

201 NEWS

LATE SUMMER
2022

THE NEWSLETTER OF 201 WEST 16TH STREET

A Smoother Entry

As an aid to our residents, we have smoothed the way for entrance into our building with a slight ramp. Former board member Everett Leiter spearheaded the effort to find an “off the shelf” solution to this detail. Longtime shareholder Matthew Assael assisted him. Their efforts produced rapid results for a well thought through solution for our building.

Welcome New Part Time Doormen

We welcome Sean Patrick Seljan, who is working the Sunday 7:00am-3:00pm shift, and Joseph Gomez, whom you will see on Friday and Saturday nights from 11:00pm to 7:00am. Please introduce yourself to them when you see them.

Only Murders in the Building?

How can you go wrong with a hit TV show about cooperatives in NYC? Hulu’s comedy/murder mystery “Only Murders in the Building” was recently nominated for multiple Emmy Awards. The show stars Steve Martin, Martin Short, Selena Gomez, Jayne Houdyshell, and Nathan Lane, and tells you truly how things could go wrong... entertainingly.

Emmys? Who said Emmys?

Speaking of Emmys, once again our neighbor Ron Carlivati was recognized for his writing talents for his remarkable work on “Days of our Lives.” On top of that, he also won a 2022 Writers Guild Award for his work on the same daytime drama.

Annual Meeting of Shareholders

The 37th annual meeting of shareholders of 201 West 16 Owners Corporation took place virtually on June 20, 2022. Within minutes of the 6:00pm start we achieved a quorum for the second year in a row. That has not happened in recent memory. The Board thanks you for your interest in the welfare and governance of our homes in Chelsea.

The finances of the building were carefully covered by Michael Antonelli of Schwartz and Associates, our CPAs of longstanding. Jeff Reich, our corporate attorney, reported on the successful access agreements negotiated with our next-door buildings, allowing the current edition of the façade restoration to proceed. Also present and providing back up information was Anthony Colella of Tudor Realty Service and our building Manager Christine Ang. Brian Tong of TRS was the technical advisor on the call and also manager of the quorum tally. Ed Lewis, President of the Board, reported on the departure of our longtime superintendent Cristian Covaci and again welcomed Cătălin Chirulescu as our new superintendent. He also covered a review of our new mortgage, our forgiven PPP loan, and the preparation of the building systems to allow The Shade Store to move in.

Since there were only the existing six directors running for the six positions, the board members Edward Lewis, Barbara Brazong, Chris Ryan, Richard Quest, Julie Crockett and Fred Rossetter were elected by acclamation.

Tudor Realty Services

One of the hardest things to do if you are not part of a giant multinational organization is learn how to “land the plane”...in other words, retire while at the same time protecting your employees. Howard Lazarus, Mary Frances Shaughnessy and Anthony Colella, septuagenarians all, seem to have engineered a soft landing for their company. Effective January 1, 2023, they are transferring their interest in the company that they founded in 1990 to FirstService Residential, one of those aforementioned multinational organizations.

Our employees will remain our employees. Our Senior Property Manager will remain Christine Ang. At this point we do not think that even the phone numbers will change. As long as we continue to get the attention we need to run our building at top quality and a reasonable price, we have no account review under consideration at this time. If we sense a decline in service or an unwarranted increase in costs, we can initiate a review of the account and consider what other options may be available to us.

Facade, Briefly

Our every-five-years marathon of a façade restoration project is moving along quickly. We have a date for delivery of the first of the replacement stones. As always, it will be a marathon sprint to finish the project by our target date of Thanksgiving, but that is the goal. Board Chair Ed Lewis is pushing hard as he works to keep things moving and everyone’s attention focused on safe, professional, and timely completion. Details of what is what on the facade have been provided in the special Facade Bulletin updates – there have been seven so far.

Cooperatives

The late 70s and the 80s were *the* era of rental-to-cooperative conversions in NYC, 201 included. Some building communities floundered, but most, including 201, learned the difference between being taken care of and caring for themselves. Most importantly, hundreds of thousands of apartment dwellers became homeowners, making them more economically and socially committed to New York City and their neighbors.

Resilience and ingenuity became a way of life for cooperatives and their boards all across the city. It hasn't always been an easy ride, and it certainly isn't today, but the investments in the building for the common good and the investments in our own homes have been nothing short of remarkable; all of us should pat ourselves on the back as our coop approaches a middle age of 38.

Report Card: D

We've complained in these pages before about NYC's inherent biases, confusion, and paradoxes in assigning building letter grades for energy efficiency based on unequal criteria. We came across an article illuminating this issue in the Engineering News Record by senior project development engineer Ben Millbank at Ecosystem Energy Services. His research and analysis have confirmed our informal (but direct) criticism of the letter grades. He writes, "There is not really a correlation between building energy efficiency letter grades and carbon emissions. A building could be burning #6 Bunker Fuel Oil and still get an 'A' grade. How's that possible? Because bigger buildings with more square footage per person – less density – tend to get good letter grades. NYC efficiency grades do not take into account how the energy for a building is produced, which is a prime determinant of carbon emissions."

201 is a building of mostly studio apartments. That layout creates a high density of people per square foot. Based on the current criteria, no matter what we do we could never improve our grade from D. We have also proactively sought out and paid for many changes to help our building operate more efficiently: new energy efficient windows, new high efficiency gas boilers (ending the use of #6 bunker fuel oil), modernized elevators, installation of LED lighting where feasible, higher efficiency air conditioning units plus countless smaller improvements.

As a result of the Climate Mobilization Act of NYC, which is a more significant and stringent (and expensive) program, it is likely that the unfair criteria used to determine letter grades will gradually fade into the dustbin as a poorly thought-out initiative by the prior mayoral administration.