



November 23, 2014

Dear Fellow East Siders:

This week's letter discusses solar roof panels, lobbyist registration and two upcoming community meetings.

On Monday night, November 24 at 4:45 p.m. at 444 Westminster Street, the Providence Historic District Commission will review a draft set of guidelines regarding solar roof panels. You can review it by clicking here: [Proposed Solar Roof Panel Guidelines](#). The recent guidelines arise from an application from a house on Jenckes Street whose façade faces south. The logical place for the panels is on the front roof, and although the State Historic Preservation Commission approved the project, the City's Commission did not. From my reading, the proposed guidelines impose a "bright line" ban on front-facing rooftop panels even when there are no other reasonable locations for them. I will propose more flexibility in the guidelines Monday night. In my remarks last week before the City Plan Commission, I stated that such a "bright line" banning rooftop solar panels does not effect a reasonable balance between the twin goals of historic preservation and environmental preservation. At an earlier meeting, I asked the Historic District Commission to develop reasonable guidelines to permit the City Council to shelve an ordinance I introduced to remove solar panels from the Commission's jurisdiction. Unfortunately, a "bright line" ban is not reasonable, and without revision will trigger the City Council's review of the proposed ordinance. The City Council has scheduled a hearing on the solar panel ordinance for Monday, December 1.

On Tuesday night, November 25, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall, the Ordinance Committee will hear public comment concerning a proposed ordinance I introduced, working with Common Cause, to enhance the City's lobbyist registration. The proposed amendments are based on research concerning lobbyist registration programs in other jurisdictions, and on the State's recent experience with the 38 Studios controversy and the investigation of Gordon Fox. The hearing will provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the draft ordinance and propose ways to improve it. As readers of these letters can conclude, I have made open government issues a key legislative priority for my work on the City Council not only with regard to my own work, but also other government officials and City vendors and lobbyists. It is my hope we can shine more sunlight on the lobbying and lobbyists that currently influence our City's governmental decisions.

There will be two public meetings at Nathan Bishop Middle School the week after Thanksgiving. On Monday, December 1 at 6:00 p.m., Mayor-elect Elorza will hold a "listening forum" to encourage community conversation. (I will try to attend; however, I will be delayed by the Ordinance Committee hearing mentioned above.) **On Tuesday, December 2 at 6:30 p.m.**, I will co-host a community meeting to discuss City and State issues with our neighborhood's General Assembly representatives, Edith Ajello and Aaron Regunberg from the Rhode Island House, and Gayle Goldin from the Rhode Island Senate. I invite you to use these opportunities to share your views

I hope you and your families have a wonderful Thanksgiving, one of my favorite holidays.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Samuel D. Zurier'.