Also, for the bed bug brochure *I believe the handbook lists new leases. Therefore, the handbook should also be revised to include renewals or get a clarification from the city as their brochure only lists new leases as well.*

STAINED GLASS

 **Post:** Hey, have any had experience and a recommendation for stain glass windows? Please supply phone number thank you very much.

 **Response:** Greg Stefan is the best. I have had him repair leaded glass in both cabinet doors and front doors. You can transport items to his studio, or he will come to your location to remove large heavy items. He can replace broken panes and installs bars to reinforce the glass panel and avoid future breakage. He removes layers of smoke and grime from the glass. The repaired windows are so clean and transparent, they are stunning. Send Greg photos and measurements for estimates. Greg Stefan Studios. 267-625-3084.



LOCAL REAL ESTATE MEETING HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE

Your first meeting is **FREE!**

Another one of the many reasons you should attend. Taking action is up to you. RSVP at DIGONLINE.org.

Mention this ad at the door for a **SPECIAL BONUS GIFT.**



Discover the Secret Sources of OFF THE MARKET investment deals RIGHT HERE in and around Philadelphia. We all know that the best deals get made long before they reach the MLS.

It is said that your "network determines your net worth." Maybe by attending next month you'll meet the person who takes your business to the next level?!

Learn WILDLY EFFECTIVE investing strategies from local and national experts for long term wealth building and short term cash infusions



215 712-2525 | INFO@DIGONLINE.ORG WWW.DIGONLINE.ORG
Meetings are the last Thursday of the month at North Hills Country Club, 99 Station Avenue, Glenside, PA 19038



Reasons to JOIN Hapco Philadelphia

— hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com —

Hapco Philadelphia is the pre-eminent rental real estate industry trade group in the Philadelphia region.

Hapco Philadelphia (HP) was established in 1954 to represent the collective interests and municipal concerns of owners of rental properties in the City of Philadelphia. Now with nearly 2,000 members, its owners/managers control over 20,000 low- and moderate- and market-rate rental units, including single-family and multi-family properties throughout the Philadelphia.

The Hapco Philadelphia board is an all-volunteer 401C-4, Not-For-Profit organization, comprised of entrepreneurs, teachers, police, lawyers, architects, and who helm firms ranging from start-ups to mom-and-pops, and old-line multi-generational firms.

HP advocates for an improved business environment, fair and reasonable laws, rules and regulations that protect the health and safety of tenants and at the same time enable landlords to operate in a free, fair, and open marketplace.

FEATURES & BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- NEW Fully Integrated Website
 - Streamlined forms for landlord & tenant legal actions
 - Searchable archive
 - Continuous updates of legislative matters
 - Updated news & information feeds
 - Announcements & calendar events
 - PA state level legislative activity & PROA
 - Online store (coming soon!)
 - Special "ask our lawyer" section
- Exclusive members-only online Forum
- Facebook, LinkedIn & YouTube channel
- Online monthly newsletter, including news, trends, & editorials
- Educational series, lectures & roundtables
- Affordable, Tax deductible membership dues
- General Membership Seminars featuring guest speakers from the local business community, building, industry, and elected officials
- HP-PAC to support our various interests and causes on behalf of its members
- Exclusive members-only discount at major retailers like Home Depot and Sherwin-Williams
- Affordable, tax-deductible membership dues
- Get involved! Exciting opportunities to make a difference by joining Hapco Philadelphia's wide array of committees.
- Meet-and-Greets!

Membership Fee Increase (Effective June 1st, 2023):

New Member Fee: \$206 / Renewal Fee: \$165



2101 Chestnut Street #1615
Philadelphia, PA 19103

PRST STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 280
Lancaster, PA
17604

Nobody **Wants** to Evict a Tenant

HapcoPhiladelphia and its members appreciate and value their tenants and the symbiotic relationship they share. Unfortunately, sometimes that relationship breaks down, with the necessity of court intervention in order to reclaim your property. Eviction is likely a last resort.

Everyone knows that going to court is time-consuming and expensive; HapcoPhiladelphia membership benefits include access to our one-stop solution to Philadelphia Municipal Court. Exclusive members-only fee structure provides top legal professionals who will guide and advise you on how the process works, from paperwork origination, mediation, settlement negotiation and, if

necessary, actual eviction and lock-change, so you are comfortable knowing your rights as a property owner are known and respected.

Professional Services Fee Schedule

Pre-Step (mediation)\$285

Step-By-Step Method

- Municipal Court Hearing.....\$285
- Writ of Possession.....\$185
- Alias Writ (actual eviction).....\$120
- Reschedule Eviction For Landlord/Tenant Officer \$50
- Petition Hearing\$150 if tenant should file a petition

To join HapcoPhiladelphia and for more information, or to register visit at HapcoPhiladelphia.com

