

Prepared for the hearing on March 16, 2015 which was postponed until
May 7, 2015

District of Columbia Zoning Commission

ZC Case No. 14-18

Testimony by Kelvin Brooks .

Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Residents Association

Members of the Zoning Commission,

My name is Kelvin Brooks, I am a resident of Brookland Manor, and I am testifying against Mid City Financial's current plans for redevelopment of the property. Currently, I live in a 4-bedroom unit at Brookland Manor and I am concerned because Mid City's plans for redevelopment do not include any new 4- and 5-bedroom units.

My family includes my daughter, her three kids, Gary, and myself. We support each other and work together to take care of our home. To some people, we might not look like a traditional family, but we are a family nonetheless. I grew up in Brookland Manor. I used to have a 3-bedroom unit, but I began applying for a 4-bedroom unit once my granddaughter was born back in 2010. We finally moved into our current 4-bedroom apartment in September of 2014. We all love and depend on each other. But Mid City's plans do not have a place for me and my family. Even more, given Mid City's plans, Brookland Manor will no longer be a place for families.

Mid City's plan does not have space for a family like mine. Even if we get vouchers, that won't help because there are fewer and fewer 4- and 5-bedroom apartments in the District. It was hard enough getting the 4-bedroom apartment we're currently in. Where will my family go? Where will all the other families at Brookland Manor go?

Their plan forces us to break up our family. Mid City does not understand how much families like mine depend on each other. Gary and I take care of my daughter's children while she goes to school. I walk my 4-year old

granddaughter to the busstop in the morning, and my neighbors help the mornings I have a doctor's appointment. Both Gary and I have disabilities and live on fixed incomes, but we're able to pay our rent, to keep a home for our family, to help our daughter finish school, and to give our grandchildren a great place to live. Currently, Mid City's plans include a 200-unit senior building. It's possible that I might be old enough for that building when it is ready, but my family won't. Mid City's current plans will force me to make a choice between my family and my home and I don't think that's a choice I should have to make.

Additionally, any development of Brookland Manor that truly cares for its residents should keep tenants on-site and move tenants to the new buildings as they become available. No family should have to relocate off-site during any redevelopment. We have our lives here: we know the bus routes, we are close to the schools, and the grocery store is not too far away. My family has built their life here and so have many other residents. If you relocate us during the redevelopment, it will make life unnecessarily hard on families to get to work, school, and other places. Brookland Manor is my family's home and we want it to stay that way.

Finally, I know some people will point to the crime at the property as a reason for this redevelopment. During my time at Brookland Manor, I've twice been the victim of crime at the property. Yes, we need better security. Yes, we need a way to make our neighborhood safe. But that does mean you should destroy my home? Does that mean everyone at Brookland Manor should be displaced and struggle for to find a place to live? Don't we deserve better security today? I love my community! I love my neighbors and my home. I want to be a part of Brookland Manor's future, but Mid City's plans leave me out.

Again, I say, Mid City's plans should not be approved because it does not provide for the current residents, especially the families, of Brookland Manor.

Thank you.