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February 5, 2015

Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia
414 4th Street, NW, Suite 200-South
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Case No. 14-18

Dear Zoning Commissioners,

My name is Gerald Kittner and I am the Executive Director of Beacon House Community Ministry, Inc., a non-profit after school tutoring and mentoring program for low-income children that operates out of two centers in the middle of the Edgewood Terrace (now "Edgewood Commons") apartment complex in Northeast, Washington, DC. I write in support of the application submitted by Mid-City Financial Corporation which seeks approval to build a mixed use development in the Brookland neighborhood of Northeast, DC.

Beacon House was founded in 1991 when the Edgewood Terrace apartment complex was a crime-ridden, distressed Section 8 housing community. As a Board member of Beacon House, I visited the complex often and had first-hand experience with the myriad affronts law-abiding residents and neighbors of the community faced each day. In the mid to late 1990s, the Edgewood property was renovated by the Community Preservation and Development Corp. ("CPDC"), a 501(c)(3) developer of affordable housing. Edgewood became then, and remains now, an attractive, clean and safe place to live both for residents who pay market rates and for low-income families who pay subsidized rates.

Mr. Ford, a principal with Mid-City, founded CPDC, was Chairman of the Board of CPDC when that company acquired the Edgewood property, and played a central role in insuring that the renovation of Edgewood incorporated subsidized units and social services for the residents.

Beacon House tutors and mentors children from families who live in the Brookland Manor apartment complex, which is on the other side of Rhode Island Avenue, roughly a mile from Beacon House. I occasionally drive through Saratoga Avenue, and through the middle of the Brookland Manor apartments. Regardless of the time of day, or day of the week, I invariably witness dozens of adults and children loitering on the streets with no apparent purpose. Quite often at night there are police cars parked on the streets, sometimes with bright spot lights set up to illuminate the neighborhood, no doubt to preempt trouble. On quite a few occasions I have heard gunshots ring out.

Brookland Manor is what Edgewood Terrace was prior to CPDC's renovation and stewardship. Like Edgewood was, Brookland Manor is a homogenously low-income community with no apparent effective social service agencies working to give residents skills and hope for a better future.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.14-18
EXHIBIT NO.20

As I understand the proposed project, Mid-City Financial and Mr. Ford, just as was done with the renovation of Edgewood, will incorporate a certain percentage of subsidized rental units, and welcome programs like Beacon House, and other child and adult welfare organizations to work on supporting the most disadvantaged residents. Just as Edgewood has been an unequivocal success story, Mid-City's planned renovations of Brookland Manor hold the promise of a much brighter future for current and future low-income residents. Furthermore, it is hard to discern the value of preserving the status quo.

As a social service professional, it is my strong hope that Mid-City Financial obtains the necessary regulatory approvals and is allowed to proceed with its plans. I would be happy to provide further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald Kittner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Gerald Kittner
Executive Director