



PHILADELPHIA

# HAPCO NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2024

Serving Philadelphia's Investment & Rental Property Community

Message from the President:

## No 'Cribin' Vibes HP's Inaugural Podcast Is In The Can!

One of our top priorities over the past few years has been focused on connecting with members and introducing ourselves to non-members. And we're at it again. In this case, we're not necessarily breaking new ground here. In fact, when we decided a few months ago to launch a podcast, we realized that 3.2 million other people had already beaten us to it. But we weren't discouraged; we had something to say, and we already knew there's an audience in need of useful information about running a successful rental property business.

*see "President's Message" on page 11*

## Eviction Diversion Changes Are Another Blow to Landlords

If you're struggling to complete Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) or to qualify for Targeted Financial Assistance (TFA), you're in good company...

*read more on page 3*

## Your Landlording Questions... gulp... Answered!

Two of the biggest benefits of a Hapco Philadelphia membership were on display again in February: opportunities to learn...

*read more on page 5*

## HP Board Member Spotlight

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

Hapco Philadelphia is excited to welcome our two new Board Members, Devi Jadeja and Barbara Capozzi, who both bring qualities and experiences that will contribute to our mission of educating and empowering rental property owners in Philadelphia!

Devi Jadeja, whose father has been a longstanding member of Hapco Philadelphia, has an impressive background in the sport of tennis, having received a



*Devi Jadeja and Barbara Capozzi*

full scholarship to play at Saint Joseph's University and then taught in the years that followed at the Julian Krinsky School of Tennis.

*see "Member Spotlight" on page 5*

## LANDLORD SPOTLIGHT

## You Can't Cut Corners Installing Apartment Fire Alarms

PDS Fire & Security Has Seen It All

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

Stuart Rosenberg remembers the bad old days of Philadelphia fire codes.

"I was a union electrician in the 1970s and 1980s who specialized in fire and security installations, and I was horrified by what I saw on job sites," Rosenberg remembers.

Rosenberg says Philadelphia fire codes were way behind the times and rental property owners couldn't get what they

*see "Fire Alarms" on page 15*



*Stuart Rosenberg*

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## Eviction Diversion Changes Are Another Blow to Landlords

By HP Board of Directors Editorial Staff

If you're struggling to complete Philadelphia's Eviction Diversion Program (EDP) or to qualify for Targeted Financial Assistance (TFA), you're in good company, and new rules and "clarifications" are not making the process any easier for rental property owners.

To summarize, the Eviction Diversion Program — and a mandatory 30-day waiting period (that doesn't even begin until your application is approved!)— is required before a landlord can file an eviction in court. Eligible landlords and tenants who participate in the EDP may be selected to apply for TFA payments from the City to cover a tenant's rent arrears up to \$3,000 plus an additional two-month's rent. Sounds great, but good luck getting through the process without a great deal of patience. Delays in the programs are being shouldered by the property owner, even when someone else is at fault.

New guidelines recently announced require that a new EDP application be filed if the previous application is denied and not corrected within thirty days of its original submission. That means re-jumping through all the city's hoops, including providing an updated proof-of-delivery of the Notice of Diversion Rights to the tenant. Even worse, this means additional delays in your ability to file

for an eviction or receive any money you're owed. As always, the clock continues to tick, and never in favor of the landlord.

At the heart of our aggravation is that the delays are often not the fault of the rental property owner. For example, if a TFA application takes longer than 30 days to process, the landlord cannot move forward with an eviction without voiding the potential for receiving TFA money. Any court filing would automatically end the TFA application. Therefore, a landlord is forced to continue to wait with no promise of being paid. We also know from experience that delays in the Eviction Diversion Program are often caused by a tenant's inaction.

The City requires both landlords and tenants to participate in EDP in "good faith." But surprise! — not really! — under the city's definition, landlords must abide by seven conditions of "good faith" (such as providing evidence that the Notice of Diversion Rights was sent to the tenant, updating ledger account balances, etc.) while tenants must abide by just three (such as addressing any issues raised).

Hapco Philadelphia is in contact with the City and the mediation company to provide our input and to better understand any rule changes or clarifications. As always, you can find the latest on our website at hapcophiladelphia.com.

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### The Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter

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# Updated Traffic Calming Request Program Improves User Experience and Expands Eligibility

Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability  
Department of Streets

The City has updated its traffic calming process to be more transparent, prompt, equitable, and citizen driven. Our aim is to reduce speeding and eliminate crashes on as many eligible City streets as possible, using equity to prioritize locations with a history of crashes. This change reflects Mayor Parker's goal of making Philadelphia safer through government action that can be seen, touched, and felt on a neighborhood level.

## What has changed?

**It's easier to make and track a request.** All requests are sent through Philly311, **online** or by phone dialing 311. Through this new, automated process, applicants learn right away if their request is eligible and can track progress at any time.

**More blocks are now eligible than in the past, but with demonstrated crash problems and where people walk more take priority.** The new program allows traffic calming requests for more local streets than previously. Narrow neighborhood arterial streets and shorter blocks are now eligible to request speed cushions (eligible blocks must be greater than 400 feet long between stop signs or traffic signals, compared to previous requirement of greater than 1000 feet).

To make sure limited resources go where they're most needed, each request is automatically scored when it's received using existing data. Traffic calming requests will receive a higher score near places that generate a lot of walking traffic, like libraries and schools, or in community locations.

State-owned roadways and larger City arte-

rial roadways are not eligible for the program, because they may need further detailed analysis and coordination to install speed cushions or other traffic calming treatments. Also, intersections are not eligible for the program. If the City receives a request for an intersection, staff will select one street block adjacent to the intersection for review.

**More predictable review process.** Residents can submit requests on a rolling basis and the City reviews requests with high



priority scores approximately three times a year. Eligible requests stay in the system for three evaluation cycles if they are not prioritized for review, so it's no longer necessary to resubmit.

**Clear, direct communication throughout the process.** Applicants will receive updates from the city as their request progresses or if the request is closed. They can also check request status at any time through Philly311.

**Staff time is focused on installing traffic calming measures.** Thanks to the new, streamlined process, City staff can focus on the important work of getting interventions in place in neighborhoods that need them.

## How the process works

1. Check your eligibility with our map on the website.

2. Submit a request form through Philly311.
3. Requests receive preliminary priority score based on safety data, pedestrian activity near community places, and equity data.
4. City reviews high priority requests approximately three times each year.
5. Requesting resident will gather and submit neighborhood petition if the location passes preliminary review.
6. Traffic calming treatments will be designed and installed.

## How we created the new program

The traffic calming program update had the following goals:

**Boost Efficiency** — Boost staff efficiency and continuously improve the program workflow.

**Be Transparent** — Create a fair, transparent, timely, citizen-driven speed cushion request program. City programs work best when residents can see, feel, and touch the processes of change.

**Slow Traffic** — Reduce speeding and crashes on as many eligible city streets as possible.

**Serve Communities** — Make traffic safety improvements near pedestrian generators and community locations the top priority. Becoming a greener city is only possible when the safety and accessibility of all modes of transport are supported.

The city worked with multiple departments and a consultant team to evaluate data from various sources. The team interviewed past applicants, staff members, and councilmembers about the program's challenges and studied what's working for other cities.

*Courtesy of the City of Philadelphia*

# Your Landlording Questions... gulp... Answered!

By Lauren Andreoli  
Hapco Philadelphia Staff

Two of the biggest benefits of a Hapco Philadelphia membership were on display again in February: opportunities to learn from experts and network with peers.

Last month's Educational Session at Drinker's Pub in Center City focused on the hot topics of insurance and safety, which, in today's environment, are top of mind for all Philadelphia housing providers. Speakers Carla Eley from Eley Insurance and Luis Vega from SuperHome Smart Home Solutions offered attendees valuable new insight.

Carla answered questions about insurance

coverage for rental properties and offered scenarios in which the owner would or would not be covered. For instance, a landlord may not be covered if sued by a tenant for lead exposure. Policies can be invaluable, but it's important you talk with your agent to understand your level of coverage.

Luis spoke about advances in technology, surveillance, and security for rental units. He outlined strategies for safeguarding your properties with the type of cutting-edge technology that was almost unimaginable just a few years ago. Today, access to that level of security that offers peace of mind is as close as an app on your smartphone.

Ask those in attendance if the learning,



Luis Vega and Carla Eley

networking and camaraderie was worth the price of admission (free!), and they're sure to tell you not to miss the next session!

If you have areas of interest that you're eager to learn more about, feel free to contact Lauren at lauren@hapcophiladelphia.com. Your input helps us invite speakers who can address topics of special interest to you!

## Member Spotlight

*continued from page 5*

From a tennis instructor, Devi transitioned to the role of Campus Director at Villanova University in 2019. From there, she became a logistics coordinator for the Penn Wharton School, where she not only honed her organizational skills, she was exposed to and learned from some amazing corporate leaders.

Although Devi didn't fully pursue real estate until after the pandemic, she had been helping her father on the side for years and always had an interest in property ownership. Devi currently works with her father and aspires to make a good impact, expand her network, and meet like-minded business leaders. Devi offers a fresh perspective and contemporary ideas and is eager to contribute to the HP Board with a unique viewpoint and enthusiasm.

Our other new Board Member, Barbara Capozzi, is a third-generation real estate professional, following in the footsteps of her father and grandfather. She actively engages in city advocacy as a volunteer, is on the board of the Building Industry Association (BIA) of Philadelphia, and Development Workshop. Barbara is also active with sev-



Devi Jadeja and Barbara Capozzi

eral committees of the Greater Philadelphia Association of Realtors.

Barbara hopes to encourage the involvement of a younger generation to become involved and foster family stability and wealth through real estate investment and ownership. She feels it has become increasingly difficult to

acquire [and maintain generational wealth in real estate investing, especially] in Philadelphia. Over the past decade, she has observed a general shift away from Realtors, landlords and homeowners, and she believes there is a diminished motivation to own, invest in, or even live in Philadelphia.

Barbara sees misguided policies and regulations that hurt the everyday person's ability to own, rent out, or invest in real estate in Philadelphia, which is what prompted her to join the Hapco Philadelphia Board. She believes Hapco Philadelphia is a wonderful organization that must play a prominent role in Philadelphia's affordable housing needs, and that our members provide the best units of affordable housing.

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# The Renter's Electric Vehicle Conundrum

By Lauren Jessop  
The Center Square contributor

Affordability and charging access remain the biggest obstacles to consumer acceptance of electric vehicles and the government's ambitious transition targets.

These factors pose even greater challenges for a demographic that has been seemingly overlooked by policymakers – those residing in multiunit dwellings.

"The transition to EVs in the United States will hit a deep pothole unless the more than one-third of the 124 million households that rent can be convinced to purchase an EV," says longtime systems engineer Robert Charette in a **recent article** he authored for IEEE Spectrum.

'The forgotten North': Public react to HS2 fund reallocation

0:36 | Sunak sets out £4.7bn local transport fund from axed HS2 leg

2:16 | PM: Threats to our democratic processes have crossed a line

1:10 | "More importantly," he says, "a compelling case must be made to tens of thousands of condo community associations as well as the millions of rental property owners that they should install EV chargers."

The issue becomes more complex when



Apartment buildings in New York City. ALAMY | Contributed photo

viewed from the diverse perspectives of renters, condominium owners and landlords.

Landlords question the rationale behind covering the costs, while tenants who may only stay for several years are hesitate to pay for installations. Condo owners face the additional hurdle of homeowner association board approvals.

Charette told The Center Square the confluence of affordability, the number of renters and the age of apartment buildings all affect the options available.

Within apartment buildings, Charette said, there is a striation of socioeconomic capability and "a high percentage of people can't afford to pay their rent right now." The question is how many renters in a building would make it worthwhile for landlords to invest in chargers, even with government subsidies?

The answer only invites more questions.

The average price of a new EV is just over \$55,300 – something Charette says is scarcely affordable for the average family. He cited **recent reports** stating that millions of Americans – especially low-income households – struggle with unaffordable rent increases due to inflation and housing

shortages. Despite decreasing prices of used EVs, the majority are still beyond the budgets of most renters.

Research indicates homeowners purchase EVs at nearly six times the rate of renters. The discrepancy, he explains, is primarily because most EV owners can charge at home using Level 2 chargers.

Renters of single-family and mobile homes with dedicated parking spots can charge at home using Level 1 chargers without requiring added electrical upgrades or landlord permission. However, many of the roughly 28 million people living in apartment buildings, Charette says, lack on-site EV charging.

Illinois is the latest state to pass a "right to charge" law requiring parking spots at new homes and multiunit dwellings to have conduit installed to accommodate chargers. California, Colorado, Florida, Hawaii, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Virginia have passed similar legislation.

The details vary by state, but in many cases the tenant is typically responsible for the cost of the equipment, installation, maintenance and electricity used, as well as liability insurance. In addition, many leases state

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## EV Conundrum

continued from page 6

that any improvements made to the property by the tenant belong to the owner after their agreement expires.

Given the expense and the fact that, on average, renters stay for only a few years before moving, Charette suggests the number of tenants installing chargers is likely to be extremely small.

Many renters in suburban areas lack access to robust mass transit, and therefore rely on cars more often than their city counterparts.

Lehigh Valley engineer James Daley, a member of the IEEE Standards Association, told The Center Square the migration of households to the suburbs has provided incentives to build apartment complexes where convenient parking is a major amenity.

Daley says having several apartment buildings in a single suburban complex is typical and parking requirements, such as the number of parking spaces allocated for each dwelling unit, are usually covered in land development ordinances.

Even if a building's wiring can accommodate EV charging loads, the problem, he says, is the way electric service is provided to the buildings.

Electricity is distributed from the utility company to a transformer and then to the service panel containing meters for each household. The significance of this, Daley said, is that it is not possible to dedicate an EV charger to a specific household.

He questions how installing a percentage of parking spots with charging units can be accomplished equitably. Additionally, who pays for the installation? Is the cost spread over all households? Are those without EVs subsidizing the cost of charging?

Charette says the age of apartment build-

ings in the U.S. is an overlooked factor and addressing the issue will necessitate infrastructure upgrades. This raises more questions, one being: if a landlord bears the cost, will it lead to rent increases?

For instance, data he obtained from a Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission report shows a large percentage of apartment buildings in the greater Philadelphia region are **more than 40-years-old** and are typically occupied by low-income and minority renters.

Something else Charette says hasn't been thoroughly considered is the risk involved when charging in multilevel underground parking garages, and in some locations, the uppermost level may be designated solely for charging. If there is an EV fire at the lower levels without rapid detection and suppression capabilities, he said, "It's like having a toxic chemical explosive going off in your basement."

While cities develop programs to facilitate on-street charging, and other innovations are being explored, alternatives to at-home charging include the use of public charging stations or charging at the workplace, if available.

"What exists today is a vicious cycle" Charettes says, where renters, even if they can



James Daley

afford it, are reluctant to buy EVs due to a lack of reliable, convenient, and affordable charging, and owners of rental properties – especially of apartment buildings – will not invest in EV chargers because too few tenants use them.

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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.

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## New local taxes eyed for mass transit financial woes



By Anthony Hennen, The Center Square

“We need to find a new way to think about and finance our transit systems,” he added.

Though SEPTA officials have warned about **“difficult decisions”** for more than a year that could include service cuts and fare increases, state officials have been slow in proposing changes. Waxman introduced a bill last April that would allow **local taxes to fund public transportation**, but it has seen no movement.

Now, after Gov. Josh Shapiro’s budget proposal for reapportionment of the sales tax to partially fund SEPTA, his bill is getting more attention.

“Transit is completely underfunded in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania when compared to other states,” SEPTA CEO and General Manager Leslie Richards said.

Shapiro’s proposal, she noted, would be “tremendous” for the system and provide “a stable foundation” for the agency.

Ridership has fallen to 65% of what it was pre-COVID, she noted, as remote work has shifted riders from commuting for work to commuting in other hours. Still, SEPTA provides more than 700,000 trips every day in the region. Richards compared it to the national attention given to the collapse of I-95, which served 129,000 trips per day.

“We are a company like CVS or Aramark

when it comes to the economy of the commonwealth,” Richards said.

If Shapiro’s proposal doesn’t pass, she noted SEPTA is considering a fare increase of up to 31% and service reductions as high as 20%.

“If we have to start dismantling or decrease our service, we will not be able to get it back in 2026,” Richards said.

The vast majority of SEPTA’s funding comes from federal and state sources, not local. Waxman’s proposed bill could change that and address some of Richards’ concerns.

“The Philadelphia region is the most underfunded transit agency in the country,” she said. Giving Philadelphia and its suburban counties the option to raise new revenues for the system is the only way to increase local match and, she said, is something local officials want to do.

Looking ahead, Richards argued more funding would bring station improvements, new subway cars and trolleys, airport trains every 15 minutes and “high-frequency service where you could show up to a station without looking at a schedule.”

Democrats were generally supportive of those ideas.

“We have underfunded and neglected this, and it’s our job to make sure that we do this and take care of moving Pennsylvania forward,” Rep. Mary Isaacson, D-Philadelphia, said.

## How the Federal Ride and Drive Electric Grant Will Build a Cleaner, Greener Philadelphia Workforce

Matthew Cassidy,  
Office of Transportation, Infrastructure,  
and Sustainability

Under the Biden Administration, the federal government is accelerating the adoption of electric vehicles (EV) to confront the climate crisis with a commitment to building a national network of 500,000 EV charging stations by 2030. In January 2024, the City received funding through the Ride and Drive Electric Grant to establish “Plug In Philly” – a City-led workforce development pilot program to empower aspiring EV supplies and equipment (EVSE) workers.

In her inauguration speech and 100-Day Action Plan, Mayor Cherelle Parker has reiterated her vision for a safer, cleaner, and greener Philadelphia, with economic opportunity for all. Partnering with IBEW Local 98, *Plug In Philly* will expand access to career training and employment within the EVSE industry while increasing and diversifying the City’s green workforce. This initiative will empower and train Philadelphia’s low-wage workers, overwhelmingly women and racial minorities, for high-paying job opportunities.

The **Plug In Philly** program will:

- Build an EVSE focused pre-apprentice program,
- Increase awareness to job seekers, especially Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and women Philadelphians currently in low-wage jobs, and
- Support graduates’ job placement in EVSE careers.

This pre-apprenticeship program will expand access to career-track training and employment in EVSE installation and maintenance work. Ultimately, Plug In Philly will increase and diversify the workforce needed to make a national EV charging station network possible.

The City will lead the initiative in partnership



with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 98 and its training arm, Apprentice Training for the Electrical Industry (ATEI).

Additional partners include:

- Philadelphia Works Inc. (PhilaWorks)
- Community College of Philadelphia (CCP)
- School District of Philadelphia (SDP)
- National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) Philadelphia

The Ride and Drive Electric grant is made possible under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the largest long-term infrastructure investment in our country’s history. The Infrastructure Solutions Team (IST), led by the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure, and Sustainability (OTIS), is spearheading BIL work in Philadelphia. The IST’s mission is to advance racial equity with the BIL fund-

ing. The team is working to:

- Increase the number of City contracts awarded to historically underutilized businesses, and
- Ensure that infrastructure workers, from planning to construction, look more like the population of Philadelphia.

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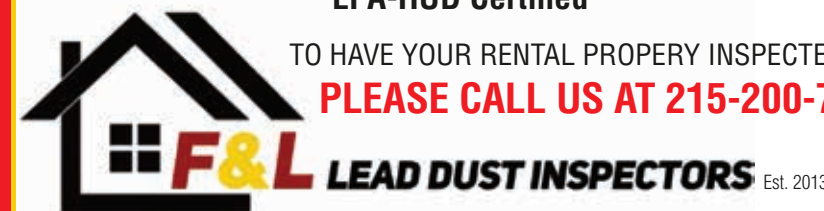
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## Dietz & Watson Half Marathon Nominated as One of the Country's Best Half Marathons by USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards

By Natalie Faragalli,  
Office of Special Events

Philadelphia Marathon Weekend officials are excited to announce that **USA Today's 10Best Readers' Choice Awards** has chosen **Dietz & Watson Philadelphia Half Marathon as a nominee for Best Half Marathon**.

"In 2023, for the first time since its inception, the Dietz & Watson Philadelphia Half Marathon sold out with 15,000 registered athletes," said **Deputy Managing Director David Wilson**, "a testament to both our cherished relationships with our annual athletes who participate year after year, and to the uniquely-crafted course and experience that entices thousands of welcomed newcomers."

The Dietz & Watson Philadelphia Half Marathon prides itself on its iconic course that offers athletes a grand tour of Philadelphia. The course features almost ten miles of urban city landscape, guiding athletes through Philadelphia's most scenic and historic neighborhoods. From the history-steeped streets of Old City, through one of the liveliest stretches of Center City, across the Schuylkill River, up through the bucolic trails of Fairmount Park, and back down to finish in the shadow of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

We are grateful for the nomination and will continue our efforts to make Philadelphia Marathon Weekend bigger and better than ever!

**To vote for the Dietz & Watson Half Marathon in the USA Today's 10Best Half Marathon category, visit: [10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-half-marathon-2024](https://10best.usatoday.com/awards/travel/best-half-marathon-2024)**

You can vote once per day until voting ends on Monday, March 25 at noon ET. The 10 winners will be announced on Friday, April 5.

### About Philadelphia Marathon Weekend

The Philadelphia Marathon Weekend, now in its 31st year, has grown tremendously since the first race in 1994. What started as a small local event of just 1,500 participants has become one of the top 10 marathons in the country. The course guides participants through a unique experience of centuries of history and architecture, diverse and lively neighborhoods, and remarkable views throughout Fairmount Park and along the Schuylkill River. Each year, spectators line the course, eager to cheer on athletes, because there's nothing Philadelphians love more than champions.

Race Weekend 2024 features the AACR Philadelphia Marathon on Sunday, November 24; the Dietz & Watson Philadelphia Half Marathon, Rothman Orthopaedics 8K and Nemours Children's Run on Saturday, November 23; and a free two-day Health & Fitness Expo on Friday, November 22 and Saturday, November 23.

For more information about the Philadelphia Marathon Weekend, visit [www.philadelphia-marathon.com](http://www.philadelphia-marathon.com).

### About Dietz & Watson

Founded in 1939 by Gottlieb Dietz, and still family-owned and operated today, Dietz & Watson remains true to their original old-world recipes and Gottlieb's commitment to "quality above all else." Creating the freshest and leanest beef, ham, pork, turkey breast and chicken breast, Dietz & Watson's offerings are enhanced only with all-natural spices and seasonings for optimum flavor profiles. The company is led by founder Gottlieb Dietz' grandchildren, Louis Eni (President and CEO), Chris Eni (COO) and Cindy Eni Yingling (CFO). Today, the fourth generation of the family, Lauren Eni, Christopher Yingling, Timothy Yingling, Michael Eni, Greg Yingling and CJ Eni have joined the company to carry the tradition further. Learn more at [DietzAndWatson.com](http://DietzAndWatson.com).

## President's Message continued from page 1

ness in Philadelphia and beyond, whether you have one renter or a thousand.

So, we enlisted the deep-voiced talents of former longtime Philadelphia TV news journalist Doug Shimell, who is already the voice behind another successful Philly sports podcast. He's also appeared on stage in some recent theatrical productions, and a bonus for us: he and the team at Focus Media Services have been working with Hapco Philadelphia for years, so he's already an "insider".

The next step was naming the podcast. When some of the suggestions fell ever-so-slightly flat ("Jest Rentals", "Property Palooza", and don't even get me started on "Cribin' Vibes"), we came back to earth and settled on "Landlord Tenant World". I like the name, because our conversations aren't meant to be an "us versus them" debate we're looking to start. Our goal is lofty but simple: to invite guests who can teach us the tricks of

the trade, experts who can advise, city officials who can point us in the right directions, fellow owners who can share their experiences, and anyone who can hopefully give us a laugh or two. (Who can't use a laugh?) During our debut podcast in February, for example, in which yours truly made an appearance, our other guest shared that he held a world record for something in which I had no ideas world records were kept. Sorry, you'll have to watch to find out, but the picture he showed from decades ago is worth every penny. (Yes, there's a hint in there somewhere.)

And so, we're off and running. And just two weeks (as of this writing) after releasing our first episode, we're approaching four

hundred views! And here's my plug to enlist your help. We're looking for ideas, guests and sponsors! If there's a topic you'd like us to explore, a guest you'd like us to invite, or something aligned to your expertise you'd like to share, reach out to our team. And if you'd like to become a sponsor — our rates are very reasonable — and even make an appearance on the podcast, let us know at [hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com](mailto:hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com).

We're shooting to release a new 30-minute podcast the first week of each month. You can find a link to all of them on our website, our social media feeds, or go to Youtube and search "**Landlord Tenant World**". Plenty of ways to find us, but "Cribin' Vibes" ain't one of them.



Greg Wertman

# DIVERSIFIED INVESTORS GROUP

A community of like-minded investors created BY real estate entrepreneurs







# 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.

### HAPCO UPCOMING EVENTS

**Post:** Just a reminder to register for the upcoming General Membership Meeting on 4/10! Registration link is below.

www.hapcophiladelphia.com/hapco-member-webinar or call Hapco Philadelphia 215-684-1684.

### INTERNATIONAL TENANT GHOSTING ME

**Post:** have an international student as a tenant and I haven't been able to get ahold

of him in the past week. He doesn't have an SSN. A couple weeks ago, I found a post on the university's housing page of him stating that he is looking for a place to move immediately, I wanted to bring it up to him because we had a discussion about me being a little overbearing. I also noticed that his communication with me has been decreasing drastically up to the days leading up to his disappearance.

The problem is he is in the middle of his lease with 3 more months to go. The last time we spoke, he texted me that he was having medical issues and asked me for the

address of a hospital nearby, which I gave him. Yesterday, I called the hospital, another hospital near his university, and some other nearby hospitals just in case, and they said they had no one with his name in the record.

His roommate also brought up some concerns that he hasn't been in the house for the past couple of days and was asking me to do a wellness check, which I am doing today. He paid this month's rent so he currently doesn't owe me anything. I want to give him benefit of the doubt but I can't help thinking that he is trying to break the lease given the clues that I have been given.

My next step is to call his employer/university professor and see if he's been coming into work. If he has, it would mean he is breaking the lease and if not, that would mean he is missing somewhere (should I file a missing person's report in this case?)

I want to be prepared in the upcoming month in either situation, whether he is sick somewhere that I don't know or trying to break the lease without me letting me know.

**My question:** Is the best course of action for March be to file an eviction (assuming I don't hear back)? How would I do that without an SSN? I have his F1 visa, work information and employer contact.

**And an additional bonus question:** I don't think I handled the situation with the Facebook post well by not bringing it up, what would you do in this situation?

**Response:** Hello - 1. He's paid up.

2. Are you sure that "looking immediately" is a current post. Could've been an old one.

3. Why would the "roommate" ask you to do a wellness check if he isn't at the apt?

4. Have you inspected the apartment to see if he's there or anything is amiss?

As I write this, I'm wondering if there is a

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## Over the Transom continued from page 12

problem with the roommate that this person feels unsafe with? His personal life isn't your business but gotta say I would call work & ask for him. I would tell him that I was just wondering if he was ok & mention that I saw the post & is there any issue. (He could also be looking for someone else?) If he's feeling threatened, he has every right to move. Wonder what you define as "overbearing".

**Response:** Absolutely not. Your tenant's health issues are not your concern unless he was not paying you rent. He has not violated the lease. The only thing he did was post that he is looking for a place to live. You are assuming he is trying to break the lease and leave without paying. For all you know, he is planning to continue to pay or find a subletter. There are boundaries that as a landlord you need to respect and you should not be looking into his private life. Calling hospitals to see if he is there, private life. Calling his job to see if he is going to work, private life.

I can understand that you are nervous because you feel that he may break the lease, especially if you do not have a cosigner on the lease or his social security number.

To be honest, if you do not have a cosigner and social security number and he is an international student, your chance of collecting would be slim. Next time if you can,

get a cosigner on the lease. It does not have to be a parent. Many international students who come to the US know someone who can cosign for them.

It is riskier to rent to international students without cosigners, but that is a risk that every landlord has to assess.

My recommendation to you would be to step out of his dad's shoes. You are his landlord, not dad, brother, cousin, etc.

**Response:** I agree. Don't get involved with their personal life. Unless they are causing issues.

**Response:** When I get applications

from tenants, I always ask for personal references and family contacts. This is so I have someone to contact if something happens to the tenant like vanishing or going into a hospital or (god-forbid) dying.

I don't have a prescribed length of time to wait before doing further research, but a missed rent payment is a good signal to start.

I assume the roommate and missing tenant were friends before renting together, so checking back with the roommate is a smart idea. Do you (or the roommate) have a phone number for the missing tenant? Email? Facebook page?

There is a possibility that the roommates do not get along now and the missing person is hiding out to avoid the other - but they still need to pay you and figure out how to solve the problem.

### JUST AN FYI

**Post:** Rent has continued to rise sharply across the country.

**Response:** In Philadelphia, renters are paying almost 4% more than last year. Now the Troubleshooters are warning about

a tactic some landlords are using to lure prospective residents. That tactic experts say is unscrupulous but not uncommon. Action News talked to two insiders, one who lays out what to watch for and another who has tips on negotiating for the lowest rent possible. The typical rent for a studio apartment in the Philadelphia area is \$1,170, and the majority of Philadelphia's Gen Zers are spending at least 30% of their income on rent. But according to landlords themselves, there are ways to get a better deal.

### LESSONS IN PLUMBING, AMERICAN WATER RESOURCES, HYDRO JETTING

**Post:** I've finally had to file a claim with AWR on one of my properties and the follow-up was surprisingly smooth but I do want to say you must be clear on what you need done and clear with the company that follows up on the claim. AWR ended up using Rapid Rooter Plumbing whom I assume is exclusive. I filed a claim on Wednesday this week, Rapid Rooter came out yesterday literally less than 24hours later.

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## 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.

Now the issue is I needed the technician to go inside my duplex but I couldn't get there in time and it sounds like the tech was being lazy. He cleared a clog from the street and I think it may be resolved but I am following up with Rapid Rooter today because I explained to AWR I need them to check the inside and outside because the backup was happening in the basement and I have both the Outside Sewer Line and the In Home Clog service on that specific property. I really thought this was going to be a bigger issue like damaged curb trap.

Lesson here to me is confirm with AWR that you need the technician to do an inside and outside check prior to leaving.

### Sewer Camera Inspections and Hydro Jetting

On two other properties I initiated getting a Sewer Camera Inspection done recently.

Property 1 - ordered a Camera inspection and the sewer and sanitary lines weren't that bad.

Property 2 - ordered a camera inspection and they couldn't complete it because both lines were clogged!

Solution - I asked for them to perform a Hydro Jetting at each property and I think it was the best money I spent since Jan 1 on repairs yet! For the company I used they included a new camera inspection at the end of the hydro jetting cleaning to confirm your lines are clean and clear and I saw the before and after of both so I can tell you it's well worth it. The cost was \$275 for the initial camera on each property and then \$800 each for each hydro jetting service. If I wasn't being cheap, I probably should've just initially requested the hydro jetting for each property but lesson learned.

I am probably going to do the camera inspections or hydro jetting on some other properties soon too! I think either way I've now realized both the camera inspection and hydro jetting service is well worth the money invested!

It's never a good feeling to do post repairs!

I am now seeing there are more ways than we realize to prevent problems in our properties if we plan accordingly. I do pretty good with internal unit inspections but some of the things you can't see yourself are the worst problems down the road! Next is having my roofers do inspections on all my roofs as I am sure that will be fun lol!

**Response:** I've used AWR a few times. Once they replaced a water line. Other times it was just clearing clogs. I paid \$25 for the clogs to be cleared when I had the in-home plumbing policy.

Concerning your decision to hydrojet, I am wondering why you feel it is money well spent -- I get how doing that cleaning can be great for the pipes and ensuring all is clean when you take over a property, but when you have the AWR, won't they come out if you do have a problem and remedy it -- and if the problem repeats, take the next step which would be to scope and find the cause of the problem, which they then are obligated to remedy?

Does hydrojet take care of all of the INTERIOR pipes? Is there a risk that they will do damage which I am guessing they make you sign off on that you are responsible for repairing that?

**Response:** Good questions... AWR - I didn't have to pay anything for clearing the clogs but again the technician did not go inside. So, I am following up on that and I will give you an update on what happens. I definitely think AWR needs to improve but I don't normally see many "positive experiences" and for the money I spend monthly I wanted to share some good experience.

For the hydro jetting I probably should've said I used "Express Drains" and not AWR. So, 1 property I had to use AWR on and 2 other properties I called for Express Drains because I didn't have AWR on them which was a clerical error on my part. I just forgot to be honest as I thought I had the service on every property I own (my loss there). And after you do the hydro jetting vs getting the lines snaked, they add in a camera view to confirm how it

looks. I have actual video footage of how each of my sewer/sanitary lines look now. You will incur additional charges with most companies if you only do a snake service.

Also, hydro jetting only takes care of the underground piping so you really need to have a good idea of where your stack and vents are inside the home so you can potentially know how to request those to be cleared if there is an issue there.

If I did have AWR on the other two properties (and trust me I went through my entire list now when this all happened,) I would not have learned how valuable the camera / hydro jetting service is. I honestly have rehabbed just about all the properties I own and more and I've never gotten a camera inspection until now. And many times, my plumbers would do some basement plumbing for me and tell me the lines look clear from their view but that's a huge mistake on trusting them during the rehab process because they can't honestly tell completely even if they snake it.

For concern of your lines getting damaged trust me I was highly concerned but I called a few plumbers and all of them said if your lines can't handle the hydro jetting then you have a bigger problem. Honestly, I think snaking the underground pipes may potentially cause more damage. It actually happened to me a few times where I had to replace sections of underground piping when my contractors tried snaking from different locations and the snake was literally ripping apart the old piping.

### TAX DISCOUNT?

**Post:** was gonna pay some Philly real estate taxes early to get the discount but I don't see it anywhere. Is this still a thing? Is Philly still offering a discount for paying real estate taxes early?

**Response:** No that went away a couple of years ago.

**Response:** Discount for paying Philly RE taxes early no longer exists.

## Fire Alarms *continued from page 1*

needed to know from contractors about proper and legal fire detection systems.

It's the main reason Rosenberg founded the PDS Fire & Security Company in 1989.

"What was lacking in the fire detection business then was integrity, honesty, and personal service," Rosenberg says. "There were a lot of substandard systems that didn't meet code and weren't properly installed."

The deadly 1991 high-rise fire at One Meridian Place in Center City exposed many of the flaws in the city's fire code that Rosenberg says he had warned about.

"The City was forced to implement new, more stringent fire alarm detection regulations and these compelled property owners to get serious about proper and legal installations," notes Rosenberg.

That's when he heard about Hapco Philadelphia from an uncle who was an inspector

with Licenses and Inspections.

"Hapco members were very serious about wanting to comply with fire codes for their rental properties," Rosenberg said. "The bulk of my customers ever since have been Hapco Philadelphia's small, independent, Mom and Pop rental property owners."

Rosenberg says he made many business friendships with Hapco members and has advertised in the Hapco Philadelphia Newsletter since the 1990s.

"Having worked as a union electrician and fire alarm engineer, I developed a good relationship with L & I and have become a fire code expert and resource for Hapco Philadelphia members," added Rosenberg.

He says the biggest issue facing rental owners and the fire detection industry is the lack of expertise among L & I's understaffed inspection division.

"L & I inspectors used to work in the construction trades before they came to L & I

and they knew what they were looking for when they inspected job sites and installations," Rosenberg says. "These days, L & I inspectors come from non-construction trades and must be trained on-the-job. You simply have to work in a craft before you can safely regulate it."

It's why Rosenberg sees a Hapco Philadelphia membership as a must for rental and investment property owners to stay current with codes and trends in the rental industry.

"It's especially important for the little guy or someone just starting out as a rental owner to get mentorship and education from Hapco Philadelphia," urges Rosenberg.

"People who join Hapco Philadelphia take pride in their properties. They do the right thing."

PDS Fire & Security offers fire detection, camera security, and intercom systems.

You can reach out to Stuart Rosenberg at philadetection@gmail.com, www.pdsfiresecurity.com or 215-744-3500.



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.

## Reasons to JOIN HAPCO Philadelphia

— hapco@hapcophiladelphia.com —

### FEATURES & BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP:

- NEW Fully Integrated Website
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  - PA state level legislative activity & PROA
  - Online store (coming soon!)
  - Special "ask our lawyer" section
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# 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

**Diversion/Mediation**.....\$294

### Step-By-Step Method

- Municipal Court Hearing.....\$294
- Writ of Possession.....\$191
- Alias Writ (actual eviction)..... \$350
- Reschedule Eviction For Landlord/Tenant Officer ..... \$52
- Petition Hearing ..... *Call lawyer's office directly for payments.*

*To join HapcoPhiladelphia and for more information, or to register visit at [HapcoPhiladelphia.com](http://HapcoPhiladelphia.com)*



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