

David Townsend
Tenke Di Piero
89 Foxcroft Drive
Scarborough, ME 04074

* Inspections

SO. MAINE POST

18 DEC 2014



CITY CLERK

2014 DEC 19 PM 2:43

City of Portland
389 Congress Street
Room 203
Portland, ME 04101

Attn: City Clerk Katherine Jones

04101953050





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David Townsend
Tenlee DiPierro
89 Foxcroft Drive
Scarborough, ME 04074

207-522-0762

December 17, 2014

City Of Portland
389 Congress Street
Room 203
Portland, ME 04101
Attention: City Clerk, Katherine Jones

Dear Ms. Jones:

We lived at 174 Glenwood Avenue, #2, Portland, ME 04103 for over 2 years. Although we loved our apartment and the space it provided, we had concerns regarding our health and safety, for almost the entire 2 years. We did not have the financial means to move until now or we would not have stayed that long. We have talked with the owner/landlady numerous times, but nothing has been taken care of. Her name is Susan Coffin, and she lives on the 1st floor of 174 Glenwood Avenue. I have text messages and private messages between Susan and myself, documenting some of our communications regarding our concerns with the safety of the apartment. However, many of our communications were oral.

After we vacated the residence and attempted to get our security deposit back, she informed us that she no longer owned the building. She claims that Christian Erdmann now owns it, and that we would have to deal with him for our security deposit. He also resides on the 1st floor at 174 Glenwood Avenue. I am not sure that he in fact owns it, but either way, they both reside there.

I will list items of concern, and add photos and hope that you will check this residence out before allowing future tenants to reside there. Presently, the 3rd floor is vacant because the tenant is in the hospital, and my understanding is that he will not be returning to the apartment. So to my knowledge, the only apartment of the 3 that is being lived in right now, is the 1st floor.

We moved out December 4, 2014. We considered just leaving and letting these issues go, but after the "Noyes Street" fire, we decided that if someone moved in to this location, and something like that happened, we would never forgive ourselves for not at least making an attempt at making sure the residence was safe.

1. In an 8 room apartment, (2nd floor) there is only 1 smoke detector, which was installed after the Portland Fire Department showed up at the owner's door,

(approximately June 2013) saying "many" fire codes were in violation and needed to be rectified. The landlady/owner told me they required fire doors and wiring updates, which have not been taken care of. Apparently, this has been brought to her attention a few times in the last few years by the Portland Fire Department, yet has not been taken care of. The location of the 1 smoke detector is quite far from the front bedroom, and I am not sure that is an adequate amount of smoke detectors for the square footage of the apartment.

In her 1st floor apartment, the smoke detector is totally unhooked in the living room, and I believe that is the only one she has.

2. One of the means of exit, (the back hallway between the apartment on the 3rd floor and 2nd floor) has an A/C unit sitting on the floor which partially blocks your means of egress from the 3rd floor. Also, often times there are empty pizza boxes on the 1st floor back hallway, piled to the ceiling, along with bags of trash. I would think this would be a concern for both fire safety and rodents.

3. Often times when we have a vacuum cleaner running and turn on a light or appliance in another room, the circuit breaker trips, and we have to go to the breaker box and reset it. I assume there may be a voltage issue.

4. The tenants on the 3rd floor and 1st floor, have both told me of mice problems. They have expressed concern that mice are found dead in their coffee cups, have been seen running across the counters, etc. We have cats, so have not seen mice, but have had mice droppings under our kitchen and bathroom sinks.

5. No radon testing has been done in the two years we have lived here, or evidence provided that one has ever been done.

(Re: Radon Testing

By 2012 and every ten years thereafter, a landlord must test the air of a residential building for the presence of radon and provide written notice to tenants of the results and the risks associated with radon. If the test results reveal a level of radon of 4.0 Pico curies per litre of air or above, the landlord must take measures to reduce the radon level below the 4.0 level.³⁵)

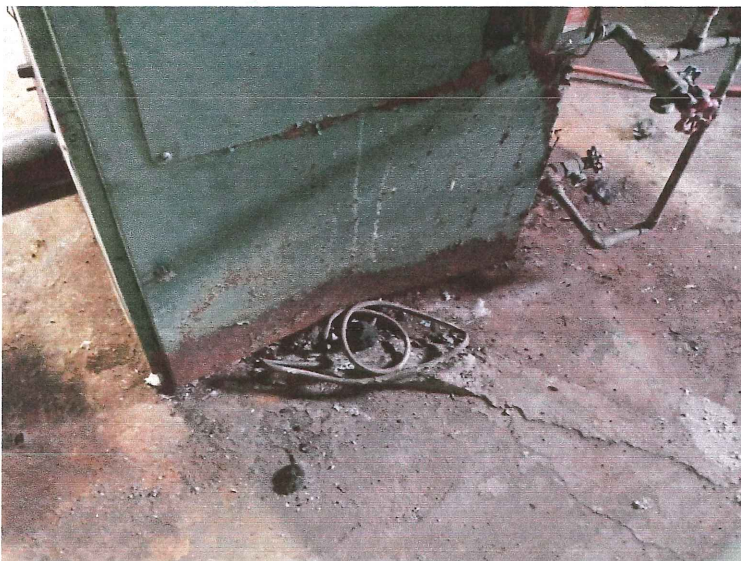
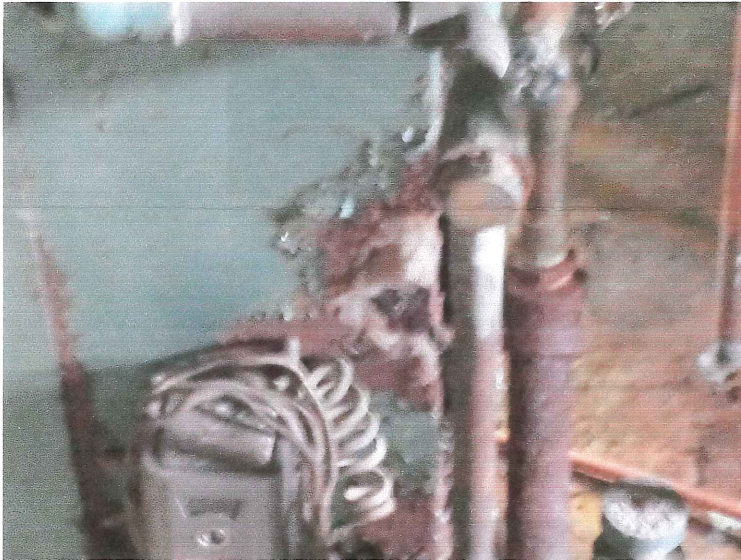
6. We have RED stains in our sinks, bathtub and on our dishes from the water, and have no idea if the water is even safe to drink.

7. We had to go to the basement to check the levels in our oil tank. Two different times in our 2 years there, we found leaks in the basement and were told by the owner that it was raw sewage. We were only told that after contacting her to advise her of the problem. She was aware and only then told us we were walking through raw sewage! I have videos but will attach a few photos of the most recent "leakage" that we had to walk through, to check our fuel levels. Approximately October, 2014.



After this happened the last time (approximately 10/2014), we asked if the floor was sanitized or sterilized and we were told it was (by Susan Coffin). However, it does not look or smell like that took place.

While seeing the raw sewage leak into the basement, we observed our furnace and hot water heater. They are both extremely rusted, and we paid for both heat and hot water. When I questioned the landlady about the safety of our furnace (and I even sent her a photo of it), she assured me it was fine. I asked her if she would have the furnace serviced and she did not comply. I have no evidence of it being serviced or checked in the 2+ years we lived there. The next photos are of our furnace, and our hot water heater.





8. We were told when we moved there that we could use the back yard for our grilling and recreation. The lawn was not mowed, the landlady's dogs "did their business" out there and it was never cleaned up, and they use the back yard for their trash.

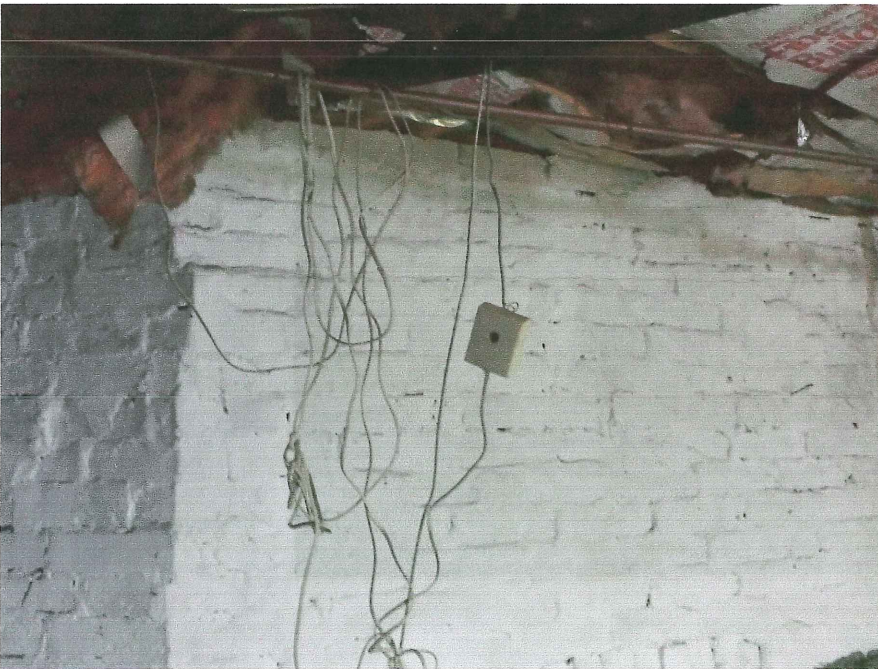
These photos show some of their back yard trash.

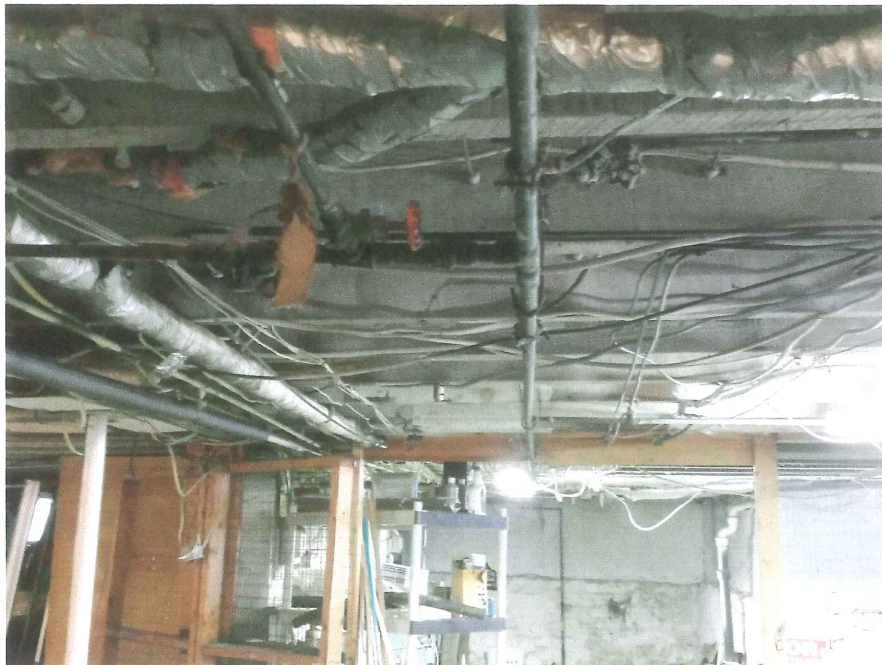




These photos were taken AFTER my boyfriend/roommate had taken approximately 4 truck loads to the dump. He finally gave up since they kept putting more trash out there.

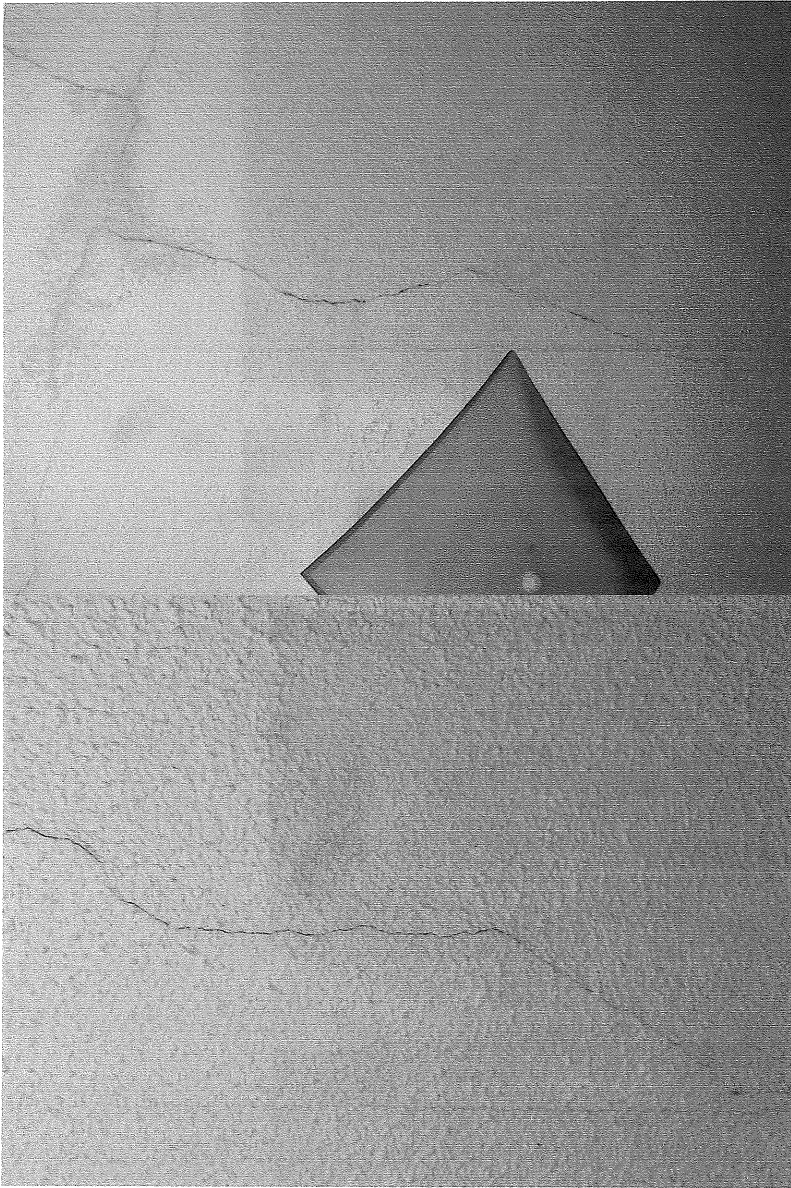
9. We had a real concern about the wiring. As I mentioned earlier, we are continuously having to reset the circuit breakers, and here are a few photos of the wiring in the basement. We also wonder if the black on the insulation, could possibly be black mold.

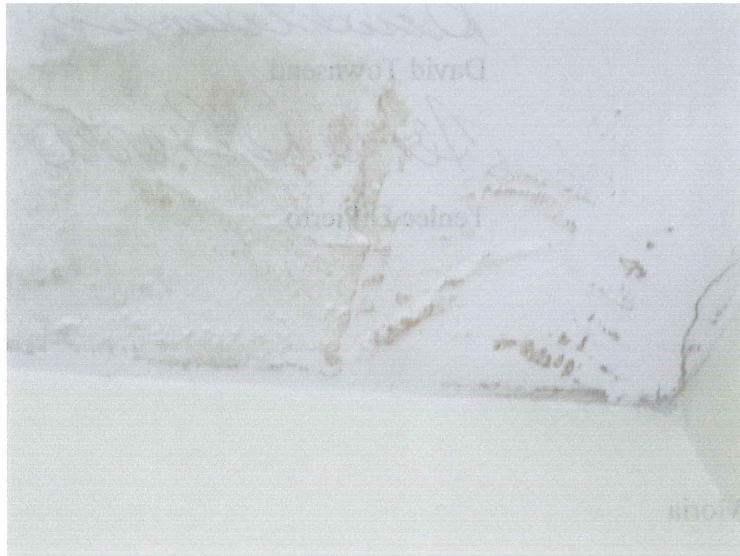
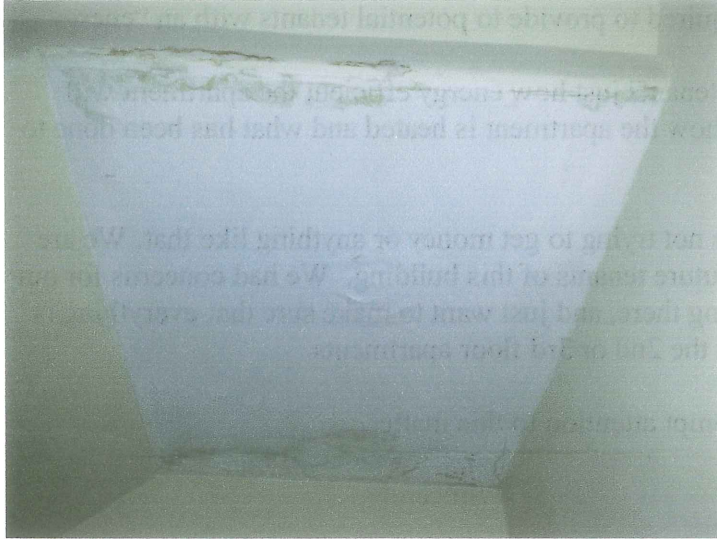




10. We have complained that our ceilings seem to be "snowing plaster" in our apartment. The landlady said she would send "the maintenance man" up to look at them. The maintenance man told us they were old ceilings, and would continue to "snow" because they were old. Each day we had to sweep up the plaster, and more and more cracks showed up DAILY! Twice we had to call Susan because we had leaks in our apartment. One was from the roof and the other from the 3rd floor apartment's bathroom.

Here are a few photos of the ceilings. The photos do not show that some of these cracks are actually bulging.





We were never provided an "energy efficiency disclosure statement", and spent a lot of money on oil, and electric for hot water and utilities. We even put plastic on our windows the first winter to try and save on fuel costs, to no avail because there are drafts around all of the windows, and some of the storm windows do not even close.

I have another safety concern regarding the windows as well. Many of the "ropes" that keep the windows from slamming shut, are broken. I have come very close to having a window slam on my hand because they are not working properly. If in fact the window were to slam on someone's hand, it would certainly break bones. These are big, old, heavy windows.

(Re: As of 2007, landlords are required to provide to potential tenants with an “energy efficiency disclosure statement,” which tells tenants just how energy efficient the apartment will be.²⁹ This statement summarizes how the apartment is heated and what has been done to winterize the apartment.)

We are not planning to sue and are not trying to get money or anything like that. We are just extremely concerned for any future tenants of this building. We had concerns for our own health and safety while residing there, and just want to make sure that everything is up to code before new tenants rent the 2nd or 3rd floor apartments.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



David Townsend



Tenlee DiPierro

cc: Portland Fire Department
380 Congress Street
Portland, ME 04101
Attention: Chief Jerome LaMoria