

# Renters United

Rockville Renters United

MARCH/APRIL 2026

FREE. TAKE ONE!

## Fenestra tenants organize over building conditions



Cockroaches, mice, broken elevators and foul smells: you wouldn't expect such problems in upscale Rockville Square apartments. But there they are, and The Fenestra Tenant Association (FTA) is working to get rid of them.

*Fenestra at the Square* (The Fenestra, for short) consists of three buildings: The Lunette, The Venetian and The Fenestra. Rents range from \$2,000 to \$2,600 a month.

"I've seen roaches crawl from my shower drain and my sink and toilet, too," said FTA member Sameer Merchant, a resident of The Venetian. "We also have problems with mice on my floor, and our trash chute has smelled like vomit for months."

"Water bills are an issue in the Lunette," according to resident and FTA member Jack McBride. "Mine far exceeds what my water meter says I've used, probably by twice the amount. Other residents complain they've gone away for a month and been billed for water when they weren't even there. We've been working with the leasing office for a year to resolve this but it's still unresolved."

Faulty elevators are a problem in all three buildings. Elevator doors in The Venetian repeatedly open and shut, Merchant said.

"The Lunette has three elevators and one hasn't worked in the 18 months I've lived here," said McBride. "If you use the freight elevator, you'll hear a loud screeching noise, and it shudders and comes to a stop. It happens a lot, so I don't use it anymore. We're down to one working elevator."

An FTA member from The Fenestra also complained of elevators shaking and breaking down, as well as broken glass and exposed wiring on a handicapped accessible door, and fire alarms going off at odd hours with no explanations from management.

"We're organizing to get management to respond more quickly to tenant complaints and actually resolve them," he said. "They need to be more transparent, more honest and communicate better with tenants. That doesn't seem too much to ask."

## Rent Stabilization: What it is. Why we don't have it. How we'll get it.

Montgomery County's rent stabilization law limits rent hikes to either 6% or the rate of inflation plus 3%, whichever is lower.\* The county passed the law in 2023 when rent increases of 10-20% and higher were forcing thousands of tenants from their homes.

Designed to prevent rent-gouging, the law also gives landlords some needed flexibility. For example, rents may exceed the cap if large-scale renovations, like major heating repairs, are needed to protect tenant health and safety. The law also exempts newly constructed buildings for 23 years, as well as landlords with two or fewer rental units.

### Why we don't have it

Unfortunately, the county law also exempts more than 30,000 renters in Rockville, which operates an independent housing authority. This leaves city landlords free to raise rents as high as they want—and they are determined to keep it that way.

Foes of rent stabilization provided \$20,800 for free campaign mailings last city election supporting Mayor Monique Ashton and council members Kate Fulton, Marissa Valeri and Adam Van Grack, all of whom oppose rent stabilization.\*\*



The mailers were sent by a political action committee (PAC) named Affordable Maryland, but the actual funds came primarily from two PACs created by corporate landlords and developers: *Progressives for Progress* and *The Apartment and Office Building Association* (AOBA).

These groups also spread scare stories in the press, claiming rent stabilization shrinks the supply of new housing.

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**ROCKVILLE  
RENTERS  
UNITED**

*Renters United is produced by and for Rockville tenants, and we need YOU.* We need writers, artists, photographers, news tips and story ideas.

To help, contact [newsletter@rockvillrenters.org](mailto:newsletter@rockvillrenters.org)

Renters United is available at the following local businesses, and we appreciate their support: *Bubble Tea Café*, 130 Rollins Ave., F#1, *Coffee Republic*, 801 Pleasant Dr. #100, *Downtown Brews*, 5751 Fishers Lane, *Italiamo Kitchen*, 15855 Redland Road and *King Craft Beer and Wine*, 402 King Farm Blvd., Ste. 100. Copies can also be found on public bulletin boards and in public libraries across the city.

We are published by **Rockville Renters United (RRU)**, a citywide coalition of tenant associations. For information, contact [rockvillrenters.org](http://rockvillrenters.org)

# Who Owns My Building?

Who is your landlord? Who pockets your rent check and hires your building manager? Can your landlord afford to spend more on maintenance and repair? Do they really need another rent hike or more fees?

Every issue, we'll explore who owns Rockville's apartment buildings. As you'll see, our landlords are mostly billion-dollar companies based in other states. This means tens of millions of dollars in rent payments flow out of our community every month, starving local businesses and weakening our economy.

## **Terano Apartment Homes, The Galvan at Twinbrook Station, and The Alaire at Twinbrook Station**

**Owner: EastSky Properties LLC (Private Equity Company)**

"Private equity" companies like to live in the shadows, disclosing little about who they are or how they operate. EastSky Properties is an excellent example.

Because private companies don't sell shares on the open market, they are legally free to conceal assets and construct complex layers of partnerships, subsidiaries and even shell companies that hide what they're worth and who is responsible for company actions.

It's unclear, for example, where EastSky is even located. One set of Maryland records says their principal office is in Delaware. Not so. The listed address belongs to a management services company.

A second set of records shows EastSky is based in Suite 295 of a building outside Baltimore. But some digging found no business listed at that address. After several calls to companies in that building, a helpful soul walked to Suite 295 and reported a sign on the door for Limitless Management LLC, a real estate investment firm.

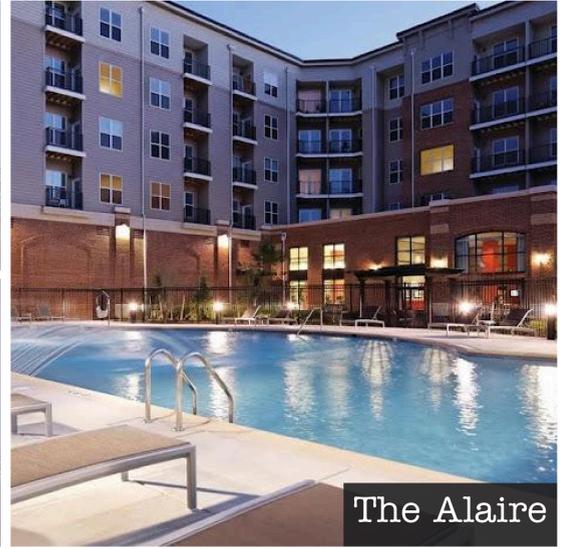
A *third* set of Maryland records lists EastSky's principal offices at 366 Madison Ave., New York City.



Terano



The Galvan



The Alaire

In fact, that address belongs to L3C Capital Partners — an investment firm headed by two of EastSky Properties' top officers.

### **Peeling the onion: What we do know**

EastSky's website says the company "invests opportunistically in multi-family real estate," meaning they take big risks for big rewards by investing in, and then improving, distressed or marginal-value apartment complexes. The site provides the names and brief bios of company officers, a short history of EastSky, and general descriptions of the properties they own.

EastSky owns 11 apartment buildings with 4,781 units in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Texas and Virginia. Maryland records show EastSky bought its three Twinbrook properties in 2022, paying \$79.43 million for The Alaire, \$152.5 million for The Galvan, and \$89.5 million for The Terano.

While EastSky discloses nothing about its internal finances, an informed business source put the company's total assets at \$1.5 to \$2.5 billion. But that doesn't tell us much, because EastSky is wrapped in a web of partnerships, subsidiaries and joint ventures which, together, own and manage more than 160,000 apartments, nationwide. These include: **L3C Capital Partners**; **Briarwood Construction Management** (services all L3C properties); **BlueSky Management Group** (a joint venture between EastSky and RAM Partners LLC that manages all EastSky properties); **Pointe Management Group** (a joint venture between RAM and L3C providing services from contract enforcement to building maintenance), and **JADE Financial Partners LLC** (a partnership between L3C Capital and FM Capital with \$2 billion in assets).

So, who is EastSky? It's really hard to say. All we know for sure is they are investors with tons of money and fingers in every phase of the U.S. real estate industry.

## **Rent Stabilization: What it is. Why we don't have it. How we'll get it.**

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Prominent developers—including Arnold and Julie Polinger of the Polinger Company, J. Gunnar Gingery of Commodore Management, and Hugo Cantu and Brian Anleu of AOBA —have appeared at council meetings to praise city leaders for voting against adopting the county law. (Polinger, Commodore and AOBA also contributed to the PACs that sent the political mailings mentioned above.)

The mayor and council majority even voted last summer to not allow rent stabilization on the agenda for public debate. This, even though capping rents is the top issue in public comments submitted to the council.

They claim, falsely, that rent stabilization is identical to inflexible rent control laws enacted in U.S. cities more than 60 years ago. They ignore decades of research showing rent stabilization provides more secure long-term housing without discouraging new construction if it is structured to provide fair returns to developers and accompanied by programs to promote affordable housing similar to ones already on the books in Rockville.

### **How we'll get it**

"Politicians who ignore the plight of tenants seem to forget that renters make up nearly half the city, and we *vote*," said Grant Samms, chair of Rockville Renters United.

"Fifty-six percent of us already pay more than one third of

our income in rent. One in four of us pay more than half our income in rent. And the federal layoffs mean more and more tenants are hurting. We'll keep talking to our city leaders," he added. "But I think it's time to find new ones."

*\*The current inflation rate is 2.7%, so the maximum allowable rent increase under county law is 5.7%.*

*\*\*Council members Zola Shaw and David Myles support rent stabilization. Barry Jackson, who did not receive free mailings from corporate developers last election, opposes it.*



At their December meeting, The Montgomery County Renters Alliance recognized the founders of Rockville Renters United for their work to advance tenant rights.