

FINAL RULING ON KEYCARDS

On Monday July 17th, 2006, four days earlier than expected, Justice Rolando T. Acosta denied our Article 78 – the appeal of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) ruling on keycards – and dismissed the case.

This, we regret to say, is the end of our fight for keycards without photos. It was a fight we still believe was critical in protecting tenants' privacy and security. Unfortunately, the landlord-friendly DHCR was stacked against us.

Your photo on your keycard is now mandatory. However, you are not required to have your name on the card. For your safety, we recommend that you do not.

You can expect to soon receive notification from MetLife/Rose Associates of the date on which photo-less cards will no longer provide entry to your building.

While we ultimately lost the fight against photos and the need to register those for whom we want keycards, we are proud to have won some important concessions in the outrageous rules Met originally proposed: Names (formerly required) are now optional on tenant/occupant/guest keycards. Guest cards, which originally were required to carry a name and be renewed every 30 days, no longer have to carry a name and have no expiration date. And, while you are required to show ID to obtain a keycard, management may not record any information from that ID.

The September 19, 2005 DHCR Order carried the following conditions with which management must comply in implementing the “security system”:

- 1. All tenants and lawful occupants will receive free keycards. In addition, there is no limit to the number of keycards, which may be issued for an apartment. Tenants will receive 4 free cards for employees and guests. There will be a charge of \$8 per keycard for each additional keycard over that amount.*
- 2. Tenants and “Guests” will receive permanent keycards. Invitees will receive keycards, which may be limited to the actual time services are being rendered to the tenants. [TENANTS ASSOCIATION NOTE: “Invitees” clearly means employees and “guests” are relatives and friends.] Owner may periodically request tenants to verify that keycard information is current.*
- 3. Individuals obtaining keycards must provide appropriate proof of identity, but the owner may not record any data (i.e. driver’s license number).*
- 4. Owner may not request or retain, in any form, the social security number of more than one (1) tenant or legal occupant for each apartment unless the security deposit is kept in a joint type of an account.*

The Tenants Association is grateful for the time, heart, and effort of the many, many Peter Cooper residents who participated in the keycard fight. More than 71 percent of the total apartments in Peter Cooper signed a petition against the system, just one of numerous manifestations of the widespread support this project drew. Special thanks go to Building Group Leaders Frank Rinaldi, Ann Salzberg, and Helen Thompson – each of whom carried responsibility for seven buildings – and to the individual Building Leaders who saw to it that our innumerable posters were posted and our flyers went under everyone’s door.

Our Council Member, Dan Garodnick, has introduced legislation that would set limits on use and retention of keycard information. Expect to hear from us with full information on the legislation and ways in which you can support it.