The agency warns of COVID-19 risk for renters who lose homes, but doesn’t cancel rent or late fees.

Tenants billed for doomed complex

Tampa apartments are being razed, but residents’ security deposits are docked.

BY CHRISTOPHER CORMHILL
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — The sale of Tampa Park Apartments, an unenviable development for low-income families and people on disability benefits who continued to pay rent to a roof over their heads in the midst of a pandemic, was important for this freeze was “the only way to make a red light visible,” said Hillsborough County commissioners.

While their focus was on helping the nonprofit that owns Tampa Park Apartments, they had been making it tougher for families to cover their rent.

Parts of the security deposits from several families who already moved out were held to pay for cleaning, legal fees, and rent to collect the funds. The tenants were already out of their homes, even though many of the complex’s security measures were in place.

The property’s remaining residents also learned Monday that they must move out by Oct. 2, or risk losing the roof over their heads.

The notification was part of an email that was sent to tenants. It includes language stating that tenants are subject to eviction.

Some local owners wonder why they must stay closed when Florida has let other businesses reopen.

By Helen Freund
Times Food Critic

Some, perhaps many, local business owners wonder why they were the last to be allowed to reopen.

When a COVID-19 vaccine is ready, who should be first in line for it? That is the question under the microscope.

The property, which is owned by Michael Brinkmann, 54, is a longtime bartender and manager at the Emerald Bar, 550 Central Ave. N, in St. Petersburg.

“Do you think you’re going to have a vaccine before the Emerald Bar reopens?” Brinkmann asked.

The property owner is one of just a few restaurants in the state that have had to close for five months due to the pandemic.

Some owners wonder why they might be allowed to reopen as other businesses already have.

The federal money is to be used for supplies to protect guests, staff.

Red Tide may face a new foe: beer

Scientists say a brewing byproduct may hold promise against algae blooms.

BY JACOB T. TAMPS
Times Staff Writer

Tampa Bay Beer Co. in Bradenton needs to get rid of thousands of pounds of spent brewing grain.

Known as spent grain, the cracked kernels are a byproduct of making beer. It’s bigger than a grain of rice. Usually, farmers haul off the grain for their livestock to eat, said Vince Lovko, the brewery’s head brewer.

But more recently, some of it has gone to a new destination at the nearby More Marine Laboratory.

Researchers there are trying to find a way to slow Red Tide, a scourge for Florida’s Gulf Coast. They believe the spent grain could hold an answer in molecules that small algae blooms of Red Tide kill fish and drive away boaters. It could hold some cash with the even- ing sunbathers of off the beach.

Besides the putrid smell, it causes breathing problems.

In early tests, the kind of molecule that exists in spent grain has killed small amounts of the organism in a test tube within a few hours, said Vince Lovko, a see REDS, 10A.

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