

Case 16-11 Zoning Commission Hearing  
Dec 5, 2016

Testimony of Shonta High

Greetings everyone. My name is Ms. Shonta ' High. I've been a Park Morton Resident for 15.5 years. I reside there with my 2 children, A 'Tira & Amarissa High, ages 16 & 2. To summarize who I am, where I come from, & what I stand for would take too much of my time to speak. So, I'm going to cut right to the chase as I am a very forthright person. Living in Park Morton has been at times very difficult with the crime that has been there in the past & the little that remains today. I have personally fought the good fight to take back my building from the junkies & the former pushers that were in & around my building, the playground where my oldest child use to play frequently, & in common areas. That was the 1<sup>st</sup> step towards the betterment of the place we called home.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> step was growing a relationship with my neighbors. This has been well accomplished as we are a unit in our building. We have connected so well that we can receive each other's mail, bulk packages, & even fellowship with each other around the holidays as a family. This is the true definition of community. How many of you can say the same? I as an individual bring leadership, advocacy, love, friendship, honesty, laughs, support, & family to Park Morton. This is what I contribute to my community as I was raised in a community that believed it took a village to raise the children. My oldest daughter who is 16 years old, is a High Honor Student, a recipient of the President's Education Award, an inductee into the National Society of High School Scholars, a People to People Student Ambassador Alumni, a current student at the Dance Institute of Washington, a model, a good friend to many of the children she knows in our

neighborhood, a mentor to her peers, a positive decision maker, & so much more, yet she remains humble.

Our community has learned to speak very highly of us simply because of the dedication & commitment we exude. Why wouldn't anyone want to live next door to a student of such a high caliber? Why? Because in the eyes of those who oppose us, we're poor & undeserving. To those who oppose us, having a garden & a dog park is more important than housing families who so desperately need the change, not only for our current Park Morton Residents, but future residents as well.

Why shouldn't my daughter A'Tira who is striving to be a doctor with a current 3.58 GPA to prove it, not deserve a better quality of life? Why shouldn't my youngest daughter who can be anything she wants to be, deserve to have a home she can be proud of? With all that A'Tira has attained & continues to strive for, the last thing she & her baby sister should have to worry about is having a place to live that their friends & our family will not be afraid of visiting simply because of the reputation it once carried. We as a family should not have to continue living in a home that most of you would not dare place your own families in. Why is it good enough for ours & not yours? I tell you that it is not! I stand before you today as an active member of my community, as a mother, as a Steering Committee Member/Chairperson of the Relocation/Reentry Subcommittee, as a friend, as a person with a fixed income, & lastly as a survivor of Bipolar Depression, I & the many others like me, all deserve the same opportunities to live in a safe, healthy environment that will allow us & our children to thrive mentally, physically, emotionally, & productively. Thank you.