

Thursday Network—Greater Washington Urban League
2901 14th NW
Washington, D.C. 20009

Case Number: 14-18A

February 19, 2017

Dear Councilman McDuffie,

On behalf and in support of the residents of Brookland Manor, we, the members of Thursday Network Greater Washington Urban League request that you stand with your faithful constituents by advocating for revitalization without displacement. At the third annual Local Leaders Council Policy Forum 2016 in Washington, D.C., Deputy Mayor of Economic Opportunity Courtney Snowden spoke on a panel amongst other local leaders from more than 30 cities across the country focusing on the challenges of providing affordable housing and maintaining reliable employment and opportunities for financial growth to residents. Displacement of the residents of Brookland Manor is the antithesis of what other D.C. government officials such as Deputy Mayor Snowden have championed. With 98% of Brookland Manor's residents receiving housing assistance, a forceful displacement would increase the longevity of cycles of poverty. As a community partner, we are confident that you are equipped to tackle such obstacles head on as each and every one of your Ward 5 constituents are of great importance.

According to [The Washington City Paper](#), the developer Mid-City Financial stated that “the existing Ward 5 buildings are old, low-quality, and have an antiquated urban design that lacks defined green space (which it says encourages crime and loitering), necessitating the demolition of the complex.”

Discriminatory sentiments can be drawn from such a statement as it reinforces stereotypes associated with the culture of communities with members experiencing financial difficulties. Additionally, it implies that even with further development of Brookland Manor, the original residents are not welcomed to take advantage of the positive changes. Based on a 2016 [Washington Post](#) Article, “D.C. estimates 5,000 families are teetering on the brink of homelessness at any time.” With statistics that dire, how could displacement be a viable solution? D.C.'s current challenges with homeless shelters being at full capacity would impact “crime and loitering” much more than the “the existing Ward 5 buildings [being] old, low-quality, and having an antiquated urban design that lacks defined green space.”

In addition to current Brookland Manor residents living in fear of displacement resulting from mass evictions, they have also reported blatant acts of discrimination by frequent harassment from private armed security officers.

In solidarity with the residents of Brookland Manor, we implore you to consider the tenants' practical and feasible demands:

1. Preserve 535 units of affordable housing at the same bedroom sizes and current subsidy levels.
2. Remain on the property during the process of redevelopment.
3. Ensure that residents can access employment opportunities through the rebuilding of the community.

4. Highlight to the Zoning Committee that a “community benefit” is not in play as Mid-City Financial’s current development plan is discriminatory in nature.

5. Oppose the 2nd Stage PUD (Planned Unit Development) due to the outstanding legal case against Mid-City Financial on the grounds of discrimination.

Councilman McDuffie, you have been a continued beacon of hope in Ward 5 and we trust that you will continue to stand with us and your constituents in Brookland Manor to secure a just, free, and equal community.

Sincerely,

LaTricea D. Adams, MAT, EdS
President, Thursday Network
Greater Washington Urban League Young Professionals