

Rev. Brian Murray, BRIDGE Maryland

Ladies and gentlemen of the Council, my testimony is that we've been here before. Inclusionary housing demands were made of Kevin Plank's Port Covington group. Simple, small percentages were asked for inclusionary housing in order to receive one of the largest TIFs in the history of this country. As two of us from BRIDGE Maryland worked with the citizen appointed activist group, we all met with the Port Covington developers for several weeks to no avail. Why? Well, we can hide behind the fact that the city couldn't assist in financing the subsidy money for building inclusionary housing all we want. But the bottom line is they wanted to push this watered down bill through because elections were just around the corner. The powers that be, feared that if most of you were in the council at that time, there would be no way this bill as it has existed would see the light of day. There are maybe three council people that were here at that time, and the chairman was still a State Senator.

Well, now you anticipated "young guns" are here. And I don't know anybody that lives in Port Covington, basically because they can't afford it. That means, in the end, inclusionary affordable housing didn't happen because there was never really an honest intention to do the work to have it happen. And so, the anticipation that the council in its entirety would do the right thing is here, upon you, right now. Many within this coalition will cite data that more than justifies a favorable report for passing this legislation. My question is...can we do it the right way this time? My understanding is that there are numerous developers lined up with applications to build in this city. And we're not so clueless that we don't understand that there are big and small building projects. But what we are saying is for big building projects that are requesting big TIFs, the contract must have ironclad inclusionary and affordable housing provisions. These provisions must be enforceable and there should be consequences for violating them. Public servants have two jobs. Constituent services and passing sensible policies to improve the quality

of life. In this matter it's time for the council to put some receipts on the table. I pray that you will. Thank you.