

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

Case No. 14-18A

February 20th, 2017

Dear Councilmember McDuffie,

As a member of Thursday Network—Greater Washington Urban League, this letter is in support of the residents of Brookland Manor ensuring that these families have a place to live during reconstruction. Brookland Manor has 535 units that the Mid-City Financial developer is seeking to redevelop and create 1700 units of luxury apartments. The issue is that during the construction of the new apartment complex, residents will have to abort. This is an example housing inequality. More importantly, this is an issue of unjust Fair Housing.

As we have seen throughout Washington, D.C. gentrification largely affects African-American families and the elderly falling within the Section 8 low-income guidelines. In fact, destroying and displacing families drives up the economy and surges up the amount of homelessness.

According to The Rental Housing Conversion and Sale Act of 1980, *D.C. Official Code § 42-3401.01 et. seq. (2001), as amended District of Columbia Municipal Regulations, title 14, chapter 47:*

“The Rental Housing Conversion and Sale Act of 1980, as amended (D.C. Law 3-86) regulates conversion of property into a condominium or cooperative, relocation assistance, the tenant organization registration, the registration of rental residential property offered for sale and tenant opportunity to purchase rights.”

At the first stage zoning hearing, representatives of Mid-City Financial suggested that due to “natural attrition,” some tenants would leave Brookland Manor, and that their absence from the property would help to justify Mid-City’s plans to build luxury apartments in place of deeply affordable housing. What the developer refers to as “natural attrition,” residents experience as forceful displacement.

Forcing families to leave there home provides the following disadvantages:

- Living in overcrowded apartments
- Living in overcrowded shelters

- Being forced to relocate
- Forced to take youth out of zoned schools
- Immediate homelessness/poverty

Consequently, the rise in rent for renters is dramatically increasing. Rentjungle.com, showcases the recent rent trends in Washington, DC, “As of January 2017, average apartment rent within the city of Washington, DC is \$2291. One bedroom apartments in Washington rent for \$2068 a month on average and two bedroom apartment rents average \$2728.”

As a result, Rentjungle.com also provides evidence that “The most expensive Washington neighborhoods to rent apartments are Adams Morgan, Georgetown, and Foggy Bottom. The cheapest Washington neighborhoods to rent apartments are Anacostia, Deanwood, and Takoma Park.”

How can we encourage the developer to revitalize the area and bolster the economy without polarizing urbanization and revitalization?

Sincerely,

Maya Jordan

Member of the Greater Washington Urban League’s Thursday Network