



## CITY OF RICHMOND

### Department of Planning & Development Review *Staff Report*

**ORD. 2017-243:** To amend and reordain City Code § 30-930.3, concerning the Commission of Architectural Review, for the purpose of reflecting certain compositional changes by (i) eliminating the requirement that one member be appointed from a list of nominations by the Better Housing Coalition and (ii) adding the requirement that at least one member of the Commission be a resident of a historic district.

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**To:** City Planning Commission  
**From:** Planning and Preservation Division  
**Date:** January 3, 2018

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#### **PETITIONER**

City of Richmond  
900 East Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

#### **PURPOSE**

To amend Section 30-930.3(b)(1) of the City Code to eliminate the requirement that Council considers nominations from the Better Housing Coalition and to add a requirement that at least one member of the Commission of Architectural Review be a resident of a historic district.

#### **SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATION**

Resolution No. 2017-R047 to declare a public necessity and to initiate an amendment to the City's zoning ordinance concerning the Commission of Architectural Review (CAR), to make certain compositional changes by (i) eliminating the requirement that one member shall be appointed from a list of nominations submitted by the Better Housing Coalition, and (ii) adding a requirement that at least one member shall be a resident of a historic district was adopted by City Council on November 25, 2017. The resolution directed the City Planning Commission to hold a public hearing on the proposed amendatory ordinance and submit recommendations to City Council.

In 2014, the Better Housing Coalition was designated to provide nominees to the City Council for one member of the CAR as they had merged with the historic preservation organization who was the previous recommending body, the Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods.

Staff recommends removing the designation of the Better Housing Coalition as a recommending body because the current mission of the Better Housing Coalition does not focus on historic preservation which is the purpose of the CAR and City Old and Historic Districts. As there is no requirement for a member of the Commission to reside in a City Old and Historic District over which the CAR has purview, staff supports the inclusion of an additional citizen member on the CAR with the qualification that at least one Commissioner shall reside in a City Old and Historic District.

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## **Background**

In 2014, City Council approved an amendment to this section of the City Code to require that the Council choose one member of the CAR from a list of three nominees from the Better Housing Coalition rather than the Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods (the Alliance) because the Alliance had merged into the Better Housing Coalition. As the Better Housing Coalition is currently not focused on historic districts and preservation as the Alliance was, Council approved a resolution on October 25, 2017, to initiate the amendment to this section of the City Code to remove the requirement that Council considers nominations from the Better Housing Coalition. There is currently no requirement that a resident of a City Old and Historic District be a member of the Commission. A recent study by Virginia Commonwealth University which surveyed residents of the City Old and Historic Districts, Commissioners, and other stakeholders recommends having residents of the City Old and Historic Districts as members of the Commission.

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