

Apartment Resales

There is always great interest in how apartment sales are going in our building. At this stage, they seem to move to closing reasonably quickly, but they are selling at about 8-10% lower than during the post COVID peak period. Apartments that need significant renovation might take a slightly larger discount. Considering mortgage interest rates and other issues, achieving sales just off the market peak is not surprising while the pace of sales remains encouraging.

The Shade Store

Our corner retail tenant, The Shade Store, has received permission from the Board of Directors to modify and modernize their retail space. They originally targeted this summer to complete the changes, but that slipped to September and October. We expect the renovation to be completed soon and to maintain an understated modern style.

Minimum Charge Electric Bills

30 years ago a company called Quadlogic furnished, installed and read our electric submeters and printed up the electric bills that appear on our monthly maintenance invoices. About a decade later they sold the business to AMPS Electric. Another decade or so passed and AMPS became AMPS/Elemco. Then they morphed into Metergy and then Metergy became Metergy-Quadlogic. A remarkable streak of business legerdemain to end up back where we started.

With all these changes, monthly electric bills remain mostly unchanged. The minimum charge also remains the same. The name of the supplier might change, but it has no impact on how costs are assessed.

Kitchen Waste Composting

After months of experimenting, we have started our building-wide kitchen waste composting operation for 201. In the experimentation phase we tried a wide range of bag sizes and materials as well as dispensers. Board member Ed Lewis and our super Catalin Chirulescu worked through the mechanics of the program and coordinated with our porters to make sure we could handle this requirement without employing more people. Our senior porter is in charge of getting our container of compost to the street at the appropriate times and ensuring that oils and liquid do not foul our floors and hallways. The board has determined that it is better to have collection sites on each floor rather than asking residents to carry compost bags to the basement. This system will also hopefully help keep participation and compliance levels high.

Composting for NYC buildings is new and we know we have not solved every challenge. We will continue to refine the program and add signage in the coming weeks. Please feel free to share your comments or suggestions by contacting super@201west16.org.

New Doorman and Porter Schedules

Over the fall, you might see different people than you expected at the doorman position. For several years we have worked to schedule our part-time employees to fill in as needed. But we have found that the effort to keep shifts organized and filled during sick, vacation, holiday and training time without violating union rules or resorting to double shifts has been more challenging than we imagined. No new employees will be hired to fill the shifts, but we will elevate one staff member from part-time to full-time to ease this burden.

Corridor Lighting

We continue to experiment with different light options including fixtures that dim the lights to 50% of full brightness when there is no activity in a hall or other public area. This is in response to a directive from NYC designed to save energy. We are proceeding carefully, testing different options before placing building wide orders and planning installations.

Short Takes

- » If you need a replacement key for the lobby entry door or mailbox, see Catalin Chirulescu, our super. If you lose the key to your apartment, you will need to contact a locksmith.
- » If you lose your laundry card, also see the Superintendent.
- » Our building is served for Internet by both Verizon and Spectrum; you can choose either supplier.
- » Please do not throw WetWipes or paper towels or similar materials down the toilet. Regardless of what the label says, they are not safe for our very old plumbing system. And note that for a clog the solution is NEVER to use Drano or any other commercial chemical clog remover. They can severely corrode our pipes. Contact the super if you have clogged drains.
- » The New York State Multiple Dwelling Law states that a key to your unit must be left with our superintendent. This is necessary in the event of an emergency. If we don't have your key available, it is possible that fire or police would have to break through your door in an emergency.

Basement Space Reallocation

The basement renovation project has taken far longer and had more surprises than we expected. For example, we found hundreds of pounds of abandoned pipes and conduits that were stored for some reason above a hung ceiling. We also found several pipes that were at risk of failing and flooding the basement. We created a room for lithium battery powered e-bikes, scooters and boards that is designed to reduce the risk of a fire spreading. If a fire were to occur during the charging or parking phase for these devices, the construction provides time to get the building emptied.

The reorganized spaces include important upgrades to 201 staff rooms, including renovation of a bathroom that was designed and installed in 1929, a mother's area, staff breakroom, locker areas and an area for future modernization of the building electrical system.

Speaking of bikes, we are overflowing in our basement storage areas. If you no longer need or want your bike, please let our super Catalin know. We can make a plan to dispose of unwanted bikes – giving them to Housing Works or Toys for Tots or some other worthy cause.

One last note on bicycles, human powered or battery powered: our corridors are not an appropriate place to park bicycles. Parking bikes in our halls or stairways can put people at risk in the event we have to evacuate the building in an emergency. Mimicking the no parking signs that were ubiquitous during the Koch Administration, when it comes to the public spaces at 201, "Don't even think of parking here."

Our Sidewalk and Large Planter

In the previous edition of 201 News, we reported that the MTA might delay our sidewalk improvement efforts. We still have not heard from the MTA officially, but board member Ed Lewis ran into several MTA hardhats a few weeks ago near the IRT emergency escape hatch. In a friendly conversation, Ed learned that the MTA would soon be finishing the rebuilding of the subway emergency hatch at 161 West 16 and moving to the emergency hatch adjacent to our building. We now know that we will be in charge of moving the planter and the MTA will get the USPS to move the green mail-relay boxes to accommodate this work. The MTA contacts indicated that the rebuild effort would take 3-4 months. (It is likely to be longer.) One bright spot is that they will not move their work trailers and other equipment to our side of 7th Avenue. They will remain in place across the Avenue. But this does mean our curb replacement effort will be delayed yet again.

"Calling All Boys to Barney's"

This was the advertising slogan for the Barney's Men's Store 60+ years ago. These days the slogan might be: "Calling All Retailers to Barneys." Both of the buildings that were part of the famous Barneys destination store remain vacant after more than a decade. Over the years, we have heard rumors of possible tenants "looking" or "considering" taking all or part of the space. It would certainly be a positive in the neighborhood for a good retail tenant to lease the space, which has become a bit of a blight right across the street from us.