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## Westchester Democrats reject Astorino pick for planning chief

Democrats eager to send County Executive Rob Astorino a message over the spat involving a Section 8 program have rejected his pick for planning commissioner. The Board of Legislators Appointments Committee — elevated this week as its own free-standing body — denied the appointment of Edward Burroughs, a longtime deputy who became acting commissioner after Jerry Mulligan retired last year.

It was one of two appointments — the other being the appointment of Mary Mahon as director of Real Estate — they voted against, angering Republicans. "In my view, it was just a disgusting move of politics over government," said Legislator John Testa, R- Peekskill, and the only one of three lawmakers to support the nominations. "This was an orchestrated series of events to poke a stick in the eye of the county executive for no apparent reason." The vote was 2-1 with Legislators Bill Burton, D- Ossining, and Judy Myers, D-Mamaroneck, voting against. The entire county board will now vote on the appointment. Battle lines between Astorino and board Democrats were drawn after the county executive canceled the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program last year along with 40 related jobs calling it too expensive. Section 8 is a federal program through the Department of Housing and Urban Development that is managed by states, municipalities and housing authorities. Westchester's contract involved roughly 4,400 of the county's 11,000 housing vouchers. But the Democrats added many of the jobs back into the budget and overrode Astorino's vetoes, including those relating to Section 8, which is run out of the Planning Department. They also directed Burroughs to rescind termination of the contract and administer the program. Nonetheless, the contract remained canceled and Astorino laid off those workers. The county's largest union, CSEA, is expected to sue.

Burroughs, of South Salem, joined the department in 1994 and became deputy commissioner in 2003. Last year, he was elevated to acting commissioner, a promotion that was approved by the board. More recently, he received the Andrew Haskell Green Award from the New York Metro Chapter of the American Planning Association. "I respect Ed Burroughs. I think he's a bright guy," said Burton, chair of appointments. "The way the administration has handled the Section 8 program in the last two months has not been one of their finer moments."

The Appointments Committee approved Kathy O'Connor as commissioner of Parks and Recreation and Mae Carpenter as commissioner of Senior Programs and Services.