



Est. 1912

Reflections on Redevelopment, Community Stability, and the Future of Deanwood

Throughout Deanwood Citizens Associations's (DCA) discussions regarding the Eastern Avenue redevelopment projects, one theme emerged consistently: *redevelopment is not simply about buildings. It is about people.*

Many of the residents who shared their experiences with DCA described years of deferred maintenance, uncertainty, and unfulfilled promises under previous ownership. This is a small example of a larger challenge facing our community: *a history of limited oversight and unmet commitments have left many residents weary of redevelopment and skeptical of promised improvements.*

One lesson reinforced throughout this process is the importance of communication at the very beginning of redevelopment efforts. While formal notices and legal correspondence are necessary, they are often not sufficient on their own.

For many residents, the first interaction with a redevelopment project may determine how they perceive the entire process. DCA believes redevelopment efforts can benefit from early, plain-language communication that clearly explains what is being proposed, why it is occurring, who is involved, what resources are available, and where residents can direct questions. Establishing those connections early may help build understanding, reduce uncertainty, and foster greater trust throughout the redevelopment process.

At the same time, DCA recognizes that investment and redevelopment can play an important role in improving housing conditions, public safety, and the long-term vitality of the Eastern Avenue corridor. Many of the improvements proposed through these projects have the potential to benefit both current and future residents.

The challenge facing communities such as Deanwood is not whether redevelopment should occur. Rather, it is how redevelopment can occur responsibly, and asking:

- How do we improve neighborhoods without treating the people who remained through years of disinvestment as collateral damage?
- How do we encourage investment while preserving community stability, dignity, and opportunity for long-term residents?

These are not questions with simple answers. However, DCA believes they are questions worth asking as redevelopment activity continues throughout Deanwood, Ward 7, and the District as a Whole.

The conversations surrounding these projects reinforced the importance of early communication, transparency, resident engagement, and thoughtful planning that recognizes both the promise of investment and the human impact of change.

As redevelopment continues across our community, DCA remains committed to supporting constructive dialogue, advocating for community interests, and ensuring that the voices of residents remain part of the conversation.

The future of Deanwood should not be a choice between investment and community.

Our challenge is to ensure that growth, opportunity, and redevelopment strengthen the neighborhood while recognizing the people who sustained it through years of disinvestment. A successful redevelopment project is measured not only by what is built, but by whether existing residents can see themselves as part of the community's future.

Ultimately, redevelopment plans, zoning cases, financing structures, and construction schedules are discussed on paper. Their impacts, however, are experienced by people. The challenge before all of us is not simply how to build stronger neighborhoods, but how to do so in a way that recognizes the dignity, stability, and humanity of the people who call those neighborhoods home.

Adopted by the Deanwood Citizens Association Executive Board on June 1, 2026

Jennifer Stecklow, President

Leron Douglas, Vice President

Jimell Sanders, Treasurer

Margarita Contreras, Secretary