



October 26, 2014

Dear Fellow East Siders:

This week's letter discusses the 2014 election campaign, a community meeting on 460 Rochambeau Avenue, lobbyist registration reform, harmonizing the values of environmental protection and historic preservation and tax stabilization agreements.

Many of you have asked whether I am making any specific endorsements for next Tuesday's election. I am endorsing [Gina Raimondo for Governor](#), [Seth Magaziner for General Treasurer](#), [Jorge Elorza for Mayor](#), and [a Yes vote on Ballot Question 3 \(Constitutional Convention\)](#). You can click on each of these links to read my explanations of these endorsements.

In recent weeks, the owners of the large property at the corner of Rochambeau Avenue and Blackstone Boulevard submitted a subdivision plan to create ten new single-family house lots on the property (plus two larger lots for the existing house and outbuildings, respectively). A group of neighbors organized to discuss concerns about the subdivision plan. They will be holding a public meeting **tomorrow night (Monday, October 27) at Rochambeau Branch Library at 6:00 p.m.** If you cannot attend but wish to join an email group discussing these issues, contact Ellen Darling at [ellendarling@gmail.com](mailto:ellendarling@gmail.com).

On **Tuesday night, October 28 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall**, the Ordinance Committee will discuss and receive public comment on two initiatives I introduced. The first would amend the scope and reporting requirements of the lobbyist registration ordinance to incorporate best practices elsewhere and lessons from recent experience. Some advocacy groups have expressed concerns about the new requirements, which we will discuss at that time. The second ordinance relates to the Historic District Commission's review of solar panel projects, specifically those for the front roof of south-facing houses. For these houses, the front roof is the obvious (and often the only feasible) location for solar panels, but the Commission has exhibited great reluctance to approve this type of project, creating a conflict between the policy goals of environmental protection and historic preservation. At a meeting last week, I informed the Commission's members that the City Council would prefer to see them apply their expertise to develop policies that strike a fair balance between these two important interests within the next month, thereby making further legislative action unnecessary.

Last Thursday night, the Ways and Means Committee approved a final report on tax stabilization agreements you can read by clicking here: [TSA Report](#). The Report contains 18 recommendations, including developing a standard template for future agreements containing language that protects the City's interests more clearly, and a moratorium on extensions of existing agreements until the end of this fiscal year (June 30, 2015) to allow the City Council to develop a clear policy on this issue. One of these recommendations (#17) arises out of my work to create a new requirement in recent stabilization agreements to impose a tax penalty if the developer "flips" a tax property to a tax exempt buyer after receiving a City tax subsidy. I intend to propose legislation to strengthen this recommendation beyond its current language, so that developers will be required to reimburse all reduced taxes to the City should they transfer one of these properties to a tax-exempt owner during the 15-year "stabilization period" or the first five years of full tax payments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Samuel D. Zurier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.