

MS. MINGO: Good afternoon. My name is Gwen Mingo, and I'm the chairman of the Coordinating Council for Community Redevelopment and also the Brush Park's Citizens District Council.

How many of you have heard of Citizens District Councils? Oh, that's good. That's great. A lot of these problems that we're having and we're talking about today are because the Citizens District Councils have been destroyed -- basically destroyed in the last ten years, and they've been -- there have been a lot of different false advertisements, meaning that people believe that it's a Citizens District Council; and it's not. It's a CDC. Some organizations have taken our name, Citizens District Council, and they're not. They're Community Development Corporations. So one of the things I want to do is clarify what has happened in the past and where we are today with Citizens District Councils and make recommendations to this mix.

Also, I'd like to thank God and thank the Commission and thank all of you for coming to make this possible today.

Citizens District Councils were established during the Coleman Young administration, and the reason was that most of you know about the riot and, after the riot, there was a need by administrators and a lot of officials to ensure that citizens participated in the planning for the development of Detroit and that they benefited from the plans.

And so Citizens District Councils were -- came into being because of legislation that was passed by the state reps and the senators. And what they said was that, if there is any development projected to occur in a neighborhood or if development is already going on, that a Citizens District Council will be established within the jurisdictional bounds of the neighborhood.

In the city of Detroit we have 17 Citizens District Councils. So 17 neighborhoods.

And I see Mr. Spence back there who represents one of the neighborhoods; so if I leave something out, maybe he can pick up for me when he gets up to speak. I just want to tell you that I've run out of time, but I want to -- I think I need to say this: The Citizens District Councils need funding. The reason they need funding is to protect your interest and to protect the interest of each and every citizen in the city of Detroit because they have jurisdiction not only of their neighborhoods but of the adjacent neighborhoods.

Funding is to provide staff who can perform the duties that are required of us by legislation.

Now, what will that do? That will ensure that you benefit from development, meaning that you get money; you get jobs; you get housing; that housing is built that is barrier free and that we can afford to live in; and that we know where the money is going and we won't have \$600 million dollars for transportation getting lost.

So far in all of the neighborhoods in Detroit there has been billions of dollars that have been misspent and unaccounted for since the dissolution of the Citizens District Councils way back in -- beginning in 1995. I am urging everyone here to support the funding for Citizens District Councils, to call the Detroit City Council; and we are going to call a citywide meeting of churches and organizations in the city of Detroit to call for the funding of Citizens District Councils.

But there is one thing that I want to warn you of. The land in the city, all the prime property is just about gone. So now they are forming other Citizens District Councils under Public Act 338.

Those people are all appointed. They are not elected like we are. So you lose your right to vote for who represents your interest in your neighborhood.

And if these Citizens District Councils -- and I'm not saying all of them are bad, but if you have to be -- you have to watch what's going on in the city of Detroit because we're in serious trouble; because, if these people dictate what happens to the land, Detroit can evolve into a city where you have no rights to be involved in anything that goes on and then you can't even sit down in certain parts of the city.

So I'm urging you for your -- oh, another thing is Citizens District Councils are a vehicle in which our civil rights are required to be adhered to; and if we lose the Citizens District Councils, as our rights go as they relate to land and property ownership, we'll lose some of those rights. Anyway, I've run out of time. I thank you. I just want you to remember this and say it after me. If something is wrong, don't say that -- wait a minute. If something is wrong, if something doesn't fit, it's not good for you. I thank you for standing up, but you have to demand that people do good in whatever they do, and you have to demand the good in yourself.

So say this: Good, better, best -- AUDIENCE: Good, better, best -- MS. MINGO: -- never let them rest -- AUDIENCE: -- never let them rest -- MS. MINGO: -- until the good gets better AUDIENCE: -- until the good gets better MS. MINGO: -- and the better gets best.

AUDIENCE: -- and the better gets best.

MS. MINGO: Now, say it again. Good, better, best -- MS. MCDOWELL: We don't have time to say it again. We have to move on.