



Rat problem unchanged at Cheektowaga apartment complex

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CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (WKBW) - It was in [December](#) that 7 Eyewitness News viewer Sam Guida sent us cell phone video he shot just feet away from his home.

The video showed rats burrowing underneath brush and running in and out of dumpsters at the Garden Village Apartment complex in Cheektowaga.

Two months after the story first aired, Guida says not much has changed.

“I took a video on my phone last night the volume of rats is exactly the same,” Guida told 7 Eyewitness News. “One jumped out of the dumpster there were rats coming out of the ground behind the dumpster and there was a rat sitting there on the side of the dumpster which you can see in the video.”

Guida lives in the sub-division just next to Garden Village. His homeowners association has baited their side of the fence, but at the homeowner's expense.

"I don't feel like umm we should have to pay for the exterminator when we aren't the problem," Guida said.

The property manager of the complex declined to discuss the issue on camera but says his tenants are happy and they currently have a 95 percent occupancy rate.

The manager did admit there was a rat problem but says his has been working to address it. He says they have hired a qualified exterminator, have replaced all of the dumpsters, and are baiting on their side of the fence.

But Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein says that's not what her investigators have found.

"So our most recent inspection was on January 26th of this year and we found that they really haven't made any significant progress," Burstein said.

Dr. Burstein says in addition to refusing to sign a voluntary compliance waiver, investigators say the complex has failed to clean up the garbage, 12 trash totes were found open, and investigators found multiple rats nests that she says management has failed to exterminate.

Management with Garden Village has paid \$750 in fines to Erie County, but they maintain the rat infestation did not originate on their property. Management claims the vacant Garden Village Plaza is the true source of the problem - a theory Dr. Burstein refutes.

"The source of the rodent infestation is not the vacant lot. There is no food for them there. There's been nothing there for 10 years."

Dr. Burstein says the next step is a hearing.

Erie County will present their findings and apartment management will act as defense. She says a hearing officer will make a ruling about what needs to happen next. No time frame has been set for the hearing.