

**Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Resident Association
Public Testimony Request Letter**

The Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Resident Association, ONE DC tenant members and residents at Brookland Manor are organizing against a forced displacement campaign led by developer Mid-City Financial, a group that has moved to displace working class people of color from one of the few remaining affordable housing properties in Washington, D.C. Residents of Brookland Manor have been subjected to discrimination based on family sizes; have faced documented harassment at the hands of a private armed security force; and mass evictions that were only slowed down after public exposure. To date, Mid-City's displacement tactics have gone unchallenged by Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie. Furthermore, Mid-City's displacement tactics have gone unchallenged by the Zoning Commission, which approved the first stage of Mid-City's displacement plan.

Mid-City Financial has outlined a plan to demolish all 535 units of affordable housing, and replace it with over 1700 units of mostly luxury apartments. Under their proposed plan, overall affordability [in the midst of an affordable housing crisis in the nation's capital] will be reduced from 535 to 373 units, and all five, four, and most three bedroom units eliminated. Covington & Burling, along with the Washington Lawyers Committee recently filed a groundbreaking lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of development plans that target a protected class (families), by effectively eliminating family housing.

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 violent displacement.

ONE DC tenant members and residents at Brookland Manor request your support at the upcoming second stage zoning commission hearing at 6:30pm on Thursday, February 23, 2017. The hearing will take place in the Jerrily R. Kress Memorial Hearing Room at 441 4th St. NW, Suite 220 Washington, D.C. 20001.

At this hearing, the tenants and their legal team will be arguing for the inclusion of robust affordable housing, including the retention of large bedrooms, so that no resident is displaced from their existing community. We request that you both submit written testimony, and if possible, join us in person to provide testimony publicly in support of Brookland Manor tenants fighting to save their homes:

- Zoning should not approve any plan that discriminates against families by eliminating large bedrooms.
- Zoning should not approve any plan that is facilitated by the forced displacement of residents through underhanded tactics such as a private armed police force.
- Zoning should not approve any plan that is facilitated by the forced displacement of residents through the erection of fences that restrict the freedom of movement of disabled persons, and that restrict the ability of residents to move freely around their own community.
- Zoning should not approve of a plan that proposes to eliminate affordable housing in the midst of an affordable housing crisis.
- Zoning should not approve of a plan that will result in the displacement of working class people of color in order to make way for luxury apartments while thousands sleep on the streets.
- We support Brookland Manor tenants in their reasonable and viable demand that the redevelopment preserve 535 units of affordable housing at the same bedroom sizes and current subsidy levels.
- We support the Brookland Manor tenants in their reasonable and viable demand that they not be displaced from the property during the process of redevelopment.
- We support the Brookland Manor tenants in their reasonable and viable demand that they gain access to employment opportunities through the rebuilding of their own community, which they have a fundamental right to be a part of.
- We implore the Zoning Commission to block this development from moving forward, until or unless Mid-City Financial immediately stops engaging in intimidation tactics to force tenants off the property.
- We implore the Zoning Commission to block this development from moving forward until or unless Mid-City Financial fundamentally changes their current plan to incorporate Brookland Manor tenant demands.
- In Zoning guidelines, it makes clear that any plan that is not considered a "community benefit" should not be approved. Any plan that does not cede to the reasonable and viable demands of Brookland Manor tenants cannot be considered a "community benefit" and should therefore not be approved.

Information from the Zoning Commission:

All individuals, organizations, or associations wishing to testify in this case are encouraged to inform the Office of Zoning their intent to testify prior to the hearing date. This can be done by mail sent to the address stated below, e-mail (donna.hanousek@dc.gov), or by calling (202) 727-0789. The following maximum time limits for oral testimony shall be adhered to:

- Organizations – 5 minutes each
- Individuals – 3 minutes each

If you are **unable** to attend and testify in person at the hearing on February 23rd:

Please submit written testimony before February 23rd if you are not available to attend the hearing in person by e-mail to zcsubmissions@dc.gov; or by fax to (202) 727-6072. Please include the case number on your submission. The case number for Brookland Manor is: 14-18A

If you are **able** to attend and testify in person the hearing on February 23rd:

If you plan to attend in person, please inform the Office of Zoning by emailing (donna.hanousek@dc.gov), or by calling (202) 727-0789. If possible, please print and bring 11 copies of your testimony to the hearing. Please include the case number on your testimony document. The case number for Brookland Manor is: 14-18A

On behalf of tenants, the Brookland Manor/Brentwood Village Resident Association and ONE DC thank you for your support in the struggle to protect families and preserve affordable housing in Washington, D.C.