

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	Marcy Logan	Marybeth Onyeukwu
Debby Hanrahan	Michael Lovendusky	Patricia Ortman
John Hanrahan	Camille Loya	Chris Otten
Ann Hargrove	Peter Lyden	Jerry Peloquin
Larry Hargrove	Sharon Lyden	Pete Perry
Sue Hemberger	Marge Maceda	Claudia Phelps
Marci Hilt	Susan MacKnight	Schyla Pondexter
Jane Huntington	Sara Maddux	Evanna Powell
George Idelson	Meg Maguire	David F. Power
Denis James	David Marlin	Perry Redd
Anise Jenkins	Susan McCarty	Belinda Reeder
Judi Jones	Mary McReynolds	Wanda Reif
Michelle Jones	Amy B. McVey	Johnnie Scott Rice
Sam Jordan	Teri Memolo	Laura Richards
William Jordan	Cy Merkezaz	Bob Richards
Cassandra Joseph	Will Merrifield	Suzanne Richardson
Barbara Kahlow	Elizabeth Mills	Glenda Jean Richmond
Jeffrey Kraskin	Barbara Morgan	Michele Rivard
Kathryn Kross	Anthony Muhammad	Robert Robinson
Bobbi Krengel	Holly Muhammad	Joyce Robinson-Paul
George Lang	Lucille E. Murphy	Andrea Rosen
Linda Leaks	Rosemary Ndubuizu	Mary Pat Rowan
Virginia Lee	Carolyn Dungee Nicholas	Mary Rowse
Bart Leonard	Abigail Nichols	John Salatti
Mary Alice Levine	Cristina Nigro	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