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## Oakland council rejects Planning Commission nominee

By Kelly Rayburn  
Oakland Tribune  
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OAKLAND — Mayor Ron Dellums held open the possibility Wednesday of reappointing Ada Chan to the city's Planning Commission a day after the City Council rejected the choice after a tension-filled debate.

Chan's nomination to the commission, which makes decisions on development proposals, brought out supporters and critics alike Tuesday night — and ultimately only three council members voted to approve the appointment.

"The mayor continues to believe that Ms. Chan is an extraordinary candidate," said Dellums spokesman Paul Rose. "Whether or not we will bring her back for a vote is a conversation the mayor will have with Ms. Chan."

Chan, director of the Laurel Business Improvement District, said Wednesday she hadn't spoken with the mayor's office about a potential reappointment, but that her "goal is to be of service" if Dellums taps her again.

In a separate action Tuesday, the council unanimously approved the reappointment of Douglas Boxer to the commission. His term will run through May 2011.

Critics of Chan honed in on her past advocacy work, which they called anti-development, in the Mission district of San Francisco. They also focused on concerns from some in the business community that Chan is the wrong choice when the city needs to send a clear signal that new investment is needed.

Council President Ignacio De La Fuente (Glenview-Fruitvale), who led the opposition, sent an e-mail Tuesday urging people

to come to the council meeting to speak against the nomination.

"More than ever, Oakland needs Commissioners who will support and promote a range of investment opportunities," he wrote, adding, "Ada Chan is not that Commissioner."

He said Wednesday that he passed on an opportunity to meet with Chan.

"The reality is that before Ada Chan even came into the picture, several council members suggested some names to the mayor and (the mayor's office) didn't even bother to talk to some of those people," De La Fuente said.

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The council president's move to rally support against Chan clearly rankled some, including Councilmember Jane Brunner (North Oakland), who praised Chan after Chan briefly took the microphone to defend her record.

"I was really saddened by tonight," Brunner told her. "And you were a breath of fresh air, because you're clearly very professional. And I don't think what happened tonight was very professional."

Supporting Chan were Brunner, Nancy Nadel (Downtown-West Oakland), and Jean Quan (Montclair-Laurel).

Opposing her were De La Fuente, Henry Chang (at-large), Patricia Kernighan (Grand Lake-China Town) and Larry Reid (Elmhurst-East Oakland). Councilmember Desley Brooks (Eastmont-Seminary) abstained.

The debate was reminiscent, in many ways, of past council debates on issues such as affordable housing — with groups such as East Bay Housing Organizations and the Central Labor Council of Alameda County supporting Chan's nomination, and business organizations, including the Jobs and Housing Coalition and the Oakland Builders Alliance, opposing it.

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Some council members who voted "no" held open the possibility of supporting Chan in the future if business concerns can be assuaged. Reid said if business leaders knew more about Chan, they might be persuaded.

"I think they would feel comfortable" if they met with her, Reid said. "When people raised their concern about her role in San Francisco, she said, 'That was then, this is now.' Certainly she has the credentials to serve on the Planning Commission."

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