

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: Public Comment Letter

To Whom It May Concern,

It is disappointing that the Director of Planning, in the name of the future of the Department of City Planning, has requested to exempt the position of the Chief Zoning Administrator from the civil service process. In making the request, the Director is correct, that this position is one of its kind and should be forward thinking for the future of the Department. However, this is precisely why it must be protected as part of the civil service process and not exempt.

It is a position that holds the responsibility for ensuring that the Office of Zoning Administration, comprised of the Chief and Associate Zoning Administrators, operates in a consistent and fair manner when evaluating variances and other discretionary actions under its authority as prescribed by the Zoning Code. It is the role and responsibility of the Chief Zoning Administrator to ensure that interpretations and determinations are consistent and fair regardless of applicant or opponent. The position is specifically described as being subject to the civil service procedure in the City's Charter, which one can only assume is to protect the position from outside political pressures when making determinations. The exempt status not only broadens the pool of applicants, but opens up the position to outside political forces the Charter currently protects it from.

At a time when the Department is moving forward with adopting new Processes and Procedures and will be proposing a new Zoning Code with the adoption of each new Community Plan, it is crucial that the Chief Zoning Administrator and Associate Zoning Administrators are an integral part of drafting these future regulations. This is the role the Zoning Administrators should have when considering the Department's future. It is a role that not only requires the capabilities to make decisions for today, but a willingness and desire to make decisions that will improve the Zoning Code in the future.

To do this effectively, would require intimate knowledge and experience in the interpretation and implementation of the City's existing Zoning Code that can only be gained from having worked first hand with the Zoning Code and the Department. This is an important role which would require making difficult and tough decisions that will effect development Citywide and should be done in a manner that is not influenced due to the exempt status of the position.

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