

Testimony before the DC Zoning Commission  
Regarding: Zoning Commission Case No. 14-18  
Applicant: Mid-City Financial Corp.  
Property: Brookland Manor / Brentwood Village  
Map Amendment, First Stage PUD  
Hearing Date: 03/16/2015

By Leslie Steen, non-profit affordable housing developer, former Housing Chief for the District of Columbia, and long term resident of DC.  
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Good evening. My name is Leslie Steen. I have been a resident of DC since the mid-1970's and a developer of affordable housing in DC and the region for most of those years. I am greatly honored to be here before you this evening to provide testimony regarding the redevelopment of the property known as Brookland Manor.

Eugene F. Ford, Sr. is the principal owner of Brookland Manor and asked that I provide testimony regarding his desires and purpose in redeveloping Brookland Manor. Mr. Ford, now retired, was a pioneer and had a long career focused on developing affordable housing under Federal government programs, developing affordable housing throughout the Washington and Baltimore areas. He is also renowned for providing responsible management with the goal of sustainability. Eugene Ford, Sr. has a national reputation for his understanding of the affordable housing programs, the underlying social issues, and his endeavors to find good solutions for the community, residents, and the private sector.

As Eugene Ford moved toward retirement and as these Federal programs wound down, he recognized the threat of the loss of the underlying subsidies and corresponding affordability of the housing. In 1987 we met and in 1989 he asked me to form a nonprofit development company with the purpose of preserving affordable housing. With his support, knowledge and mentoring I started and ran Community Preservation and Development Corporation for 15 years preserving over 3,500 apartments, many of them federally subsidized. Affordable housing came under great pressure starting in the 1990's as the program rules reduced the incomes of the households allowed to be served in the subsidized housing and the properties became concentrations of extremely low income households. This, along with drugs that moved into many communities, caused many complexes to become distressed. CPDC along with Eugene Ford became leaders in revitalizing affordable housing into sustainable, mixed income communities.

Originally built in the late 1930's, Brookland Manor is a community in need of revitalization. The property was redeveloped in the 1970's under Federal Section 236 program originally designed to serve a mix of incomes up to 80% of the area median income, and later supplemented with project based Section 8 and DCHA voucher rental assistance, it has deteriorated to the point that the housing is obsolete and it is a community impacted by a high concentration of very low income households. The Federal subsidies and regulations have expired or are about to expire. Mid City and Eugene Ford have no obligation to continue to provide Section 8 rental subsidy. At the same time, transit oriented housing, higher densities, and a mix of uses and a mix of incomes have become the most desirable model for creating vibrant, sustainable communities. While Eugene Ford has retired and is no longer active in real estate activities, the Ford family and Mid City share and own his vision and commitment to the transformation of Brookland Manor.

## Brookland Manor continued

Under the proposed redevelopment plan, Mid City and the Ford family will actualize Eugene Ford's legacy. The property will become a truly mixed income community with a mixture of types housing and retail to serve the community. 20% of the property's units (estimated at 424 units) will be restricted on a permanent basis to households with incomes of 50% and 80% of the area median, which is twice the requirement for inclusionary zoning. In addition to this requirement, 373 of the affordable units (18% of the property) will have project-based Section 8 as well as some will have availability to households using Housing Choice Vouchers and phasing that minimizes off site relocation during development. Importantly, the rental subsidy allows people with extremely low incomes (30% of the area median income) to afford housing. It not only covers the cost of creating the housing, it also covers some of the annual cost of operating it, which is more than 30% of area median income households can afford to pay. In the affordable housing world, rental subsidy is like gold.

Under this plan Eugene Ford's legacy will be realized. Brookland Manor will be revitalized into a truly mixed income community providing very low income households with housing in a sustainable community close to transportation and with the amenities of a vibrant, healthy community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim A. Ford". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.