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Mobile home park residents protest eviction

BY DANNY TEIGMAN

daniel.teigman@newsday.com

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Residents of the Syosset Mobile Home Park stepped up their opposition to their impending December eviction Wednesday with a sign-carrying protest.

The protest comes about 5 1/2 months before about 100 people in 55 homes set back in a five-acre lot south of Jericho Turnpike are supposed to begin leaving.

Syosset-based STP Associates wants to develop the property and began sending out eviction notices last month as part of a settlement with residents that gave them extra time to leave.

Residents have refused to pay increases they said boosted their rents from \$500 or \$600 a month to \$750 or \$1,000 a month, and appealed a March ruling by a State Supreme Court judge in Nassau that said STP can evict tenants who have not paid their rent.

Residents then argued that they were entitled to six months' notice instead of 30 days.

The developers are considering building condos, rentals and a commercial area, said Judy White, a spokeswoman for STP.

But residents said that they have no intention of leaving. They are holding two protests each day, Tuesday through Friday, to call attention to their situation.

"I don't foresee us going anywhere," said Marcy Rappaport, 41, a three-year resident of the mobile home park and vice president of the community's advocacy group, the HOPE Association of Syosset. She said the developers "bought an occupied property. How is that humane? How is that moral?"

For many of the residents, mobile home living provides the only affordable housing available on Long Island, Rappaport said. Homeowners own their homes mortgage-free, but do not own the land. They pay the developer to oversee the park's sewers, garbage collection and plumbing.

"This home has found me an affordable way to make ends meet," said a teary-eyed Ginger Bonner, 50, a 10-year mobile home resident. "I'm struggling, my heart is struggling. I want to be here forever."



Bonner, who said her last home burned down, works at an assisted living center in Westbury. With limited income, she has nowhere else to go, she said.

"I'm out there picketing, but I'm dying," Bonner said.

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