

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E.

People Against Landlord Abuse & Tenant Exploitation

P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. HARLEM URGE NYC COUNCIL TO OPPOSE CONVERSION OF 34 MORNINGSIDE IN NYC

Community leaders and local residents expected to rally in front of City Hall on May 11th at 10 AM

NEW YORK, NEW YORK – (May 9, 2022) – P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem, along with local residents, community leaders and local elected officials, join forces to urge New York City Council to stop the conversion of 34 Morningside Ave in Harlem. NYC Council Members are expected to take a vote at a virtual public hearing, which will take place on Wednesday, May 11, 2022 at 10 AM.

“We stand together to *Fight for TIL!* We are encouraging our community to join us on May 11th in front of City Hall to have our voices heard and ask City Council to vote against the ANCP conversion and leave buildings in the TIL program. A potential conversion of 34 Morningside Ave will not leave local residents in a good place.” said Elsia Vásquez, Founder and Executive Director of P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem

The current proposal for 34 Morningside Avenue would expose the building and surrounding area to increased gentrification and displacement. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. strongly advocates for the City to fulfill its original promise of affordable homeownership offered by TIL and focus on empowering current tenants and their local communities rather than developers and their future profits.

“We strongly urge that the City Council, HPD, and all other stakeholders help deliver the assistance and improvements needed for current tenants without opening the door to future displacement. The choice of some privatized assistance (intrinsically tied with gentrification) or nothing at all is not a real choice—but two versions of the same failing status quo for black, brown, and working-class Harlemites.” said NYC Council Member Kristin Richardson Jordan. “This approach must be shelved in lieu of an actual community-centered response that is in the spirit of the original TIL program.”

The current project would partner with Genesis company, which is problematic and unsuited to carry out the interests of the community. The former managing director is Brian Benjamin, who has recently been arrested on felony charges partially concerning his past development connections. Genesis company has a troubling record of tenant complaints and evictions: they have been the subject of over 48,204 complaints in the last 3 years, and 1,821 evictions have taken place in their buildings since 2017.

Despite the project being marketed as affordable, it would price out local residents and likely would increasingly do so over time. The project utilizes the highly flawed ANCP, with around half the units (47%) to be available at 100% AMI, which is completely unaffordable for local residents of Harlem. The situation would likely worsen over time as units currently

occupied that become available could also be sold at the market rate. Meaning the building could eventually become 100% market rate—100% out of the price range of Harlemites. In addition to initial purchase costs, ANCP dictates a 40% AMI maintenance fee, which would be at the very top of affordability for our community. Management will raise that rate by at least 2% every year, with no stated cap, allowing them to hike it to amounts that would price out tenants and other locals again.

To register and testify in the virtual public hearing on May 11th, pre-register [here](#). For more information about P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem visit palanteharlem.org.

About P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem, Inc.

Founded in 2008, P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. Harlem is a grassroots tenant advocacy organization that assists renters and low-income homeowners in New York City. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E., a 501(c)3 non-profit, is a leader in providing actionable solutions to address tenants' housing concerns. P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. helps under-represented families realize their full potential providing technical assistance, training, and legal services, and connecting residents to the government and non-profit resources that enable them to remain in their homes, hold negligent property managers and landlords accountable for critical safety violations and ensure that the buildings in their neighborhoods are safe, affordable and habitable homes. Since its inception, P.A.'L.A.N.T.E. has serviced over 9,000 families throughout New York City.

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