

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

(revised 1/31/2022)

[Charter Amendment - Building Inspection Commission]

Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters at an election to be held on June 7, 2022, to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco to revise the duties, composition, and method of appointment for members of the Building Inspection Commission; and affirming the Planning Department’s determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Existing Law

Charter Section 4.121 and Appendix D outline the duties, composition, and method of appointment for the Building Inspection Commission, which oversees the Department of Building Inspection (“DBI”). Under Section 4.121, Building Inspection Commission members are appointed directly to the Commission by the Mayor (four seats consisting of a structural engineer, a licensed architect, a residential builder, and a representative of non-profit housing development corporation) and the President of the Board of Supervisors (three seats consisting of a residential tenant, a residential landlord, and a member of the general public). Commissioners serve two-year terms and vacancies are filled by the appointing officer.

Unlike other Charter commissions that, pursuant to Section 4.102, must forward at least three candidates for the director position to the Mayor to make the appointment, the Building Inspection Commission has the power to appoint and remove the Director of DBI.

Under Charter Appendix D3.750-2, the Director of DBI may appoint and remove one deputy superintendent and up to two assistant superintendents that are exempt from civil service provisions of the Charter.

Many of the provisions in Appendix D pertain to the creation of DBI, formerly the Bureau of Building Inspection within Public Works, as an independent department upon enactment of Proposition G in 1994. These provisions include the initial 1994-1995 budget, identifying personnel and agencies within Public Works that would transition to DBI, and Building Inspection Commission powers, responsibilities, and procedures that are duplicative of general provisions made applicable to all departments in the 1996 Charter.

Amendments to Current Law

This Charter amendment would change the composition of the Building Inspection Commission by eliminating the requirement that each seat have a specific designated profession, background, or industry affiliation and would, as amended in Rules Committee,

mandate that at least three members (two of the four Mayoral appointments and one of the three President of the Board of Supervisors appointments) meet certain qualifications. Specifically, two of the Mayoral appointments shall have qualifications as an engineer, architect, or residential builder and one of the President's appointments shall be a residential tenant and/or work for a non-profit housing organization. And the Charter amendment, also as amended in Rules Committee, shall require that appointments emphasize inclusion of members concerned with tenant and habitability issues. The amendment would preserve the Mayor and the President of the Board of Supervisors as the nominating officers of Commission, but would make each nomination subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors within 60 days. The amendment outlines provisions to transition to the new composition of the Commission by July 1, 2023.

The amendment would remove the ability of the Commission to directly appoint the Director of DBI and would make the Commission subject to Section 4.102. Section 4.102, among several provisions, mandates that commissions provide the names of at least three qualified candidates to the Mayor for department director positions and that the Mayor makes the appointment.

The amendment also eliminates the ability of the Director to appoint one deputy superintendent and two assistant superintendents that are exempt from civil service. DBI would remain subject to Article X of the Charter, including Section 10.104 regarding appointment of civil service exempt positions.

In an effort to eliminate moot and redundant provisions resulting from the wholesale incorporation of Proposition G into Appendix D when the 1996 Charter was enacted, the amendment consolidates the Building Inspection Commission composition, duties and responsibilities into Section 4.121; explicitly incorporates Sections 4.102, 4.103, and 4.104 and deletes duplicative provisions within Appendix D; and deletes moot provisions that only pertained to the initial separation of DBI from Public Works. The amendment includes Section 3, which states that if other Charter amendments that impact the same provisions as this Charter amendment are passed by voters in the June election, the amendment with the most votes shall apply.

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