

April 29 2017

City of New York
Department of Investigation - Complaint Bureau
80 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038

SUBJECT: "THE FAMILY"

1

An article By Sally Goldenberg 01/17/17 10:00 on www.politico.com reads "In a phone interview Monday, Glen said she opted to elevate her aides, rather than conduct a broader search for Been's replacement, because of uncertainty facing the city's housing plan under the incoming Trump administration. "You always want to look at the family first, and if there's great people in the family and people like James, (who) demonstrated (his) ability to step up, you want to reward those people," she said."

If what this article says is true, the criteria that Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for housing and economic development used to choose the new **Housing Preservation and Development** HPD commissioner was that she is part of the family.

2

Maria Torres Stringer was appointed by the Mayor Commissioner at NYC Department of Housing Preservation & Development (HPD) in 2017. On 2015 the Mayor also appointed Maria Torres Stringer President at NYCEDC, and in 2014 De Blasio appointed her Commissioner of NYC Department of Small Business Services at City of New York Government. I found no records of important positions in housing and no important jobs not appointed by the Mayor. Looks like, her only previous job was a brief Former Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Friends of The High Line.

3

Maria Torres Springer is the wife of Jamie Torres Springer, partner of *HR & A Advisors*. "[HR&A Advisors, Inc.](#) (HR&A) is an industry-leading consulting firm providing services in real estate, economic development, and program design & implementation."

On January 13, 2015 De Blasio administration required from the Economic Development Corporation to "choose HR&A on a sole source basis". Mayor de Blasio appointed Maria Torres Springer President at Economic Development Corporation NYCEDC. The solution for the conflict of interest is solved with a technicality, Jamie Torres Springer, goes from being a partner to being an employee [Next EDC President Will Have to Recuse Herself from Projects Her Husband is Involved In](#). Susan Lerner de Common Cause New York said: "I think this shows a long-standing incestuous relationship between the real estate industry and the EDC. And the EDC is a very problematic entity from a good government point of view. They are really not transparent at all," ... "And are not really accountable to anybody."¹

¹ <http://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/politics/2015/07/6/next-edc-president-will-have-to-recuse-herself-from-projects-her-husband-is-involved-in.html>

4

Former employees of *HR&A Advisors* occupy or have occupied the most important positions in urban, city planning and housing in the City of New York. This tied relation between the firm *HR&A Advisors* and De Blasio administration is something well known. Andrew J. Hawkins write in Crain the article [*HR&A Advisors is the chosen consultancy*](#)²:

1-In the position of Commissioner of HPD Housing Preservation and Development appointed Maria Torres Springer (wife of Jamie Torres-Springer partner of *HR&A Advisors*)

2-In the position of President of [Economic Development Corporation](#) EDC Maria Torres Springer and before

3-In the position Commissioner of NYC Department of [Small Business Services](#) at City of New York Government, Maria Torres Springer

4-In the position of [chair](#) of the [City Planning Commission](#) Carl Weisbrod, appointed by Mayor De Blasio on February 7 2014 consultant and partner of *HR&A Advisors*

5- In the position of Director of [Department of City Planning](#) NYCDCP, Carl Weisbrod is a real Estate consultant and partner of *HR&A Advisors*

6-In the position of First Deputy Mayor Anthony Shorris worked *HR&A Advisors* briefly in the early 1990s

7- In the position of President of the New York City Housing Authority, Shola Olatoye appointed on March 2014. Works for the fir *HR&A Advisors* for several years from 2001 to 2007.

I am reaching out to see if your office can do or know something related to these questions:

- It is “being part of the family” the right criteria to select government officials?
- Which family is this?
- Is there a relationship between Alicia Glen and Jamie Torres Stringer or *HR&A Advisors*?
- Is there is any benefit for *HR&A Advisors* to have former employees or employees relatives in most important positions in urban, city planning and housing in the City of New York?
- Why a Mayor will appoint a solo firm for the consultancy of the whole city? Is any benefit for the Mayor?
- What would be the effect for the city of New York to have a Real State firm as solo source and their officials behind positions of power?
- What would be the effect for New York residents to have a Real State firm making decisions on housing, city and urban development?

JL and LJ

² <http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20140414/POLITICS/304139992/hra-advisors-is-the-chosen-consultancy>