

Alida Camp
Chair



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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan

August 30, 2018

Cesar Perales
Chair
New York City Charter Revision Commission
1 Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

At the August 13, 2018 Charter Revision Commission Task Force meeting of Community Board 8 Manhattan, the committee unanimously approved the following resolution by a vote of 11 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions and 0 not voting for cause:

WHEREAS the Mayor’s Charter Revision Commission (the “Commission”) has passed a proposal calling for a term limit of four consecutive two-year terms for community board members;

WHEREAS most, if not all, community boards—including Community Board 8 Manhattan (“Community Board 8”)—do not meet in August, and several do not meet in both July and August;

WHEREAS the Commission’s issuance of reports and resolutions in July and August does not afford community boards any real opportunity to provide collective input into the Commission’s proposals, effectively excluding community boards from the debate about and participation in the formulation of the Commission’s recommendations;

WHEREAS despite the questionable timing of the Commission’s process and issuance of reports and resolutions, Community Board 8 has formed a Charter Revision Commission Task Force, consisting of both long-standing and new community board members, which has met multiple times in the months of July and August to ensure that Community Board 8 provides, to the limited extent possible, comments and responses to the Commission’s proposals;

WHEREAS institutional knowledge, expertise, and memory directly affect a community board’s influence, and are vital to community boards seeing projects through and influencing policy-making impacting their district;

WHEREAS it takes time to learn the interests and positions of stakeholders and to understand the history behind and context of projects that take years, or even decades, to develop, particularly with respect to land use issues;

WHEREAS several projects in Community Board 8's district—including the Second Avenue Subway, the East River Esplanade, and the creation of the Park Avenue Historic District—have taken at least eight years, and often much longer;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 agrees with the statements of four Borough Presidents—Gale Brewer of Manhattan, Ruben Diaz, Jr. of the Bronx, Melinda Katz of Queens, and James Oddo of Staten Island—that the expertise to deal with difficult development issues comes from years of serving on community boards, that the Commission's proposal will weaken the ability of community boards on land use and other proposals, and that term limits would “further empower real estate developers and the lobbyists and technical advisers who appear on their behalf before the community board”;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 has had significant attrition and non-reappointment of members, including 9 new members in 2018—approximately 18 percent of the board—and five new members in 2017, equaling more than 25 percent new membership of Community Board 8, within the last two years;

WHEREAS these attrition rates demonstrate that Community Board 8 members are being replaced regularly, and that the blunt tool of term limits is unnecessary for turnover on Community Board 8;

WHEREAS this attrition has brought new ideas and new voices to Community Board 8, without forcing the community board to lose any of its more experienced members or their institutional knowledge;

WHEREAS it is the mixture of long-serving members' knowledge and new appointees' fresh ideas that allow community boards to serve their ever-evolving communities well;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 has term limits for the Board Chair, two Vice-Chairs, and Secretaries;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 supports the reforms of former Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer and current Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, which have standardized and made more transparent the community board appointment process in Manhattan, increased the emphasis on diversity when considering applications, and made the application process more demanding, rigorous, and robust;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 supports continued efforts to duplicate these reforms across the other four boroughs of New York City;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 supports the concept of an urban planner for each community board, or urban planners shared by the community boards in each borough;

WHEREAS an urban planner dedicated to the community boards would empower community boards to analyze developments that are planned, participate effectively in land-use decisions affecting their communities, determine whether “as-of-right” buildings are truly as-of-right, question compliance with the zoning resolution and other relevant laws, resolutions, and regulations, analyze Uniform Land Use Review Process (“ULURP”) applications, and effectively propose ideas that would help the City achieve sensible growth;

WHEREAS it is essential that any urban planner dedicated to the community boards remain free of conflicts of interest arising through work for developers or other entities;

WHEREAS it is essential that any urban planner dedicated to the community boards not have connections to developers or other individuals or organizations whose interests are aligned with those of developers;

WHEREAS Community Board 8 believes it is critical that any urban planner assigned to the community boards have the experience and qualifications sufficient to facilitate community boards’ land use work, and the willingness to advance the goals of the community;

BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 requests that the Commission exclude any references to community board term limits or proposals relating to community board term limits from the November ballot proposals;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Community Board 8 supports the Commission’s ballot proposal to require that an urban planner, without conflicts, be provided to community boards.

Sincerely, ^{no}



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Cc: Hon. Bill de Blasio, Mayor of the City of New York
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Liz Krueger, NYS Senator, 26th Senatorial District
Hon. Dan Quart, NYS Assembly Member, 73rd Assembly District
Hon. Rebecca Seawright, NYS Assembly Member, 76th Assembly District
Hon. Keith Powers, NYC Council Member, 4th Council District
Hon. Ben Kallos, NYC Council Member, 5th Council District