

HAPCO NEWSLETTER

Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

Message from the President:

HP Is "On The Air" With New Podcast

"Landlord Tenant World"
Debuts Late January

Happy New Year!
We're kicking off
2024 with some
exciting news.
Hapco Philadelphia
will be living on the
air through "Face-
book Live" with the
rollout of our own
podcast.



Greg Wertman

see "President's Message" on page 7

How an Interwoven Research Agenda Will Help Us Enumerate Historically Undercounted People in the 2030 Census

read more on page 6

Is Philly's New Mayor & New Council Landlord Friendly?

"Hapco Philadelphia is the eternal optimist
given the hits rental owners have taken in
recent years from City Council."

read more on page 4

Mayor says Philadelphia will 'no longer be a Tale of Two Cities'

By Anthony Hennen
The Center Square

Philadelphia's 100th mayor, Che-
relle Parker, swore her oath of
office Tuesday as the first black
woman to lead the city and promptly an-
nounced a 100-day action plan.

In doing so, she set her sights high.

"We will make Philadelphia the safest, clean-
est, and greenest big city in the nation with
economic opportunity for everyone," Parker
said.

During her **mayoral campaign**, Parker em-
phasized the need to get more police offi-
cers on the streets. Voters responded to that
rhetoric, but were **ambivalent about the**

see "Tale of Two Cities" on page 11

LANDLORD SPOTLIGHT

Private Mediation: An Alternative to the City's Eviction Diversion Program?

A new year may signify a fresh
start, but if you're having ongo-
ing issues with a tenant, a cal-
endar change probably won't resolve
them. Hapco Philadelphia recently
sat down with a certified mediator
who specializes in landlord-tenant
mediation to help Philadelphia rental
property owners better understand
how private mediation works. Marie
Kramer, of ASAP Mediation Services
in Philadelphia, took our questions:

see "Mediation" on page 5



Marie Kramer, submitted by ASAP Mediation Services.

Happy New Year!

Philadelphia mayor takes on sky-high rents

By Anthony Hennen | The Center Square

Philadelphia's new mayor, Chelle Parker, knows the city needs more affordable housing and says fixing the problem is one of her top priorities.

As part of her 100-day action plan announced Tuesday, the mayor pledged to **enable more housing** to get built and ordered a plan for "affordable luxury" for low- and middle-income families.

The problem is a serious one for the city and Pennsylvania broadly. Experts argue that the state has a shortage of almost **100,000 housing** units.

Homebuilders **struggle with a labor shortage** and long delays created by bureaucratic delays. Both **Republicans** and **Democrats** held hearings last year to discuss how to address the issue statewide.

"Housing is essential for economic opportunity and wealth-building," Parker said in her **action plan**. "Philadelphia historically was a majority homeowner city."

The key to keeping home prices and rent in check may be to build more than what the



Chris Becker | Unsplash

city has allowed in previous years.

"Apartment rents growth has, in fact, slowed in geographies that built a greater number of units," Chris Bruen of the National Multi-family Housing Council wrote in a December **research note**.

Places like Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; Sarasota, Florida; and Boise, Idaho all saw rents fall when the number of apartments rose significantly. When supply expands to meet the demand of current and new residents, rents tend to stabilize or fall.

What's happened nationally can be seen

in Philadelphia, where rents for new apartments in the greater Center City area **have stabilized** as more get built.

That stabilization, though, could be temporary. Rising interest rates that drive up the price of new construction projects and what Bruen called "market softness" could mean that fewer get built.

"Unless we find ways to remove more chronic barriers to supply, this balloon of apartment deliveries and reduction in costs is likely to be short lived, which will put upward pressure on rents and hurt housing affordability over the longer term," Bruen wrote.

"In addition to leveraging programs that support housing production and preservation, we will address longstanding barriers that add cost and delay," Parker wrote in her plan.

Those barriers will be tough to overcome, important though they may be.

It takes, on average, months longer to build new housing in Pennsylvania than in other parts of the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an apartment building with two to four units needs **17 months** to get built in the Northeast, compared to 11 months in the South.

Without a faster or cheaper process, Philadelphia renters could wait years until rent becomes less of a burden.

Four Generations: Elements of the Modern Renter

Gen Z
15% PERCENTAGE OF THE RENTAL MARKET
Higher Education: Too young to study
2017 AVERAGE CREDIT SCORE: 634*
 • Prefer partly or fully furnished rentals
 • Interested in apartment buildings with 10 to 49 units
 *Young generations often have a low credit score as the result of "thin" credit files, or few credit accounts

Millennials
50% PERCENTAGE OF THE RENTAL MARKET
Higher Education: 39% have a bachelor's degree or higher
2017 AVERAGE CREDIT SCORE: 638
 • Moving into home ownership. 2017 mortgage **debt rose by 6.8%**
 • Interested in apartment buildings with under 10 units

Gen X
19% PERCENTAGE OF THE RENTAL MARKET
Higher Education: 29% have a bachelor's degree or higher
2017 AVERAGE CREDIT SCORE: 658
 • More likely to consider a single-family detached home
 • Interested in apartment buildings with under 10 units

Baby Boomers
12% PERCENTAGE OF THE RENTAL MARKET
Higher Education: 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher
2017 AVERAGE CREDIT SCORE: 700
 • Only 8% would consider renting a townhome
 • 48% value energy-efficient features

Ages 18-23
 Top three most used social media: YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat

Ages 24-38
 Top three most used social media: Facebook, YouTube, Instagram

Ages 39-53
 90% use Facebook once per week

Ages 54-73
 96% use Facebook once per week

Advertising Rates and Information about the Hapco Monthly Newsletter

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 The deadline for each issue is the last day of each month.

HAPCO PHILADELPHIA
 Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

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Philly's New Mayor & Council Landlord-Friendly?

HP's Paul Cohen Looks at The Incoming Class

"Hapco Philadelphia is the eternal optimist given the hits rental owners have taken in recent years from City Council."

Paul Cohen ought to know.

As HP's general counsel and de facto point person at Philadelphia City Hall, Cohen teams up with other Hapco Philadelphia board members to propose laws that help rental owners and head off ones that hurt them.

"There was some predictability on Council with so many long-term councilmembers," notes Cohen. "Now, with so many new faces, it creates new challenges and opportunities for rental owners."

The most notable departure is that of long-time Council President, Darrell Clarke. A fixture as a council member for more than a decade, Clarke became known as a firewall between emerging Council progressives and legislation harmful to rental owners.

"Clark was a great leader of City Council and had amazing knack of bringing people together, getting consensus, and getting

things done," recalls Cohen. "We hope the new Council President, Kenyatta Johnson, can lead in the same way."

Cohen says newcomers, like At-Large council member Rue Landau, appear to be inclusive and open-minded. As the City's first openly LGBTQ member, Cohen hopes to forge a good working relationship.

"She seems to be willing to listen to reason," adds Cohen. "I think she realizes it's not just a tenant-only world out there in affordable rental housing."

As for Philadelphia's incoming Mayor, Chelle Parker, Cohen feels she's very inclusive based on past dealings with her and knows she will do what's best for the city.

"HP will make sure the new Mayor and Council know that preserving affordable rental housing is at the top of that list," says Cohen. "I look forward to working with her."



Paul Cohen, General Counsel



Incoming Mayor Chelle Parker. Photo: Courtesy of Facebook.

Cohen says his rental owner platform he'll be pushing with the new Mayor and Council includes several hot button issues.

"Rent Control Does Not Work" will be HP and Cohen's drum beat for the new arrivals on Council. Study and after study reinforce that rent control, or so-called "rent stabilization," make owning affordable rental properties impossible and drives owners from the market. "Cities that have enacted rent control are now trying to undo it," Cohen says.

"Eviction Diversion Shouldn't Be A Delay Tactic" is what Cohen told the outgoing Council and will emphasize with the newcomers.

"The EDP needs to start immediately after the landlord-tenant complaint is filed. Otherwise, it's just a 30-day stalling tactic in the eviction process," points out Cohen. "And the City should reimburse rental owners for rent not paid during that delay in the EDP process."

"Eliminate Delays in Targeted Financial Assistance" so rental owners can get immediate payment of back rent up to \$3,000 during the Eviction Diversion Program.

"And there should be a direct funding mechanism that pays landlords directly," Cohen says. "It's the landlords that need the money."

Paul Cohen says the bottom line for building new relationships with the new Mayor and Council is the simple ability to listen to what rental owners are facing.

"I look forward to being at the table and working with them," notes Cohen. "I hope they're ready to do the same to save affordable rental housing and rental owners in this City."

LANDLORD SPOTLIGHT

Mediation continued from page 1

Q-What is mediation?

A-Mediation is an alternative way of dispute resolution in which landlords and tenants meet with a neutral party — a mediator — to resolve their issues.

Q-As a property owner, when might I need mediation?

A-When you have any unresolved issues with your tenants: it could be non-payment of rent, security deposits, disputes between roommates, breach of lease agreements, they want to terminate the lease — any of these issues.

Q-How is mediation connected to the City's Eviction Diversion Program?

A-The City of Philadelphia requires all landlords who want to file for eviction to go through the City's Eviction Diversion Program. One of the major components is a mandatory mediation program. However, not all cases will actually go through mediation with the program. (With private mediation) you can try to resolve it privately through a mediator first, and if that doesn't work, then you can go through the City's Eviction Diversion Program.

Q-What are the benefits of mediation versus litigation?

A-Mediation is faster; it's cheaper. It has a lot of benefits: it reduces stress, it preserves the landlord-tenant relationship, and it creates a proven path for resolving conflicts in the future.

Q-Should I have an attorney first?

A-It depends. If you have a situation where the tenant has become aggressive or if anyone's safety is at risk, definitely hire an attorney first. Otherwise, you can use a mediator first to try to resolve it in a friendly manner, because once tenants hear the word "eviction", they can become very adversarial.

Q-How exactly does private mediation work?

A-One of the parties (landlord or tenant) will contact a mediator. The mediator will assess whether mediation is a good fit. The mediator will reach out to the other party asking for an agreement to mediate. The mediator will explain the rules, and everyone agrees to follow them. Each party explains their sides. The mediator will clarify the issues and receive feedback from the parties. The mediator acts as a facilitator, and it goes back and forth until the parties reach a mutually beneficial solution. If an agreement is reached, the mediator will put it in writing.

Q-Is the agreement reached in private mediation legally binding?

A-Right now in Pennsylvania, it is non-binding. However, if you reach an agreement with your tenant, it can become part of your lease agreement, so that you can show the judge that you already tried to resolve the issue. If you end up going to court with the tenant, the judge can see that the tenant has a history of breaching agreements.

Q-What are the common mistakes that rental property owners make?

A-One of them is not listening to the tenant during the mediation or allowing something that the tenant said to upset them. The next thing you know, the tenant is upset as well, and everyone starts yelling, and I have to de-escalate the situation. Also, not arriving at mediation being prepared to compromise. Most landlords feel like compromising means letting go of the rent. But in reality, that's just one of the solutions. You need to be flexible. Think about what will happen next if you don't reach a resolution. Finally, think out of the box. I would suggest that landlords come to the table prepared with three solutions that are satisfactory and sustainable.

Watch the full interview at hapcophiladelphia.com under "Hapco Premium Content". While Hapco Philadelphia does not endorse any specific mediation service, you can learn more about Marie and her company at asapmediationservices.com.



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How an Interwoven Research Agenda Will Help Us Enumerate Historically Undercounted People in the 2030 Census

By Robert L. Santos, Director
United States Census Bureau



Robert L. Santos, Director, of the United States Census Bureau

Life is interconnected. For instance, I found that hunger, homelessness and even unemployment are portals to an interconnected web of personal, environmental and system factors. These include chronic physical conditions, mental health and addiction issues, climate change and federal, state and local policies. So, it's not surprising that research on any of these topics can be informed by including the nodes of this interconnecting, interacting network.

Our research on historically undercounted populations is similarly interconnected. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts research on public trust, cultural relevance, language usage, question comprehension and many other topics to develop better methods to reach and collect data from the historically hard to count. But the interconnectivity goes deeper.

Consider research on our field operations, on improving efficiency of enumerators using adaptive design, on leveraging administrative records to predict housing unit occupancy, on improving our frame of housing units. All such research interacts with and ultimately impacts the enumeration of historically undercounted people and their households. In fact, using this lens, it is easy to see that many 2030 Census research projects currently being proposed directly or indirectly involve the enumeration of historically undercounted populations. It is in this context that I write about our interwoven research agenda to address the 2030 Census enumeration of historically undercounted people.

Recently, the Census Bureau held another webinar about our preparations for the 2030 Census. It addressed how we're using public comments submitted in response to our

half of our projects involve research that addresses our ability to effectively enumerate these critically important populations.

Our efforts in this arena cover a wide range of topics. Among them:

Conducting research to inform our overall 2030 Census communications campaign and developing outreach strategies for historically undercounted populations.

Exploring how we can use administrative records and analysis of 2020 Census data to investigate the undercount of young children, one of the most persistently undercounted groups.

Examining the use of tailored contact strategies – that is, messaging, materials and methods of inviting households to self-respond to the census. Improving and increasing self-response is critical to the quality of census data, and we want to design our contact strategies with the needs and preferences of different demographic groups and geographic areas in mind.

Developing an internet self-response instrument specifically for certain types of non-institutional group quarters, such as college student housing or military barracks.

Many Federal Register comments suggested avenues of research the Census Bureau was already pursuing, which validated and enhanced our research program.

Additionally, based on the feedback, we have added a new project to improve our outreach to historically undercounted populations. We received many comments that suggested that we include culturally diverse training and educational materials, and use tailored, unique cultural approaches with historically undercounted populations. In response, we

continued on page 7

2030 Census Federal Register notice about our plans for the next decennial count.

We were pleased so many of the comments sought to improve our efforts to reach and enumerate historically undercounted people. We recognize the need to engage and collaborate with partners, stakeholders, tribes and the public to gather their perspective to inform our research.

If you've been following our journey toward the 2030 Census, you already know we're conducting 55 projects in five different enhancement areas. You can read about all of them in our 2030 Census Research Explorer tool.

You'll note that several projects primarily focus on reaching, motivating and accurately counting historically undercounted populations (HUPs). But as discussed above, this research intersects with many more projects even if the titles of the research do not include the term "historically undercounted population." In fact, 22 or 40% of our research projects are investigating how to increase participation of historically undercounted populations, while nine (16%) others are probing how to improve external engagement, which necessarily includes research to engage HUPs. That means over

Census *continued from page 6*

are investigating how we might add training that ensures Census Bureau staff build specialized skills on cultural competencies, including field staff and Census Questionnaire Assistance. To that, we say "thank you"! We are now researching our options for how we might conduct that training and what it could contain.

Improving how we collect and present information on historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations is important work. Note that I added "hard to count" because there are certain populations like students in college dorms and those in selected group quarters that are always difficult to count and require more resources yet are not historically undercounted. We're taking a single enterprise approach across the Census Bureau – both within and outside of the 2030 Census research program – on the collection and reporting of data on these populations. For example, we also have experts throughout the agency working together on topics like the undercount of young children and historically undercounted populations.

(By the way, stay tuned for an upcoming blog post from Deborah Stempowski, our Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs, that will tell you lots more about the historically undercounted and hard-to-count categories! A deeper understanding of the differences and nuances between these populations is extremely helpful in devising strategies to reach and more accurately count them.)

President's Message *continued from page 1*

"Landlord Tenant World" is a long-awaited and sorely needed outlet for rental and investment property owners, managers, and industry vendors, as well as renters.

This new podcast is an incredible voice for HP members. It's another way for the world to know what rental owners face.

The 30-minute show will air monthly on the Hapco Philadelphia Facebook Page. Find us at <https://www.facebook.com/HapcoPhiladelphia> (or just search for us on Facebook) ... and be sure to follow us!

I'll help to kick off the premier episode by discussing why owning rental property is still a great investment and income source, despite recent challenges like the City's Eviction Diversion Program and incidents surrounding the Municipal Court Landlord Tenant Office.

The show will also include HP's general counsel and nationally known rental law expert, Paul Cohen, to talk about how landlord-friendly Philadelphia's new Mayor and City Council will be.

Hosted by veteran Philly TV journalist and Emmy-winning reporter Doug Shimell, "Landlord Tenant World" takes a warts-and-all approach to what's right, what's wrong, and what needs fixing in the City's affordable and market-rate rental housing market.

We'll have advice, tips, and tricks from rental industry experts to help rental owners and their tenants succeed as partners. Let's just call it "Must See Podcast TV!"

So be on the lookout later this month and tune it. And here's wishing you and your family a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2024!

Again, we can't thank you enough for putting so much thought and effort into your comments on how to conduct the best 2030 Census possible. Your input represents public service and civic engagement in its truest forms. You gave us much to contemplate and incorporate, and we – and ultimately the public – are better for it.

Much research, testing and learning lies ahead. We'll continue to communicate with you about our preparations, progress, challenges and successes. Why? Because we

live our values of transparency and scientific integrity. And we need you to be our active partners as we forge a new vision of how decennial censuses (and ongoing surveys, for that matter) can and should be conducted. As we endeavor to develop a superb 2030 Census, we ask that you stay engaged with us and with each other. We're all in this together. Our efforts and our nation are stronger when we work together toward the common goal of a complete and accurate census.

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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.

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Pennsylvania's first autonomous vehicle (AV) shuttle has officially arrived at the Philadelphia Navy Yard



The arrival of the electric, zero-emissions shuttle comes after much planning, testing, and coordination between public and private organizations. The AV is ready to begin operations starting in early January 2024

The project was announced in February 2022 when PIDC, Philadelphia's public-private economic development corporation, awarded Perrone Robotics, Inc. a two-phased AV shuttle and services contract.

The AV shuttle is another example of the Navy Yard's commitment to long-term sustainability and resiliency by helping reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles, lessen congestion, and decrease carbon emissions on a campus home to 150 businesses and 15,000 employees. The AV shuttle will be incorporated into the Navy Yard's existing shuttle service that connects visitors and employees to SEPTA's NRG Station and Center City.

"DVRPC, PennDOT, Perrone Robotics, AECOM, and Drexel University have all been instrumental partners in bringing the Commonwealth's first AV shuttle to the Navy Yard," said Kate McNamara, PIDC's Senior Vice President at the Navy Yard. "The Navy Yard has always been a home to innovation – from its rich history as a naval base where

aviation and shipbuilding were pioneered to the present with more than 150 companies in sectors such as industrial trades, manufacturing, shipbuilding and repair, cell and gene therapy, health care, and more. The addition of the AV shuttle continues that tradition of innovation in a sustainable and resilient way and ensures equitable access to quality jobs at the Navy Yard."

The Navy Yard AV shuttle was funded by the **Travel Options Program**, a grant program of the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC).

"This exciting project will enhance accessibility to jobs and amenities in the Navy Yard, while reducing the dependence on single occupancy vehicles," said Ariella Maron, DVRPC Executive Director. "The funding of innovative projects that encourage the use of alternatives to driving alone is the idea behind DVRPC's Travel Options Program (TOP), and we are pleased to award a TOP grant to help fund the first AV shuttle in Greater Philadelphia and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This milestone is the culmination of ongoing public-private partnerships and forward-thinking planning, and we believe it is just the beginning of our region's growing menu

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AV Shuttle *continued from page 8*

of electric and autonomous travel options."

The AV shuttle is the world's first automated Buy America, FMVSS, and ADA-compliant transit van, which utilizes Perrone's TONY (To Navigate You) technology that converts the shuttle to fully automated capabilities for operations in the Navy Yard. The shuttle can seat nine passengers plus a wheelchair, aside from the operator. The wheelchair ramp feature will be accessible from a standard roadside curb.

"We are thrilled to participate in this groundbreaking journey with PIDC, DVRPC, PennDOT, AECOM, and Drexel University, to deploy a pioneering achievement in urban mobility: the world's inaugural automated Buy America, FMVSS, and ADA-compliant Ford E-Transit van, right in the heart of Philadelphia," expressed Paul Perrone, CEO and founder of Perrone Robotics. "This venture stands as a testament to the transformative impact of collaborative innovation, blending public and private sectors to forge pathways in advanced, safety-enhanced transportation. As we roll out the TONY AV driver on Philadelphia's vibrant streets, we're not just navigating roads; we're charting a bold course for future cities in the United States and across the globe. This is more than a project; it's a mobility revolution, and we are proud to be at its helm with world class partners."

In the first phase of deployment, the Navy Yard AV shuttle will operate, with a back-up operator on board, around the Navy Yard campus to circulate Navy Yard employees and visitors around the campus. Then in Phase 2, which is expected to begin in the coming months, it will connect the Navy Yard to SEPTA's NRG Station on the Broad Street subway line.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) will oversee regulatory approvals and is partnering with researchers at Drexel University to analyze shuttle performance and rider feedback to inform future deployments. The infrastructure consulting firm AECOM assisted the grant pro-

posal, and through its existing contracts with PennDOT will be providing overall program management, technical planning, testing, and deployment expertise.

"This is an exciting project, and AECOM is proud to partner with PennDOT, PIDC, the City, and DVRPC to bring the AV shuttle to Philadelphia," said Michael Girman, Senior Vice President, Transportation, AECOM. "Management of congestion, particularly during construction, is a substantial concern when creating more equitable and efficient transportation infrastructure, and we are always looking for innovative and collaborative ways to solve our region's transportation challenges."

Drexel's support of this project is an extension of its commitment to enabling equitable economic growth throughout Philadelphia," said Dr. Jonathan Spanier, head of the Department of Mechanical Engineering and Mechanics in Drexel's College of Engineering. "The work of Professor Dimitrios Fafalis and his students will provide important information on how this program can continue to improve, in hopes of expanding access to public transportation for people throughout the city."

"Autonomous vehicles have demonstrated a unique potential to improve transportation safety and accessibility in use cases around the country," said **PennDOT Secretary Mike Carroll**. "We're excited to shepherd the industry forward in Pennsylvania with projects like this."

continued on page 10

More information about the AV shuttle and Navy Yard Transit can be found on the **Navy Yard website**.

About PIDC | The Navy Yard

PIDC is Philadelphia's public-private economic development corporation. Since acquiring the 1,200-acre site from the federal government in 2000, PIDC has led the development and site operations for the Navy Yard. PIDC's mission—to spur investment, support business growth, and facilitate developments that create jobs, revitalize neighborhoods, and drive growth to every corner of Philadelphia—strongly informs its strategy for the Navy Yard, where the focus is on building a cohesive community that fosters employment, innovation, and production. PIDC manages all aspects of the Navy Yard, including planning, leasing, property management, infrastructure development, utility operation, and structuring development transactions. www.PIDCphila.com | www.navyyard.org

About DVRPC

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Philadelphia region, established by an Interstate Compact between the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the State of New Jersey. Members include Bucks, Chester, Delaware,

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Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties, plus the City of Chester, in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties, plus the cities of Camden and Trenton, in New Jersey.

DVRPC's vision for the Greater Philadelphia Region is a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable region that increases mobility choices by investing in a safe and modern transportation system; that protects and preserves our natural resources while creating healthy communities; and that fosters greater opportunities for all.

DVRPC's mission is to achieve this vision by convening the widest array of partners to inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making. We are engaged across the region, and strive to be leaders and innovators, exploring new ideas and creating best practices. www.dvrpc.org

About PennDOT

PennDOT oversees programs and policies affecting highways, urban and rural public transportation, airports, railroads, ports, and waterways. More than three-quarters of PennDOT's annual budget is invested in Pennsylvania's approximately 120,000 miles of state and local highways and 32,000 state and local bridges. PennDOT is directly responsible for nearly 40,000 miles of highway and roughly 25,400 bridges, a system first established in 1911.

Roughly 7,200 of PennDOT's complement of nearly 11,375 employees are engaged in the

maintenance, restoration, and expansion of the state highway system. They work in central headquarters in Harrisburg and 11 engineering districts, with facilities in all 67 counties.

PennDOT also administers the state's 11.8 million vehicle registrations and 10.3 million driver's licenses and IDs, and oversees safety and emission inspection programs. www.penndot.pa.gov

About Drexel University College of Engineering

Founded in 1891 in Philadelphia, Drexel is a comprehensive urban university of more than 23,000 students, and a leader in experiential, technology-infused education, enriched by the nation's premier cooperative-education program. Drexel is rethinking its institutional boundaries and creating a vibrant presence and ecosystem of innovation in and around University City while delivering on the University's public purpose as an anchor institution for Philadelphia.

As the cornerstone of Drexel, the College of Engineering empowers students to engineer change in their lives and through their careers by emphasizing a balance of theory and practical experience. Faculty scholars and industry experts cultivate technically and theoretically trained adaptable engineers who are dedicated to the discovery and the application of technology, and who understand the global, social and ethical implications of creating sustainable solutions

to societal challenges. Through industry and community partnerships, Drexel Engineering is committed to engaging students in capstone learning experiences and helping to drive the advancement of technology and automation in the region. www.drexel.edu/engineering

About Perrone Robotics, Inc.

Perrone is a leading provider of fully automated vehicle systems. The company delivers mobility excellence via TONY® (short for "TO Navigate You"), a vehicle independent retrofit kit for use in the automated transit of people and goods in geo-fenced and localized operations. TONY embeds inside any vehicle type or model, for any job application to provide a complete "artificial driver" solution that brings full autonomy in a safety certifiable framework. Proven, piloted and in commercial production, Perrone automated systems help commercial, municipal, and governmental customers increase transportation efficiencies, enhance safety, and accelerate zero-emission electric vehicle deployment. The company also offers a portfolio of existing turnkey automated shuttles and vehicles pre-integrated with the TONY retrofit kit. www.perronerobotics.com

About AECOM

AECOM is the world's trusted infrastructure consulting firm, delivering professional services throughout the project lifecycle – from planning, design and engineering to program and construction management. On projects spanning transportation, buildings, water, new energy, and the environment, our public- and private-sector clients trust us to solve their most complex challenges. Our teams are driven by a common purpose to deliver a better world through our unrivaled technical expertise and innovation, a culture of equity, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to environmental, social and governance priorities. AECOM is a Fortune 500 firm and its Professional Services business had revenue of \$14.4 billion in fiscal year 2022. www.aecom.com

Tale of Two Cities continued from page 1

policies they supported to lower crime.

"There will no longer be a Tale of Two Cities in Philadelphia," Parker said. "I believe in a city government that our citizens can see, touch and feel — visible actions that help people at the neighborhood level."

In her plan, Parker focused on public safety, quality-of-life issues, housing, economic opportunity, education and a "roundtables" initiative to guide her tenure.

Police and crime

"We will restore a sense of lawfulness to the city — supporting those in need while prosecuting those who commit violence," the plan read. "To deter violent crime, we will pursue systemic changes, including community policing and greater investments in neighborhoods."

Parker declared a public safety emergency to address violent crime and plans to have more police deployed on the street. She'll also instruct Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel to build a strategy to shut down the open-air drug market in Kensington.

The mayor also expects the commissioner to draft a plan for quality-of-life crimes like car theft, shoplifting, and illegal ATVs on city streets, which have been perennial annoyances to residents.

Clean and green

"We need coordinated city government efforts to clean public spaces and support community involvement," the plan noted. "We must focus on aging infrastructure and the need for environmental resilience, especially in underserved neighborhoods. We must simultaneously address current issues and focus on long-term sustainability and carbon reduction goals."

To that end, Parker's plan calls for hitting carbon neutrality goals, improving public transit and planting more trees in the city. She aims to target problems like illegal dumping, graffiti, abandoned cars and

cleaning commercial areas more frequently.

Housing

"The Parker Administration pledges to enable increased housing production and preservation, supporting homeowners and renters," Parker announced. "Every ounce of efficiency we generate frees up resources for more housing."

The mayor wants to support housing production and preservation, ordering the Department of Planning and Development to create a plan for "affordable luxury" for low- and middle-income families.

To that end, she'll order a review of the city's



land bank to get vacant lots into productive uses and offer a single contact for small landlords to get city improvement grants.

Economic growth

Concerns over economic disparities has the mayor pushing for a "streamlined, supportive business environment."

Parker will order every city department to send the mayor's office a list of all licenses, permits, and certifications it issues and which can be cut to make it easier to do business.

She also wants to remove more college degree requirements for city jobs and create an "Equitable Capital Table" of local and national investors "who commit to specific

investment targets supporting local diverse businesses."

Education

For education, Parker plans to create two working groups: one on full-day and year-round schooling and another on modernizing school buildings.

She also wants to do more to improve teacher retention by getting more feedback from teachers and finding potential members for the school board.

"The Parker Administration will bring a unified vision and organizing strategy to the Philadelphia education system," the plan noted."

Roundtables

The mayor plans a trio of roundtables to get feedback on making the city better: one on working with city, state, and federal officeholders to "speak with a unified voice and maximize resources coming to the city." Another will be a business roundtable for economic concerns, and another will be for religious leaders to serve as a "touchpoint" for residents who otherwise wouldn't interact with city government.

"The Mayor is calling for a revival at City Hall to bring out the best of Philly — a more efficient government that is an employer of choice and uses intergovernmental collaboration to bring more resources to our city," the plan read.

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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.

ASK THE ATTORNEY 1/9

Post: Don't forget to register for the next Ask The Attorney session on 1/9 if you haven't already! Call Hapco Philadelphia 215-684-1684.

SMALL CLAIMS JUDGMENT

Post: A tenant took me to small claims for his security deposit. I withheld it because he had turned off the boiler over the winter of 2023 and caused my water pipes to crack. Although the judge was given work receipts, a notarized letter from a second plumber that the work was justified and caused by the boiler turn-off, the judge ordered me to return half the security deposit. I knew I was in trouble when the judge said, "I'm not a plumber." In the future, my leases will contain a clause that the boiler cannot be turned off during the winter. I also learned that some judges will take testimony from witnesses by phone. Had I known that, I would have had my confirming plumber on standby to testify.

Response: In Philadelphia Judges usually favor the tenants. They look at it as if we are making all the money and can afford to lose the money. (my opinion)

Why did the tenant turn off the boiler and what was the tenant using for heat?

Response: When people talk about

court rulings, why is the judge's name not mentioned? The proceedings are public record. So, it would not be a problem to mention their name. And many of the judges are elected. So why not have a record of rulings by judges? This would be a great thing for HAPCO to keep records of. It would help any efforts we make in that arena.

ROOFER

Post: Any roofer and siding recommendations?

Response: George's Roofing. 215-677-4648 ask for George

MONTH TO MONTH

Post: There are different rules for leases that are less than one year (especially you can't terminate a tenant except for "just cause"). See the code, attached. Once a year lease ends and the tenant is on month to month, some might think this is a lease of at least a year, some might say it's not, it's a lease for only a month at a time. The last time I heard from Paul Cohen (HAPCO's counsel) the courts hadn't taken up the question of which view is right. So, from my perspective, it's not worth spinning the roulette wheel.

Response: Look up Good Cause Amendment to Phila Code 2019.pdf

IRS AUDIT

Post: Over the years, how many of you have been audited by the IRS?

Response: They put me through the wringer 2005-2006.

Response: I've been audited by both the IRS and by Philly.

The IRS agent was retiring in a few weeks or months and said the young agents were tougher but he also looked at my records and had questions about a mistake I had made in my return.

It took a day to go over everything with him. He said if my return was off by less than \$100, the IRS says "good enough" you don't owe anything. Mine ended up being off by \$112 so I owed a small amount for the penalty plus the unpaid amount.

I keep receipts on everything so I had good records. I had simply made an entry error.

No harm, no fowl.

The Philly audit was a little more grief. I had made mistakes deducting expenses that they did not allow. And my then accountant, who had promised to give me audit support, didn't.

That Philly auditor went back reviewing 6 years' worth of returns finding overpayment of taxes and underpayment of taxes. They charged me interest and penalties on the recent underpayments but also refused to credit my 6 year old overpayment which should have cancelled out all the subsequent underpayments but which the auditor claimed was "out of statute" (too late to get that credit back.)

Since my final cost totaled around \$600, my lawyer friend advised me to just pay it because "You can't beat city hall." But many years later, another taxpayer took the same type of case all the way up through the

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Over the Transom continued from page 12

courts and beat city hall but his was for a LOT more money.

Since then, the city doesn't dig into records that it declares "out of statute" as a result. I think they only go back three years - but I'm not sure. And I believe that if they find criminal tax fraud, all bets are off.

In both cases, I got called down because of mistakes that I (or my accountant) had made. After they saw that I was doing my best, they haven't bothered me.

Except that one time when they thought I hadn't paid what I said I owed. Just before court they offered to drop the penalty charges if I would just pay their (usurious) interest. It turned out in court that they had lost track of my revised return and claimed to the judge that they'd never seen any revised return. So, I showed the revised return to the judge with the city stamp that my accountant had advised me to get indicating they HAD received the return.

Judgement:

Error: city hall tax department. I really enjoyed that day in court. BTW: Though I've never been to an audit by the state, they occasionally send me letters telling me I owe a small amount or that I overpaid a small amount and I just pay what they ask or cash their check.

Response: I've never been audited thank goodness, but once the state made me send in all my receipts for everything to verify. I copied and mailed a box load of papers. Big waste of time, but never heard anything from them again.

POSSUMS IN THE ATTIC

Post: Best Wishes to All For A Healthy, Happy And Prosperous 2024!

I need a recommendation for an exterminator (or whomever) to remove a possum(s) from an attic in a West Philly property.

Response: Happy New Year! I recommend Delaware County Animal Control. 610-522-1113. The property does not need to be in Delco. We used them to remove a family of squirrels in the ceiling of a property in Grad Hospital, also in Ardmore and Penn Valley. They know what they are doing and are reasonably priced. They will keep coming back until the problem is solved. Good luck!

REAL ESTATE

Post: Time for me to get out of rentals: 2 left 1 this year 1 next. I have good investments in Tennessee. No work for me just a monthly fee & with a mortgage & service fee still make money & good appreciation. No city council to harass you. I am selling at market price no flippers please. This property is in the PENN CATCHMENT AREA now with **Saint Joe's University** rated a **prestigious university**, absorbing the College of Science in 2023, it improves all housing & brings new money to the area. I feel King-essing to 49th Street should be in Cedar Park. It appears Squirrel Hill is dead. Cedar Park is alive just my opinion.

Thank you. joehanson1800@yahoo.com

WHIRLPOOL REFRIGERATOR

Post: We went to Alabama for a weekend and my wife had devastating accident. In hospital for 8 days. We are in now in Pennsylvania and Lillie is in Rehab. While we were away, we got a call that a new Whirlpool Refrigerator that cost about \$3500 had a problem and Whirlpool does not have serviceman. 'The tenants took the refrigerator apart. Right now, I need a serviceman who can get the refrigerator up and running again. I would appreciate any help I can get.

Response: I have good service from Dominic's Appliance (<https://www.dominicappliances.com/>) and Pop's Appliance (<https://www.facebook.com/popsappliance/>). Both coordinated directly with tenants, came when they said, and gave fair

service/advice. BTW, I think the tenant is on the hook for the repair if they've admitted disassembly.

Response: In terms of the refrigerator since it is new, sometimes bringing another repair person will void the warranty or even the tenant messing with it. So, make sure to check on that before proceeding.

Response: www.whirlpool.com/owners.html?

Response: So very sorry to hear about your wife. I hope the rehab is aggressive and that she has a positive outcome. (Retired RN here). Thank heavens that Philly is great for health care (despite some outliers).

Anyway, if they "took apart" send pictures to my guy- Ask for Simone at Quick Fix. The pictures will give an idea of whether or not it can be fixed & give you an estimate. Main # 267-888-7071.

COLLECTIONS

Post: Looking for aggressive collections person to collect on judgements. Who can you recommend??

Response: I had a VERY good experience with Todd Baritz, the HAPCO Lawyer. He charged 40% and fees. Well worth it.

The MOST IMPORTANT THING TO FOCUS ON is giving service.

For example, if the garnishee works in a Hospital, where you know their hours and can access, how do you get to them?

Does anyone reading this know a talented Warrant server who knows how to do more than just go through the motions? I do not.

Response: So, you've had more success than not? Who was your contact person?

Response: Todd Baritz. 267-908-6065. tbaritz@baritzlaw.com

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GARAGE DOOR REPAIR

Post: Can anyone can recommend repair person for storage unit garage doors?

Response: I recommend D&M Garage Door Solutions 267-687-2216

Response: Sean's garage door and replacement did a couple of residential jobs for me, which I was very happy with the price and quality of work. My installer was Omar. His number is 215-767-8195.

SECTION 8 TENANTS

Post: I am considering renting to Section 8 Tenants. Can I get some feedback about recent experiences?

Response: Personally, I like renting to section 8. You have to pass all of their inspections which can be challenging (espe-

cially after someone moves in and your rent could be abated if not fixed in timely manner) but in general, I prefer section 8 over market rate tenants because of the automatic, guaranteed rent from government. Their computer system has been down for a little over a week now but usually they are easy to contact and the paperwork goes through relatively fast to initially lease up a person.

In my opinion, I would always like to have a diverse portfolio: have a payor mix of guaranteed government section 8 AND other market rate tenants.

Response: We use affordablehousing.com to find the section 8 tenants. When we show the property and we like a person, we will FaceTime when they are home to see how they live. Depending on their income section 8 will pay all or most of the rent. You are guaranteed your money as long as the property passes inspection and the tenant

complies with the rules. 75% of our properties are section 8.

Response: I follow the same process. The new portal has really improved the experience of working with PHA, I say that after thirty-two years of working with the housing authority. The rents are competitive and the based on my locations the tenants on S8 are no better or worse than the non S8 applicants.

Response: Much appreciated. Currently, my property is being managed by a property manager and they have made the Section 8 recommendation. I have lost so much dealing with traditional renters. I have a duplex & this month I have received \$458.00 in rent. Most of that paid water. And we all know that tax & refuse is due this month. This is most encouraging.

Response: I get as much as \$3800/month out of inner city duplexes

Response: Is the \$3800 per month from Section 8? How large are the units in your duplex? What zip code?

Is Section 8 exempt from some of the latest crazy regulations passed by Council?

We always avoided Section 8 because we could not select the tenant (had to take tenants with serious mental health disorders who destroyed the property.) Totally unmanageable situations.

Response: I have (2) 2-bedroom apartments in 19144 without living rooms/dining rooms, without washer/dryer, without a/c units, the tenants pay all the utilities except water and I'm getting \$1500 each from PHA(section8).

Response: Each apt has 4 rooms.

Response: I rent the duplexes by the room.

**PLB Board Meeting
January 2024**

The next Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Philadelphia Land Bank ("Land Bank") is currently scheduled for Tuesday, January 16, 2024, with the executive session to begin at 9:30 A.M. and the meeting to begin at 10:00 A.M or as soon as the Executive Session has ended. This meeting will be held remotely using Zoom webinar. The meeting is open to public attendees and for public comments and questions.

PLEASE NOTE: To participate in the meeting on your computer, you must register in advance. This requirement is necessary to allow us to collect the names of participants as required by law. Using a computer, tablet or smartphone, use the following link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_uShnioX9SLuhXBEJvc4utQ

The Board meetings will be conducted on the Zoom internet platform. A Memorandum outlining the attendance and comment procedures for each monthly Board of Directors meeting, including a registration link for attendance, will be published with the agenda ten (10) days prior to each Board of Directors meeting on this page. If the decision is made to resume in-person or combined in-person/online Board meetings, advance public notice will be provided. If such a determination is made, meetings will be held in the 17th Floor Boardroom, 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, with the possible continued option of remote participation via Zoom.



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Meetings are the last Thursday of the month at North Hills Country Club, 99 Station Avenue, Glenside, PA 19038



HAPCO PHILADELPHIA

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.

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- Petition Hearing *Call lawyer's office directly for payments.*

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