

# AIA Queens

The Queens County Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

April 26, 2008



Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg  
Mayor of The City Of New York  
City Hall  
2 Lafayette Street  
New York, NY 10007

PRESIDENT  
Alan Weinstein, AIA

Re: City Charter

VICE PRESIDENT  
John Calcagnile, AIA

Mr. Mayor:

SECRETARY  
Joseph Sultana, AIA

Four million dollars have recently been dedicated to analyze the safety of the construction industry in the City of New York. Its purpose is to closely examine the safety of construction sites and the administration of law known as the NYC Building Code. The recent resignation of Patricia Lancaster, RA, has placed the Department of Buildings under the appointed leadership of one, whom although we respect and has served well as Deputy Commissioner, does not possess the minimum qualifications as required by law to be Commissioner. The Department of Buildings is not a business but a regulatory agency that is required to protect, preserve and safeguard the public from danger.

TREASURER  
Nat Costanza, AIA

Our individual safety and the safety of the public shall not and cannot be jeopardized by any person, agency, government or government official.

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William E. Gat i, AIA, '05 & '06

It is for this reason that we have charged our elected officials to ensure that our safety and the safety of the public at large is maintained through the passage of laws. Laws that we must abide by to ensure this safety.

For this sole purpose, our elected officials through time have put in place strict requirements that guarantee our personal safety and freedoms by mandating a specific standard for governing agencies. A standard that guarantees that these departments and their appointed leaders maintain a level of professional credentials and certifications that is repeated throughout our local, city, state and even federal laws.

Among these positions is the Commissioner of the Department of Buildings. It is clearly written in the current city charter that “With respect to buildings and structures, the commissioner shall have the following powers and duties exclusively”...to examine and approve or disapprove plans for the construction or alteration of any building or structure, including the installation or alteration of any service equipment therein, and to direct the inspection of such building or structure, and the service equipment therein, in the course of construction, installation or alteration;”...and “The commissioner shall review and certify any proposed subdivision of a zoning lot with any building thereon, in order to ensure that the subdivision will not result in any violation of the applicable zoning laws”

New York State Education Law requires that for anyone to engage in the activity that requires the application of the art and science of design to the construction of buildings, groups of buildings, including their components and appurtenances and the spaces around them wherein the safeguarding of life, health, property, and public welfare is concerned they must hold a license in good standing issued by the State Of New York in Architecture or Engineering. Such services include the evaluation of construction documents which is the primary purpose of the NYC Department of Buildings.

For this reason and for the sake of public safety, the elected officials of the New York City Council cannot allow an unlicensed individual to serve as the head of the Department of Buildings without a valid NYS issued license to practice Architecture or Engineering. This must hold true for an acting commissioner as well. It is incumbent upon you, our elected officials to preserve this minimum standard and guarantee the current requirement as outlined in the City Charter and State Law. If any change is to be made than it should be to include a license requirement for an acting or interim commissioner as well.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Weinstein, RA, AIA  
President AIA Queens Chapter  
Cc: All City Council Members