

The conflict No One Disclosed

On May 11, 2026, a woman named Constance "Gerry" Post stood at the podium in Mount Vernon's City Council chambers and encouraged the council to approve a zoning amendment for a "mixed use", "transit-oriented", 21-story residential development project near the Mount Vernon East railroad cut. She identified herself as a professional planner with an American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) certification and noted her 20-year tenure as the city's planning commissioner. She did not mention two other things that were directly relevant to her appearance that evening.

She did not mention that she is a sitting member of the Mount Vernon Economic Development Task Force - a body appointed by the very City Council she was addressing on behalf of a developer.

And she did not mention that she is a federally convicted felon whose crimes were committed in the exact same role - planning and community development - in which she was now presenting herself as a credentialed expert.

Both omissions matter. But they matter in different ways, and it's worth being precise about each one.

The Conviction

In March 2009, a federal jury in White Plains found Constance Post guilty of conspiracy to commit mail fraud and mail fraud. At the time, Post was serving as Commissioner of the Mount Vernon Department of Planning and Community Development and as Executive Director of the Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency (MVURA). Prosecutors established that Post steered a city computer services contract to a company secretly owned by her boyfriend, Wayne Charles - a company with no employees, no computer expertise, and no ability to perform the work. The scheme cost the city more than twice what it would have paid had the employees worked directly for Mount Vernon. Post also concealed a \$250,000 unpaid loan balance that Charles owed the MVURA, taking steps to hide its existence from the city's books. During the course of the scheme, Charles paid Post \$30,000.

That first conviction was subsequently overturned on a legal technicality - the U.S. Supreme Court had changed the legal theory of "theft of honest services" fraud that prosecutors relied on. Post was retried. In November 2015, a second federal jury convicted her again - this time on charges stemming from the diversion of more than \$1.2 million in funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara said at the time: "Constance Post abused her position of public trust to conspire with Wayne Charles to enrich themselves. Their corruption victimized the citizens of Mount Vernon, HUD, and U.S. taxpayers."

Two separate juries. The same conduct. Convicted twice.

Post was sentenced in December 2018 before U.S. District Judge Kenneth M. Karas. She received no prison time — the sentence was time served — along with two years of supervised release including six months of home confinement, 100 hours of community service, and restitution of \$528,394.58 to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Court records show the restitution was paid in full by February 2019.

The Task Force Appointment

In February 2025, the Mount Vernon City Council appointed Post to a recently created Economic Development Task Force, a body whose stated mission is to advise on economic policy, develop strategic plans, and promote business growth in the city. The council's rationale, offered in response to resident objections: she deserves a second chance.

There is a legitimate debate to be had about second chances in public life. But that debate requires being honest about context. The Economic Development Task Force is not a neutral civic body - it is an advisory body with influence over exactly the kinds of development decisions and contracts that Post was twice convicted of corrupting. Appointing her to that body is not extending grace. It is placing a twice-convicted development official back into the development pipeline, with the city's endorsement.

Residents objected. The council appointed her anyway.

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Which brings us to the City Council work session on May 11, 2026.

Developer Marcus Leven, represented by attorney Mark Blanchard of the Blanchard Law Group in Yonkers, introduced Post to the council as his consultant on their proposed 21-story residential development at 150 East First Street and 141 Washington Street, near the Mount Vernon East railroad cut. Post then made a detailed, enthusiastic case for the project - describing herself as a "cheerleader" for it -citing her planning credentials and her familiarity with the railroad cut from her years as planning commissioner.

What she did not say: that she currently holds an appointment from this same City Council on the Economic Development Task Force.

That omission is not a matter of personal ethics alone. It is a potential violation of the professional code Post herself invoked when she identified herself as an AICP-certified planner.

The American Institute of Certified Planners Code of Ethics, Rule 17, is direct: certified planners *"shall not fail to disclose the interests of our client or employer when participating in the planning process."* Post appeared before the council as a developer's consultant without disclosing that relationship clearly, while simultaneously trading on her credentials and her institutional familiarity with the council. More specifically, a sitting advisory appointee of the City Council appeared before that same council as a consultant for a developer seeking a zoning change - without flagging the appointment that creates an obvious conflict.

The council members seated across from her already knew she was on the task force. They appointed her. That mutual familiarity without public disclosure is precisely how conflicted relationships become normalized. At minimum, the council members who voted to appoint Post to the task force — and who were present in that chamber on May 11 — had an obligation to disclose that relationship to the public the moment she took the podium. Neither Councilmember Gleason nor Council President Thompson did.

The AICP Question

Post identified herself as holding an active AICP certification. That claim deserves scrutiny.

The AICP Code of Ethics defines a federal fraud conviction as a "serious crime" requiring mandatory revocation of AICP membership. Section E.3 states that membership *"shall be revoked"* -not *may* be revoked- upon conviction of a serious crime, which explicitly includes fraud. Rule 24 further requires that a convicted member *"shall not fail to immediately notify the Ethics Officer"* and must not represent themselves as a Certified Planner until membership is reinstated by the AICP Ethics Committee.

There are three possible explanations for Post's claim of active AICP certification: she notified AICP, her membership was revoked, and she was subsequently reinstated (which is possible after a minimum of five years under Section E.9); AICP failed to enforce its own mandatory revocation requirement; or she is misrepresenting her credentials.

I have submitted an inquiry to the American Institute of Certified Planners to determine which of these is true. I'll give an update with APA's response when received.

The Systemic Problem

It would be convenient to frame this as a story about one person's behavior. It isn't.

The more uncomfortable question is this: does the City of Mount Vernon have any ethics policy that would have caught what happened on May 11? Any disclosure requirement for task force

members appearing before the council on behalf of private clients? Any conflict-of-interest framework with teeth?

If the answer is no - and there is no evidence that any council member raised a conflict question during the May 11 work session -then the problem is not just Constance Post. The problem is a governance structure with no guardrails, in a city with a well-documented history of exactly this kind of insider dealing.

A second chance is a reasonable thing to offer someone. Appointing that person to an advisory role in the exact domain where she committed federal fraud — with no disclosure requirements and no guardrails — is not a second chance. It's an abdication of responsibility. Residents deserve to know when the people advising their government are simultaneously consulting for the developers their government regulates. That is not a radical standard. It is the minimum.

Sources

1. Mount Vernon City Council Work Session, May 11, 2026 (Constance Post appears at approximately 1:28:30):
<https://www.youtube.com/live/O3ylzm1YBJ4?si=GrIOWM4ZHN3jeXZX>
2. FBI New York Field Office Press Release, March 31, 2009 (first conviction):
<https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/newyork/press-releases/2009/nyfo033109a.htm>
3. Mount Vernon Daily Voice (first conviction overturned): <https://dailyvoice.com/new-york/mountvernon/politics/former-mount-vernon-commissioner-has-conviction-overturned/581022/>
4. U.S. Department of Justice, Southern District of New York Press Release, November 30, 2015 (second conviction): <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/former-mount-vernon-commissioner-and-her-associate-found-guilty-white-plains-federal>
5. *United States v. Constance G. Post*, Case No. 7:08-cr-00243-KMK, Judgment in a Criminal Case, December 19, 2018, U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York
6. City of Mount Vernon Economic Development Task Force membership roster:
<https://www.mountvernonny.gov/974/Economic-Development-Task-Force>
7. American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, Rules 17, 24, and Section E.3, American Planning Association:
<https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/>