

Apartment Rentals Halted Until Repairs Are Made

By Elizabeth Becker

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As part of a crackdown on housing code violators, Prince George's County has blocked the admission of new tenants to one of the county's largest apartment complexes until its management makes 500 repairs demanded by housing inspectors.

County Executive Winfield M. Kelly Jr. promised to continue such actions to prevent Prince George's "becoming the slum-landlord capital of the region." He said that "absentee landlords" would continue to feel "heat if they don't get their projects together."

The county's Landlord-Tenant Commission reached the unanimous decision to refuse to renew the complex's operating license late Wednesday night, upholding the county housing department's ruling against the 504 unit Gregory Estate apartments in Seat Pleasant.

Since 1972, the housing department has been "lenient" with the complex at 6918 George Palmer Hwy., granting conditional operating licenses and temporary suspensions in hopes that repairs would be made, said Nancy Stevens, a landlord member of the commission.

Donald Trump, an official of Bruche Realty which owns Gregory Estates charged angrily that the decision was "the county's way of saying we don't want low income people living in" Prince George's. "This terrible situation took place as soon as we applied for a federal rent subsidy program. "all of a sudden inspectors came around in droves," he said.

Kelly, the county executive, has engaged in a long battle against these subsidies under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Section 8 program.

He has blocked subsidy funds for all apartment complexes which have been applying for them.

"Their HUD application had absolutely no bearing on their citations," Kelly contended. "All we're doing is beefing up our housing inspection process. The laws are there and they are going to be enforced."

Last January, during a routine inspection for the renewal of the project's license, housing inspectors issued a citation for five violations of the county's code. When the May deadline for renewal had passed, the violations had yet to be corrected.

After numerous telephone conversations with the management and the owner, the county housing department signed a warrant for the arrest of Bruche Realty president Fred Trump for failing to comply with the citations. Trump, the father of Donald Trump, was surprised last month during a visit to the project, arrested and released that day on a \$1,000 bond. His trial is set for Nov. 9.

Those five violations included broken windows, failure to install fire extinguishers and failure to repair exterior boards. Last Friday county inspectors were called by the management to inspect their repairs. But after clearing the project of the five old violations, the inspectors issued 500 new citations.

Lucas J. Nelson, chief of the housing division of the department of licensing and permits, said his inspectors carried out an extensive inspection of 100 units and common hallways of five of the buildings. These inspectors issued the long list for major problems such as missing door locks, cracked ceilings, stopped up plumbing, roach infestation, and holes in living-room and bathroom walls.

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Rental Barred For Apartments Needing Repair

APARTMENT, From C1

But they also cited leaking faucets and uncut lawns, small points that Donald Trump said he was particularly upset about.

"I think we will appeal this decision to the courts or else a lot of people will be put out on the streets," Trump said. "Once you can't re-rent units, the job (project) becomes economically unmanageable." There are about 45 units vacant now, county officials said.

Karen Hakel, treasurer of Tuskegee Real Estate Management which manages for complex for the New York owners, said yesterday that the problem has been "a question of how much money Trump is willing to spend on repairs."

Trump contended that the owners want to work with the county to fix up the project but "when they put on violations for dripping faucets . . . well, we can't spend money for heat, fuel and hot water."