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FROM COUNCIL MEMBER **TONY AVELLA**



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Press Release

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Avella and HDC Announce that AIA has Formally Withdrawn Their Zoning Text Proposal

Today, Council Member Tony Avella and the Historic Districts Council (HDC) announced that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) has formally withdrawn their zoning text amendment application. In November, upon hearing about the proposal, Avella immediately asked AIA to withdraw their application.

"I am extremely pleased to learn that AIA has withdrawn their application. Some of their proposals would clearly have had a very negative effect on the many positive rezoning actions we have already implemented to protect residential neighborhoods throughout the City from overdevelopment," stated Avella.

Mr. Paul Graziano, an urban planning consultant who is also President of the Historic Districts Council, stated, "These proposed zoning changes are counterintuitive to the contextually zoned neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs. The changes would have created more density, height and profits for developers at the expense of light, air and space. Additionally, it's one thing to question the merits of these text amendments; it's a whole other thing to have them imposed on the public through a very stealthy, inappropriate manner, where the process of public input is essentially decided by the applicant. Withdrawing these text amendments was the right thing to do and we applaud our Council Members for their support, especially Council Member Avella."

"The Queens Civic Congress advocated the withdrawal of the AIA efforts to disarm zoning reforms that many of us worked long and hard to achieve. We welcome this decision; this should serve as a lesson, not just to AIA, but also to anyone who seeks to promote zoning changes that the public will not stand for efforts that impose changes. The best results in New York City, whether it concerns public policy, legislation or planning result when government makes sure the community gets fully engaged at the earliest stages. More and more, few plans that ignore this imperative achieve any real shelf life," stated Corey Bearak, President of the Queens Civic Congress.

"Our communities and Councilmember Avella have sent a clear message to City Planning that we will not tolerate this type of veiled lobbying by AIA. We thank Councilmember Avella for his efforts to stop this process," stated Mr. Phil DePaolo, President of the New York Community Council.

"I am pleased that the unpopular AIA proposal has been withdrawn. Now, the City Planning Commission can concentrate all of their efforts on completing the much-needed and long awaited contextual rezoning initiatives in Auburndale and other communities across the city," stated Mr. Henry Euler, Zoning and Housing Chair for the Auburndale Improvement Association.

Ms. Mary Anne Sallustro, President of the South Canarsie Civic Association said, "I applaud Councilman Avella for his decisive leadership and authority on behalf of all New York City neighborhoods upon his urging AIA to withdraw their proposal, he truly is the voice of the people."

"AIA's attempt to rush changes to the zoning code through an expedited ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process was nothing more than a furtive attempt to circumvent the public in order to fulfill their own self-interests. This should serve as a warning to those who seek to undermine and destroy the character and charm of our City's residential neighborhoods," concluded Avella.