

Summary: NPS Senior Official Created the Appearance of Using his Public Office for Private Gain

Report Date: January 8, 2018

OIG investigated allegations that a National Park Service (NPS) senior official in the Northeast Region used his position for personal gain when he requested unnecessary design and construction improvements to a park housing unit he expected to rent as his personal residence. We also investigated allegations that the senior official made improper position changes by preselecting a staff member who did not meet qualifications and that he improperly served on park partner organization boards.

We found that the NPS senior official created the appearance of using his public office for private gain when he asked his subordinate employee to include specific design and construction changes in the renovation proposal for a historic townhouse, which was the park housing unit in which he planned to reside. The changes were included in the final design plans and added approximately \$32,000 to the cost of the project, but at the time of our report, the senior official had decided not to move into the unit and NPS had delayed the renovations.

We also found that some employees and contractors did not agree with the proposed changes, and only one person raised these concerns before the project was awarded. Additionally, we found that members of the Regional Development Advisory Board, whose role was to review and approve the proposed renovation plans, were not aware that the senior official had intended on moving into the unit.

We did not substantiate that the NPS senior official made improper position changes by preselecting staff members, and we found that while the senior official did serve as an NPS liaison for two park partners, his participation did not violate NPS or ethics regulations.

This is a summary of an investigative report that we issued to the NPS Acting Director.

