



Crystal Graham <crystal@augustafreepress.com>

RE: CIM Group/Southern Towers

1 message

Jami Schlicher <jschlicher@jconnelly.com>
To: "crystal@augustafreepress.com" <crystal@augustafreepress.com>

Wed, Jun 28, 2023 at 12:15 PM

Hi Crystal,

I saw your story and wanted to reach out as I represent CIM Group. I don't think we received an inquiry or fair chance to provide you with any comments or statement, so I am reaching out to ask if you would please include our statement in your story to represent CIM Group's response on this matter?

Please let me know if you are willing to add our statement to the story and if you have any questions. I realize the statement is long, but it is all very important context/facts and we would appreciate it if you could run it in its entirety.

Thank you!
Jami

**This can be attributed to a spokesperson for CIM Group.

"CIM Group has long been a proud member of the Alexandria, VA community as the owner and operator of several properties, including Southern Towers where the firm took over operations in 2020. It was immediately clear to Southern Towers Management that they needed to address years of deferred maintenance and make important quality-of-life improvements to the development including long-overdue roof replacements; renovation of apartments, corridors, and common areas; resurfacing parking areas and tennis courts; new playgrounds and much more.

While Southern Towers is not an affordable housing community, CIM Group has worked diligently to keep rent 20% below comparable properties in Alexandria, while at the same time, making significant improvements to the habitability of Southern Towers. Residents have always paid a portion of their utilities and continue to be responsible for the costs they incur.

Southern Towers Management has never violated the CARES Act or any local, state or Federal laws. In fact, CIM Group is legally required to utilize a form provided by the State of Virginia—referred to as a 5-Day Notice—to notify residents when they are in arrears. CIM Group has no control over the language used in the form and any call for modifications should be directed to the State of Virginia.

Despite much disinformation, Southern Towers Management will not be deterred from their commitment to the community they serve, their legal obligation and the fiduciary duty the company has to investors who have also helped improve the living conditions at Southern Towers from what existed prior to CIM Group's ownership.

CIM Group has made significant improvements for the overall wellbeing of the residents at Southern Towers, including:

1. *Providing assistance during the pandemic to residents who suffered financial setbacks that resulted in more than \$5 million in rental assistance secured for hundreds of families.*
2. *Increasing the level of regular maintenance well beyond what was the norm under the prior owner by 96%, which is more than \$8.2M to address significant deferred maintenance issues.*
3. *Instituting an online resident portal that provides transparent and open communication, as well as a seamless way for residents to submit work orders, which expedites necessary repair and maintenance.*
4. *Prioritizing community involvement by organizing farmers markets, job fairs, food drives, and vaccination clinics.*
5. *Engaging residents in a transparent and ongoing way by holding monthly meetings and appreciation events, as well as communicating important dates and information in the resident portal, as well as the weekly and monthly newsletters.*
6. *Taking on many infrastructure development initiatives including:*
 1. ***Fostering a secure and healthy environment by:***
 1. *Installing security cameras in each elevator landing in each tower and upgrading cameras on the lobby level in each tower. The entire project is anticipated to be completed by the end of July 2024.*
 2. *Upgrading all smoke detectors and replacing every unit on the campus with smoke detector/CO2 combo units.*
 3. *Repairing the retaining wall near the Ashlawn.*
 4. *Installing Flock Security – license plate reading cameras installed at each entrance to the property.*
 5. *Upgrading the fire alarm panel at Sherwood.*
 6. *Purchasing a new Jeep for patrolling the campus.*
 7. *Performing a thorough Pest Control inspection and preventative treatments of all common areas and every apartment home as well as sealing of any holes found during the inspection.*
 2. ***Making material upgrades to improve the quality of living at Southern Towers:***
 1. *Making significant laundry room upgrades, including purchasing new washer and dryer equipment for each floor at every building. The new equipment also included upgraded payment panel allowing residents the option to use cash, credit/debit cards or an app to pay for service.*
 2. *Enhancing and upgrading the dog park.*
 3. *Tennis Court resurfacing, striping and new nets. Upgrade also included replacing the solo player wall.*
 4. *Resurfacing the overflow parking area.*
 5. *Asphalt resurfacing at Beauregard entrance near The Graham and Monticello.*
 6. *Replacing all of the playground equipment.*
 7. *Beautifying the property including removing 26 dead or rotting trees from the campus and pruned trees in the community park to raise tree canopy by 3 feet, allowing better sight lines.*
 8. *Replacing 4 outdoor gas grills at Graham.*
 9. *Installing new grilling areas throughout the community park.*
 10. *Expanding concrete pads at grilling areas which include new accessible seating.*
 11. *Installing a new pergola over the grilling area closest to the Monticello pool.*
 12. *Complete resurfacing of the Monticello main and small pools.*
 13. *HVAC convector project completed at the Sherwood.*
 14. *HVAC system inspections completed across the campus.*
 15. *Window and Balcony door mock-ups completed at Ashlawn and Monticello. Each building scheduled for full window replacement by Q4 2023.”*

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