

**Mr. Perry Spiller – Feb. 23 Hearing Testimony
Case No. 14-18A**

My name is Perry Spiller and I'm a tenant at Brookland Manor, I've been there for 3 and a half years. The message that we have gotten from the developer is that everybody will be displaced without a care in the world. My next door neighbor spoke at the last hearing and she's a single mom. She doesn't have a place to go, and that's all she knows, but she's not able to get out to meetings.

The notes that Mid-City sent out and posted on the gate, what I got out of it is that the buildings will be torn down, but no suggestions as to where we should go or what's going to take place. So it's kind of like getting an eviction notice and not knowing what's next – you don't even know how this is happening. If it weren't for tenant meetings and ONE DC getting the message out about what's going on, I wouldn't really know what's going on with my surroundings. I just got a sense that a redevelopment was going to take place and there was nothing I could do about it. And when they started talking about reducing the number of affordable apartments that were coming back, that's when I became aware a little more of the steps I need to take to make sure that me and my daughter have a stable place to stay.

Me and my daughter having access to affordable housing in DC is very important. I'm a single father, my daughter is 7 and I've been raising her by myself. Finding a job that matches her schedule makes it even harder. Right now I'm receiving TANF \$347 a month, until she gets older and is able to feed herself and go school. Even if I had a job I still need affordable housing because the prices are ridiculous. You have four people grouping up to afford a house note. Right now, HUD is helping me out. I just want Mid-City to abide by the people, that's the only way things are going to work. It's crucial that I have a stable subsidized apartment for me and my daughter. It's crucial to my sanity and it's crucial for the development of her growth. Without having a stable place, and a functional environment, my daughter cannot flourish. Mid-City is actually, in all hindsight, guiding the footsteps of my daughter – their actions will lead to her reactions. So they are not just making a decision for me, they're making a decision for my daughter and for other

families. It gets bigger. So their task weighs heavy on them, because it's not just the people they get rid of, we are the people who gave them what they have. It's like a business – they're telling us “we don't need you guys anymore, we're looking for new and more sources of income.”

Lack of access to housing is creating poverty. Poverty can create numerous situations, and when we realize that our back is against the wall, it creates a need for survival, and it creates crime too. But the biggest crime of all is what Mid-City is doing – to displace working class black people nonchalantly and to mask it like it's benefiting the people – that is the biggest crime of all. Because their actions cause poverty, and poverty causes crime. They say they want to reduce crime, but they are introducing crime, and favors and money get exchanged with city officials. Mid-City is causing a lot of confusion, and threatening to take things away that they won't put back. The problem of homelessness and not having stable housing will persist if it's not addressed. It's like dishes in the sink, if you keep letting it sit, it will build up, and it's going to need some maintenance. You can keep sweeping this under the rug and think that things are going to get better, but it won't. You have to play fair with the people, and Mr. Meers and Mid-City are not playing fair.

We are the people and we have spoken. It's crucial that we keep affordable housing, because that's all some of us have. As we and our families grow, of course we are going to need more space. Surviving is a hard thing, but surviving taking care of a child is even harder. It takes a village to raise a child, and if you break the village up, then that child cannot be raised properly. If Mid-City divides our community, where does that leave our children? Our demands are completely reasonable, and they are coming from people whose homes are in jeopardy. Our major demand is to preserve 535 units of affordable housing at the same bedroom sizes and subsidy levels, and this redevelopment plan should not move forward unless we are a part of it.

I'll leave you with this: 1 Corinthians 10:24 says, “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” - that's what I'm doing here, and I ask Mid-City, and the zoning commission to do the same.