

An Open Letter to Elected Officials in the District of Columbia and Candidates for Citywide Office

We the undersigned believe that DC government's planning and development agencies have been effectively captured by the industries they are supposed to regulate. Judged by any relevant standard -- the American Institute of Certified Planners' Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct; the work product of planners in other American cities; responsible stewardship of public assets; and basic principles of democracy -- our planning and development agencies are failing.

It is time for change. And, change -- in both personnel and institutional culture -- is urgent because unelected bureaucrats and Commissioners are making major decisions that will have lasting consequences for our city's future. Profoundly dysfunctional planning practices and poor decision-making across the City have resulted in the displacement of longtime residents; the loss of small businesses; a surge in homelessness; and a crisis in housing affordability.

As voters and politically engaged citizens, we expect our elected officials to take responsibility for this situation and to use their powers -- of appointment, confirmation, oversight, budgeting, and legislation -- to ensure that policy choices are made democratically and with equal consideration for all neighborhoods; that agencies follow the law; that the preferences and interests of citizens are taken no less seriously than those of developers; that public land is used to serve public needs; and that actual planning (e.g. data collection and analysis, coordination among agencies) precedes and informs decisionmaking.

Toward that end, we request that

- any action on the proposed zoning regulations be deferred until after a robust public discussion of (and a Council vote on) amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,
- the incoming Mayor appoint a new Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, a new Director of the Office of Planning, and a new member of Zoning Commission,

- the Council require, as a condition of confirmation, that candidates for these positions have a track record of, and a commitment to, constructive engagement with diverse groups of citizens,

and that

- decisions on controversial public land PUDs be postponed until after these new leaders have been appointed and confirmed.

The following 157 DC residents have endorsed this letter as of September 15th 2014:

Gerri Adams-Simmons	Renee Bowser	Guy Durant
Carole Lewis Anderson	Dorothy Brizill	Jenefer Ellington
Karlene Armstead	Mary Buckley	Charles Ellis
Carol Aten	John Chelen	Erin Fairbanks
Bénédicte Aubrun	Judy Chesser	Derek Farwagi
Willie L. Baker, Jr.	George R. Clark	Nkechi Feaster
Mathew Bader	John Cloud	David Frankel
Allison Basile	Melba Conway	Linda Frees
Mary Belcher	Carolyn “Callie” Cook	Franklin Garcia
Detrice Belt	Charles Crews	Marta Perez Garcia
Gerald Bemis	Bill Crews	Alma Gates
Sherrill Berger	Janna Daniels	Harry F. Gates
Philip J. Blair, Jr.	Tim D’Emilio	Richard A. Graham
Wendy Blair	Jean-Christophe Deverines	Sara Green
Mary Bolton	Christy Dickens	Miriam Gusevich
Lyndi Borne	Robin Diener	Ted Guthrie

Colleen Hackett

Debby Hanrahan

John Hanrahan

Ann Hargrove

Larry Hargrove

Sue Hemberger

Marci Hilt

Jane Huntington

George Idelson

Denis James

Anise Jenkins

Judi Jones

Michelle Jones

Sam Jordan

William Jordan

Cassandra Joseph

Barbara Kahlow

Jeffrey Kraskin

Kathryn Kross

Bobbi Krengel

George Lang

Linda Leaks

Virginia Lee

Bart Leonard

Mary Alice Levine

Marcy Logan

Michael Lovendusky

Camille Loya

Peter Lyden

Sharon Lyden

Marge Maceda

Susan MacKnight

Sara Maddux

Meg Maguire

David Marlin

Susan McCarty

Mary McReynolds

Amy B. McVey

Teri Memolo

Cy Merkezaz

Will Merrifield

Elizabeth Mills

Barbara Morgan

Anthony Muhammad

Holly Muhammad

Lucille E. Murphy

Rosemary Ndubuizu

Carolyn Dungee Nicholas

Abigail Nichols

Cristina Nigro

Marybeth Onyeukwu

Patricia Ortman

Chris Otten

Jerry Peloquin

Pete Perry

Claudia Phelps

Schyla Pondexter

Evanna Powell

David F. Power

Perry Redd

Belinda Reeder

Wanda Reif

Johnnie Scott Rice

Laura Richards

Bob Richards

Suzanne Richardson

Glenda Jean Richmond

Michele Rivard

Robert Robinson

Joyce Robinson-Paul

Andrea Rosen

Mary Pat Rowan

Mary Rowse

John Salatti

Linda Schmitt

David Schwartzman

James E. Scott

Anne Sellin

Karen Settles

Patrick Sheary

Sonia Silbert

Marilyn Simon

Juliet G. Six

Thomas M. Smith

William “Spence” Spencer

Frank Staroba

Arden Staroba

Joan Sterling

Jean Stewart

Nancy Sturm

Anne C. Sullivan

William Phillip Thomas

Doreen Thompson

David Tisel

Toussaint Tyson

Kirby Vining

Cheryl Wagner

Steve Waller

Frazer Walton

Khadijah Watson

Leonard Watson

David Irving Weiner

Gretchen Wharton

Earl Williams

Cathy Wiss

Daniel Wolkoff

Mary C. Young

Hugh Youngblood

John Zottoli