

**Statement in support of Roberta Washington, Architect
For a position as a Commissioner on the
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission**

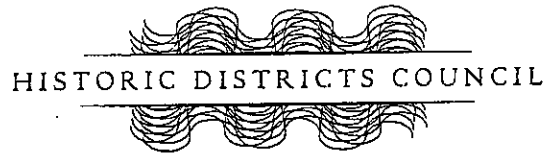
Good morning Council members. My name is Gene A. Norman and this statement is offered in support of Roberta Washington, Architect who is a candidate for the position of commissioner on the New York City Preservation Commission. From 1983 to 1991 I had the honor of serving on the Landmarks Preservation Commission, first as Chair for six of those years and as a representative of the Bronx for almost two years. This experience afforded me a fairly unique understanding of the skill sets, knowledge and temperament needed to serve as a commissioner. I believe Ms. Washington posses these traits and will surely be an asset on the LPC.

As a practicing architect Roberta Washington has successfully designed projects that included preservation principles and she also understands how the goals of preservation can be applied to enhance proposed changes to individual landmarks and historic districts. As an architect she also understands the Landmarks law and knows much about the Commissions past decisions and designations. Roberta's practice has included projects built in Harlem and other minority areas that give her special insights into the needs of communities and the historic resources that are often overlooked in the Boroughs outside of Manhattan and its downtown core.

I speak with confidence about Ms. Washington's abilities because I hired her in the 1990s to design a large multi-use development projected to cost in excess of \$150 million dollars. While the project was never built, through no fault of the architect, her work was excellent and I learned of her skill and work ethic first hand. The Landmarks Commission will be the beneficiary of the wealth of architectural skill and knowledge Ms. Washington will apply while serving as a Commissioner. I heartily support and endorse her appointment because I know her performance will always be 100 percent.

My only regret is that I was not able to read this short statement in person due to a scheduling problem, but have asked Mr. William E. Davis, Jr., a former LPC Commissioner and architect to present it to you.

Submitted by Gene A. Norman, June 27, 2007



HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

THE ADVOCATE FOR NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS


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no better legacy could be left than the best possible assurances that, barring unforeseen fiscal circumstance, this will not happen again. In August 2001, then-candidate Michael Bloomberg said "you really do have to give (the Landmarks Commission) some money and it's not going to be in the grand scheme of things -- anything that's going to bust the budget. But those are the kinds of things infrastructure, long term things planning things where you really do want to spend some money. Landmarks is like your top management and organization, that's where you really want to spend your money." This observation has been shown to be true by the increased activities of the agency when it has been given the resources, and we urge Mr. Tierney to ensure that the agency continues to get those resources through an increase in the baseline budget.

Second, HDC continues to be concerned about the transparency of LPC actions. This has been a perennial concern in both regulatory and designation activities, and while efforts have been made to ensure public participation in the landmarks process, they could use improvement. We understand that there are plans to post more information on the LPC website, and we applaud them. We also greatly appreciate the increased content on the site. However, HDC would request that the LPC consider making public its deliberations on potential designation items so that the public can be more aware of this most important agency activity. Public presentations of agency-sponsored surveys would seem to be not much to request. Similarly, HDC has concern about certain regulatory items which appear for public review once and then return greatly modified in a public meeting. Although the agency has done its best to allow continued public participation in such cases, a clearer process -- for both applicants and the public -- could be promulgated.

Finally, everyone concerned with preservation agrees that we need both added protections for potential landmark buildings and incentives to encourage rehabilitative and restorative work. There are a number of ideas that have been suggested on both these issues; a demolition delay legislation, tax assessment freezes, and tax credits to mention just a few. HDC would like to take this opportunity to request both the LPC and the City Council to pledge to work together and with the public on these initiatives. Working together in partnership, we are certain to be able to solve our biggest preservation concerns and make profound headway on the others.



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Statement of the Historic Districts Council
Committee on Rules, Privileges & Elections
Regarding the Reappointment of Robert Tierney to the Landmarks Preservation Commission
Wednesday, June 27, 2007

The Historic Districts Council is the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods. As much of our work is focused on the functioning of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, we appreciate this public opportunity to discuss the agency's recent activities.

When HDC last submitted testimony before this committee on Mr. Tierney's reappointment in January 2006, we voiced our concerns about the lack of resources for the agency which led to a diminishment of designation actions to a profound low. In the ensuing 18 months under Mr. Tierney's leadership and the active partnership with City Council, the LPC has greatly strengthened its staff numbers and just achieved the highest number of landmark designations since 1990 while still processing a record number of permit applications. This is a remarkable accomplishment of which Mr Tierney should be justly proud. That these designations are almost all entirely outside of Manhattan also points to the agency's growing responsiveness to the preservation community's calls for attention to under-served areas. Indeed, the additional research and survey staff brought on in the past year have enabled the LPC to react speedily when necessary in order to preserve historic structures from imminent destruction, such as the case at 70 Lefferts Place where the agency intervened literally days before a demolition permit was issued.

It would be incorrect to say that there have not been instances in the past year and a half where HDC has objected to the LPC's actions and decisions – that is part of the natural tension between civic groups and government. Rather than revisit past arguments, HDC would like to take this opportunity to mention a few ideas and hopes we have for the future, hopes that we wish Mr. Tierney as the preservation community's strongest advocate to Mayor Bloomberg can help us accomplish. First, it has clearly been shown that the Council's generous allocation to the LPC has greatly aided the agency's work. As part of his legacy, we hope that Mayor Bloomberg increases the baseline LPC budget to, at the very least, ensure that the survey department remains at this current level and that the preservation department is adequately staffed to deal with the inevitable increased regulatory work. This is of pivotal importance. Under Mr. Tierney's guidance, the agency has emerged from a ten-year slump in resources and