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**HOMEOWNERS VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY TO**

**MAKE UNION SQUARE'S ICONIC ZECKENDORF TOWERS**

**THE LARGEST SMOKE-FREE CONDO IN NEW YORK CITY**

*Owners join with NYC Department of Health, Manhattan Smoke-Free Partnership on campaign to enact landmark smoke-free policy in 29-story, 647-unit condo*

**New York, NY (EMBARGOED UNTIL FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2013)** – Homeowners in Zeckendorf Towers, the famed 29-story, 647-unit pyramid-topped building that led the revitalization of Union Square more than 20 years ago, have set a new city milestone by voting overwhelmingly to become the largest completely smoke-free condominium in New York City.

In a landmark vote, a record 85% of unit owners voted on the policy, making it the strongest voting turnout in the building's history. Of those unit owners casting ballots, an overwhelming 83.5% voted in favor of the amendment to prohibit smoking in both residential units and public areas for all new residents, with a grandfather clause granting existing owner-residents who smoke a three-year interval before their units are subject to the smoke-free policy.

The vote makes Zeckendorf Towers the largest non-smoking residential property – including condominium, cooperative, and rental buildings – in New York City, and possibly in the entire nation. While several new condominiums in New York City have prohibited smoking since their opening, Zeckendorf Towers is one of only a handful of condominiums whose unit owners have voted to transition their building to smoke-free status.

The vote comes on the heels of a recent [Quinnipiac Poll](#) revealing that 59% percent of New Yorkers would prefer to live in a smoke-free building, yet a majority would also prefer that the restriction not be dictated by the city.

The building's board first began to explore going smoke-free in 2010, following numerous complaints from residents about cigarette smoke. After confirming that they could legally prohibit smoking by amending the building's bylaws, the board partnered with the New York City Department of Health and Manhattan Smoke-Free Partnership, part of the NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City, a health advocacy group that supports the efforts of buildings adopting smoke-free policies.

The smoke-free decision is the latest of several milestones for Zeckendorf Towers, which sparked the resurgence of Union Square when it opened in 1987. In 2010, the building launched the city's largest green roof initiative, a 14,000 square-foot oasis of dogwood and Japanese maple trees, rhododendrons, hostas, ferns, sedum, and moss.

"Zeckendorf Towers has always been at the forefront of real estate innovation in New York City, and we're proud to be leading the way once again on another step forward that will improve the quality of life for our neighbors and our community," said Pete Ellis, a member of the Zeckendorf Tower condominium homeowners board. "We hope that our example will inspire other buildings throughout the city to go smoke-free and improve the health of our city."

"Smoke-free housing is a growing national trend, and we congratulate the board and management company of Zeckendorf Towers on this landmark move," said Maria Pico, Borough Manager for the Manhattan Smoke-Free Partnership. "Just as they did three years ago, when they opened the city's largest residential green roof, Zeckendorf Towers has set a new benchmark for the Union Square neighborhood by going smoke-free and becoming the largest smoke-free condominium in New York City."

Pico noted that 97.5% of Manhattan homes are in a multi-unit building (3+ units) and 70% of all New York City homes are in multi-unit housing, the highest concentration in the country. Up to 65% of the air in such buildings is shared between units, and studies confirm that secondhand smoke travels between apartments and floors. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe level of secondhand smoke exposure.

"I am thrilled that such a large majority of my neighbors voted to make our building a healthier, safer, and more pleasant place to live," said Andrea York, a homeowner at Zeckendorf Towers who voted in favor of the smoke-free policy. "It feels great to know that I can sit in my living room and sleep in my bedroom with clean air again. Just like smokers have the right to smoke, non-smokers have the right to not inhale their smoke. Smokers can still be free to smoke but now they have to be a bit more concerned about where they do it. It feels great to sit in my living room and sleep in my bedroom with clean air again."

Zeckendorf Towers sits at the heart of what is now a thriving neighborhood that includes the Union Square Greenmarket, expanded pedestrian promenades and plazas, a new playground, and major retailers like Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, Nordstrom Rack, and Best Buy.

Properties in the building range from studios (\$600,000 - \$775,000) to one-bedrooms (\$870,000 - \$1.2 million) to two-bedrooms (\$1.4 million - \$3.2 million) and larger units, while most rentals range from \$2,700 to \$11,000. Many units in the 29-story towers boast views of the Manhattan skyline and the Hudson and East Rivers.

### **About One Square East Condominium**

Zeckendorf Towers is a 647 unit, mixed-use condominium located on Union Square. The distinctive four-tower, pyramid-topped building is a common sight to all who are familiar with the area. The building features landscaped roof gardens and courtyards, a full service health club, and a sky lobby supplementing the services provided by the street-level concierge. Zeckendorf Towers was first opened for occupancy in 1987, and is credited with initiating the re-vitalization of the Union Square area.

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