

To Promote the General Welfare and Promote the Quality of Life in Our Neighborhood

Manor Park Citizens Association

Est. 1923

P.O. Box 60622

Washington, DC 20039

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Performance Oversight Hearings - Office of Planning, Office of Zoning
Committee of the Whole, DC City Council

Testimony of Carroll Green, President

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, we thank you for this opportunity to present testimony on the performance of the Office of Planning and The Office of Zoning. We, and other community groups, have been advocating over the years for an independent planning commission for some rather obvious reasons. First and foremost, virtually every major planning decision made in this city is tainted with political overtones, generally at the expense of the citizenry and to the benefit of special interest. The issuance of bonds, tax abatements and subsidies for private development seems to overshadows the need for and the use of long term comprehensive planning.

Much to our chagrin, the voice of the citizenry in matters pertaining to planning is muffled. There is no effective outreach to elicit citizen input from the ANC's, the wards or on a city wide basis. Engaging communities, a critical element in the mission of the Office of Planning is woefully lacking. The absence of acquisition planning, comprehensive planning and the routine use of emergency legislation has effectively disengaged citizen input from the process of governance.

These omissions, essential elements of good government, have precipitated the looming financial disaster facing this city. We submit that the first order of business in deficit reduction is to fix processes that are broken, processes that continue to contribute significantly to this growing dilemma. Shutting out citizen participation in the governance process sends an unmistakable message to the electorate.

