



City of Alexandria, Virginia

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City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 28, 2008
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR & MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
FROM: COUNCILMEN ROB KRUPICKA, PAUL SMEDBERG & JUSTIN WILSON
SUBJECT: REFORM OF DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

There are a series of reforms that we believe will help us improve openness and accountability within City Hall. Taken together, it is our belief that this package of initiatives will help reinforce the confidence Alexandrians have in the transparency that accompanies the deliberations of the City Council, the Planning Commission, the Boards of Architectural Review and the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Recently, the City Council has successfully utilized its Legislative Package to advocate for meaningful changes to the Code of Virginia relating to the timely disclosure of campaign finance information, as well as disclosure of pre-election activity by newly-formed Political Action Committees.

We request our colleagues' support of three actions:

- 1) Inclusion in our Legislative Package of a request for amendment to the City of Alexandria Charter providing that applicants before the City Council, Planning Commission, Boards of Architectural Review, and Board of Zoning Appeals must disclose all investors in their application prior to the hearing by the applicable body.
- 2) Inclusion in our Legislative Package of a request for amendment to the City of Alexandria Charter providing that individual members of the City Council, Planning Commission, Boards of Architectural Review, and Board of Zoning Appeals must disclose any current or previous (within 12 months) financial interest (excluding campaign contributions) with any of the investors in any application pending before that body.
- 3) Adoption of a City Code provision (if such authority exists) or inclusion in our Legislative Package of a request for amendment to the City of Alexandria Charter to allow the City Council to prohibit the acceptance of campaign contributions from applicants before the City Council.

As the only jurisdiction in the Commonwealth utilizing the Urban County Executive form of Government, Fairfax County is subject to the provisions of 15.2-852 of the Code of Virginia. This Code section provides that all applicants before the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission and Board of Zoning appeals disclose all investors in their application in advance of their hearing.

Furthermore, individual members of the body hearing that application must disclose any current or previous financial interest with investors of the application before them.

Additionally, the General Assembly adopted Senate Bill 532 during the 2008 session. This legislation imposed restrictions on Loudoun County similar to the restrictions on Fairfax County.

In July of 2008, Loudoun County adopted a new Board of Supervisors Policy to address the acceptance of campaign contributions from those that have business before the Board of Supervisors. This new provision provides that members of the Board cannot accept contributions from applicants beginning when the application is initially filed, and concluding 6 months after final action or when the application is withdrawn.

Cc: James K. Hartmann, City Manager
Ignacio B. Pessoa, City Attorney
Bernard Caton, Legislative Director
Alexandria Planning Commission
Alexandria Board of Zoning Appeals
Alexandria Boards of Architectural Review