

16 January 2026

San Francisco Commission Streamlining Task Force:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at City Hall Tuesday, 23 January 2026. As I said, my year with SF's last Charter Commission taught me that you tread in turbulent waters trying to simplify government while maintaining or improving essential citizen participation.

As I stated Tuesday, the Access Appeals Commission (AAC) has a unique history and structure. Its 2 - 1 - 2 memberships of two construction and finance industry memberships, one neutral public membership, and two disability community memberships 'bake in' specialized architectural and construction competence with disability community direct participation.

The AAC has a long history of case-by-case determinations, which may not be made by building inspectors. These individual case considerations, including financial capability, allow the AAC to approve reasonable solutions that strict code might prohibit. It is small neighborhood businesses, especially, that benefit.

Accessible solutions that save owners a few hundred square feet in a small shop can make the difference in viability. From the community's perspective, these solutions often preserve or improve neighborhood retail, entertainment, and assembly access at little or no cost.

To my ear, the hearing concluded with broad consensus, but not every specific is in place.

I would like to discuss detail implementing language. I hope we can speak before the 28th. My questions include:

- 1 Who will staff commission administrative (secretary / clerk / public notice) activities?
- 2 Who will appoint new commissioners? My understanding is that this will no longer be BIC, but may be the Appeals Board.
- 3 In whose line account budget will the AAC appeal?
- 4 How will we create the new customer flow chart of case movement through the system? (No longer solely within DBI.)
- 5 Commissioner Arnie Lerner, F.A.I.A., thought he heard you say that the AAC would be termed a committee, not commission. I heard you suggest that naming details might be reviewed after the 28th. I hope we can avoid that.

The AAC is not a working group or advisory body, and will not be a committee drawn from a larger body. Given the finality of the AAC's decisions, appealable only to a court of law (which has never happened), I suggest 'Commission' is the better designation.

If there are inherent costs related to the use of either term, I'm not aware, and would like to learn what they may be.

Thank you again for your attention and thoughtfulness throughout the hearing.

Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Walter Park
President,
San Francisco Access Appeals Commission.

cc: AAC Commissioners, BIC Secretary, and staff