

*It saddens me that the members of the Ad Hoc Committee were prophetic in their warnings to the local government leaders, but like the proverbial prophets were not accepted or listened to in their own land.*

*The Ad Hoc Committee also asked for a watch dog committee to be established so that social justice issues pertaining to displacement, etc., could and would be addressed.*

*Needless to say, if attorneys can not protect themselves from gentrification one can only imagine what is happening to the homeowners and renters who are "in the way."*

- Eugenia Rudmann, Co-chair of the Community Board 12Q Ad Hoc Committee

[http://www.nydailynews.com/ny\\_local/queens/2008/05/13/2008-05-13\\_rezoning\\_of\\_jamaica\\_hurts\\_small\\_business.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2008/05/13/2008-05-13_rezoning_of_jamaica_hurts_small_business.html)

## **Rezoning of Jamaica hurts small businesses, nonprofits**

BY JESS WISLOSKI

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Toba Stutz, a court-appointed attorney, in her former office at 161-10 Jamaica Ave. She says assistance in finding new space since her eviction has been lax.

It has been months since a sweeping rezoning plan for [Jamaica](#) won city approval, bolstered by hopes of an economic renaissance.

But some small businesses and nonprofit groups - many of them mainstays of the shabby shopping strip along Jamaica Ave. - have become unintended casualties of the city's vision.

*Farriella for News*

Since December, 16 firms have moved from an office building at 161-10 Jamaica Ave. - an ornate structure that dates back to 1921.

Most of the small law firms and nonprofits that once filled the building have relocated or shut down for good. The three that remain are either fighting their eviction in court or are about to move.

"The rezoning, frankly - I didn't think it would have this effect," said pro bono attorney Archibong Archibong, 43.



"It's a loss to the community," which "needs services like mine," he said.

Tenants blame the former landlord, [JP Morgan Chase](#), for the situation that took them from what they described as borderline harassment to eviction.

Problems started in 2005, when the city began public scoping hearings about the rezoning. The landlord was "ignoring or sidestepping everybody's requests for a [renewed] lease," at that time, recalled Archibong.

The entire building defaulted into month-to-month leases, he said, which make it easier for owners to evict tenants.

[Toba Stutz](#), a court-appointed attorney who challenged her eviction, said maintenance of the building quickly went to pot.

JP Morgan Chase hired a management firm that fired maintenance workers. Leaking pipes flooded bathrooms, ceiling tiles fell and heat became unreliable, she said.

In September, tenants received "warm and fuzzy" letters asking them to renew leases but they never received papers to sign, tenants said.

Then, in November, evictions began.

Property records show that JP Morgan Chase sold the building in September to a limited liability company called BREOF, a subsidiary of [Canada](#)-based [Brookfield Asset Management](#), which owns \$95 billion in [U.S.](#) assets.

An attorney representing both BREOF and JP Morgan Chase in the dispute declined to comment. So did [Greater Jamaica Development Corp.](#), which championed the rezoning.

City Councilman Leroy Comrie (D-[St. Albans](#)), who voted for the rezoning, said he was saddened by the turn of events at 161-10 Jamaica Ave.

"We will try to do whatever we can to relocate folks in the Jamaica area," he said.

Stutz, who's still looking for space, said the development corporation has been unsuccessful in finding alternate spots for other clients as well.

"I love my office. I did not want to leave my office, but I don't have any choice. There's nothing around," Stutz said.

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