

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Posted on Thu, Apr. 8, 2010

Security at issue after reported rape of girl, 7

By Aaron Morrison

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRENTON, N.J. - Security has long been a problem at a crime-ridden apartment building where police say a 7-year-old girl was gang-raped after her stepsister sold her to a group of men at a party, residents complained Wednesday.

Most residents of Rowan Towers said they remained unsatisfied after meeting Wednesday with officials from the company that owns it, Interstate Realty Management Co. Others said they didn't get a chance to voice their concerns.

The meeting, which included representatives from the mayor's office and the police department, was closed to most media, though a reporter with a local newspaper was escorted in after it began.

Some residents who attended later said the building management and police offered no new solutions for improving security.

"They [IRM and police] just kept saying 'We have a solution for that' when tenants asked about building security matters," resident Monyay Williams said. "We've been asking for cameras. We've been asking for a lot of things."

When tenants began raising their voices in dissatisfaction with the responses to their complaints, the meeting was ended.

IRM and police officials called the meeting productive. Police Director Irving Bradley Jr. said tenants should know officers will step up their efforts to keep them safe.

"Even though there was a lot of anger, people were able to vocalize a lot of complaints," Bradley said. "We'll be doing some more surveying of the exterior and the interior of the building to improve security."

IRM lacks the expertise to handle security on its own and will hire an outside consultant, spokeswoman Laura Zaner said.

"We can't successfully manage the building without investing in its security" Zaner said. "We will have to put up the money."

Confirming a fear of many tenants at the meeting, Zaner said those who were detained on unrelated warrants in a police raid last week could face eviction if they are found guilty of the crimes. According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations, a management company is given authority to evict tenants convicted of certain crimes, Zaner said.

Most of the tenants swept up in the raid were single mothers who have lived in the building for more than a decade and said their warrants were for minor infractions.

Rowan Towers sits on a stretch of West State Street, near downtown Trenton, and is surrounded by blocks of abandoned, boarded-up homes. It's fronted by a well-manicured lawn and features a colorful playground and a basketball court.

Neighbors of Rowan Towers say some tenants and their guests have long been a nuisance to the neighborhood.

"It's just so wild, open and free," said Sharon Jackson, who lives in a seniors building next to Rowan Towers. "You get yourself a bottle [of alcohol] and a bag of weed, and there aren't too many people that won't invite you in over there. It's like life is one big party."


Concerns about Rowan Towers greatly increased after a 15-year-old girl took her 7-year-old stepsister to a party there with some men on March 28. The teen sold sex to men in the room, then took money to let them touch the younger girl, police said.

Touching turned to forcible sex, as at least seven men and boys raped the 7-year-old, police said.

Two men and three teenage boys have been charged in the attack.

Find this article at:

http://www.philly.com/philly/news/breaking/20100408_Residents_complain_about_security_after_reported_rape_of_7-year-old_gi.html

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright | Philly Online, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Any copying, redistribution or retransmission of any of the contents of this service without the express written consent of Philly Online, LLC is expressly prohibited.

