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To: [City Council](#); [Toni Cone](#)
Subject: Don't erase HPB expertise
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Dear City Council,

I am urging you to reconsider the proposed membership of the new Historic and Architectural Preservation Board today.

Many residents lament the fact that City Council is abolishing a stand-alone Historic Preservation Board in one of the most historically significant cities in Florida. But City Council's rationale was that it better served Venice as it moves to becoming a Certified Local Government, or CLG.

I'm not challenging the merger of the boards or the qualifications of any of the members you are likely to appoint today. What I do challenge is the result of your process and the recommendations of the mayor in the memo shared with you today.

You are abolishing two existing boards – the ARB and the HPB -- and it was inevitable that some of those 14 board members would not continue to serve on the new HAPB.

But through the process of individual rankings by each of you, the result is that the proposed new board is likely to be comprised of just 1 new member, all 5 members of the ARB who applied, and only 1 of the 4 HPB members who applied.

And the sole HPB member who made the cut for the new board is recommended for only a 1-year term. If she is then not reappointed, there will be no one left with a connection to the city's previous historic preservation efforts. I remind you that the first word in HAPB's name is "Historic."

This doesn't look like a **merging** of two boards. It looks instead like City Council is just **purging** one of them.

This is not in the best interests of Venice. And the CLG status that Venice is seeking is focused entirely on a city's implementation of historic preservation.

Your ranking process may have been a neutral one. But even neutral processes can lead to bad outcomes. And not looking at the overall result of your individual rankings is a bad outcome.

Now that you've seen the outcome of your individual rankings, I urge you to reconsider during today's discussion a way to make the new board truly

representative of the best of both areas of expertise.

Thank you,
Jan Vertefeuille
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Venice