

Carrington Place rent squabble settled

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

When Pat Query first met former Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnoni, she was at an art fair and in her slippers.

That's OK with Query. Their meeting prompted her public complaints about a 9-percent increase at the subsidized Carrington Place Apartments for Seniors at Freedom and Drake roads, and a final resolution to that problem Monday night.

"Someday, when I write a book, I want you to know this will be a very important chapter," Query said.

Query and fellow resident Fred

Pidruny — members of a city council-sponsored committee formed to negotiate with Carrington Place owners — breathed a collective sigh of relief as a final report on a resolution to their problems was read aloud.

Carrington Place owners Sam Yaker and Armen Kalaydjian, who received low-interest financing through the Michigan State Housing Authority, have agreed to limit rent increases to five-percent per year for five years through June 1, 1996.

"Carrington residents are helping the owners of Carrington to expand the 5 percent beyond the year 1996," Pidruny said.

CARRINGTON PLACE'S rent restriction is based on a new state policy prompted by meetings arranged by state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, councilwoman Nancy Bates and with MSBDA.

The new policy requires MSBDA to cap the amount of rent increase allowed each year to 5 percent for residents of MSBDA-financed housing.

Unfortunately, the Carrington contract with MSBDA in 1990 was signed before this new state policy. Though not required to follow the policy, Carrington owners Yaker and Kalaydjian nonetheless agreed by letter to limit their rent increases.

"This should give residents at Carrington Place an opportunity to plan future expenses and to feel confident they will not have to be fearful of another enormous increase," according to the report.

Still, residents were forced to pay a 9-percent rent increase in 1991 because it was based on a formula determined by the federal Housing and Urban Development Index.

"The 9-percent happened and there was nothing we could do about it," said Steve Brock, assistant to the city manager and staff member to the committee. "It was the formula. I think it was catching up for the 1980s (when rent increases were

small)."

THE MSBDA cap allows rents to increase from zero to 5-percent maximum per year. The HUD formula will continue to be used to determine the amount of increase that will be allowed, if any. But it cannot exceed 5 percent, according to the report.

In 1990, the city allowed the Carrington Place partners to make a 4-percent payment in lieu of taxes because they received MSBDA financing.

That means Carrington pays, instead of property taxes, 4 percent of its revenue from shelter rents, which are rent receipts after utility costs. The special status allows Carrington Place to provide low-income housing based on income eligibility. The tax break, which means lower

costs for the partners, allows lower rents. MSBDA subsidies also are supposed to be available to tenants who use more than 40 percent of their income for housing.

Despite Carrington partners' agreement to limit increases in the next five years, councilman Aldo Vagnoni, also a committee member, remains annoyed.

"I would have liked to have seen more. We really had no clout with the owner," Vagnoni said. "I would have liked to have seen more assistance from the owner. We bailed him out (with the payment in lieu of taxes)."

Vagnoni reminded the council that Carrington partner Yaker promised to keep rents reasonable and that Robert McQuaid, executive director of Blaplat Manor, would manage Carrington Place.

Committee addresses concerns

Rent increases weren't the only topic before a Farmington Hills City Council-sponsored committee formed to negotiate problems with the owners of Carrington Place Apartments for Seniors.

The committee addressed the following concerns with Carrington Place owners:

- To protect future Carrington Place residents from shock and surprise about rental rates, applicants will be informed and sign a statement of understanding that rent may increase annually each June 1 through 1996 or 30 days after figures are released from HUD, whichever

- date is later.
- Carrington residents may decide among themselves whether they want to establish a residents council.
- Addendums to leases will be automatic in 12-month increments after June 1, 1992. Tenants may terminate the lease agreement prior to the ending date with 30 days written notice.
- Fire drills will occur frequently.
- Snow removal will be adequate to allow for "reasonable and safe use" of the sidewalks and parking lots.

Based on concerns from committee member Pat Query, state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, will introduce legislation for an escape clause for seniors who are awaiting acceptance into subsidized housing but have a present lease elsewhere. Seniors are often forced to pay the remaining months' rent at their former residence in order to move out into subsidized housing.

Dolan's legislation reportedly will include coverage for senior adults who must leave their current housing because of health problems or because they require assisted or nursing home care.

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