CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NY
DEPARTMENT OF BUILDINGS

SHAWYN PATTERSON-HOWARD
Mayor

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Patrick G. Holder, R.A.
Commissioner

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2nd Deputy Commissioner

July 10, 2025

City Hall
1 Roosevelt Square
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

THROUGH THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR.

Re: Third-party Building Inspector(s) to address Inspection backlog

To the Honorable Council Members:

As you are aware, the City of Mount Vernon recently adopted recommendations from the New York State Department of State following the audit requested by the city. One of the key action items outlined in the Department of State's letter dated April 15, 2024, regarding the Enforcement of the Uniform Code in the City of Mount Vernon, was the resumption and implementation of fire safety and property maintenance inspections for buildings listed on the official Inspection List—specifically Public Assembly, Multiple Dwelling, and Nonresidential occupancies.

The city responded to this directive by engaging a consultant to support the outsourced inspection of Multiple Dwellings. However, Public Assembly (PA) inspections—originally supported by the Department of Buildings due to a lack of certified fire code enforcement personnel in the Fire Department—placed additional strain on our team. While the Fire Department assumed full responsibility for PA inspections as of February 2025, the year-long support (Feb 2024-Feb 2025) from our Building Inspectors led to a notable backlog of over 1700 other critical inspection types. Despite our best efforts to address this backlog, the sustained increase in inspection requests, combined with pre-existing resource limitations noted in the State audit that recommended additional hires to perform all enforcement activities (i.e. Inspectors); has left us unable to meet the full demands of enforcement obligations under the Uniform Code.

I am requesting the use of the authority granted by the New York State Building Code to formalize a process to allow third-party providers for Inspections. According to but not limited to NYCRR1203.2 section (d), "*Every authority having jurisdiction responsible for administration and enforcement of the Uniform Code shall exercise its powers in due and proper manner so as to extend to all people of the State protection from the hazards of fire and inadequate building construction. Every authority having jurisdiction responsible for administration and enforcement of the Energy Code shall exercise its powers in due and proper manner so as to further the purposes of Article II of the Energy Law, as applicable" e-(1) Where an authority having jurisdiction contracts directly with an individual or a business entity to perform any building safety inspector enforcement activities on behalf of such*

authority having jurisdiction, the authority having jurisdiction shall satisfy itself that each individual performing such contracted-for building safety inspector enforcement activities has qualifications comparable to those of a person who has met the requirements of Part 1208 of this Title applicable to building safety inspections. (3) No agreement shall be made by which building permits, certificate of occupancy, certificates of compliance, orders or appearance tickets or other similar documents related to administration and enforcement of either or both of the Codes are issued by other than public officers of the authority having jurisdiction.

Therefore, I am proposing the city allow third-party Building Inspections to be available to our constituents. This is supported by the following: recommendations of the recent department of state audit; In-person and phone meetings with building commissioners in adjacent communities; and demands for timely inspections from our own business community and individual property owners. Further, our experiences with third-party electrical consultants; the success of our ongoing outsourcing of plan reviews, plumbing and multiple dwelling inspections; and the history of our city and other adjacent municipalities working with third-party consultants to enforce the uniform code, also supports this action.

Like the current process with third-party electrical consultants there will be no charge to the city for these proposed third-party building inspections. Constituents will have the option of utilizing the approved third-party list to help expedite their inspections should they choose to bypass the standard process and the lag time the DOB is experiencing with these inspections.

DOB Third-Party Protocol

DOB Third-Party protocol will be a straightforward process that presents a choice to all constituents of hiring an approved DOB third-party consultant firm/individual.

We are proposing that this process is initiated by posting an RFQ for qualified third-party providers, of which three qualified firms/individuals can be chosen to provide this service to constituents. If this meets with the approval of Your Honorable Body, kindly enact the necessary legislation to move forward with these third-party consultant firms.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patrick G. Holder
Commissioner of Buildings

cc: Mayor, Corporation Counsel, City Clerk, The Comptroller