



Councilmember Robert C. White, Jr.

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency regarding the need to provide financial relief and other assistance to the current owners of the condominium units at the River East at Grandview Condominiums.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Relief for River East at Grandview Condominium Owners Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2024”.

Sec. 2. (a) In 2011, the Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”) provided a loan to Stanton View Development LLC (“Stanton View”) to cover predevelopment and acquisition costs for a Ward 8 property at 1260 to 1272 Talbert Street, S.E., Washington, DC 20020, at which Stanton View planned to develop 46 for-sale affordable housing units.

(b) In 2014, Stanton View transferred the property to Rivereast at Anacostia LLC for development, who decided instead to develop rental units and who received a Housing Production Trust Fund (“HPTF”) loan from DHCD, with the support of the Council, to do so.

(c) By the end of 2016, Stanton View and DHCD agreed to convert the property back to the originally proposed ownership units, and the project was finished and just about ready for move-in.

30 (d) From July 2017 to February 2019, 46 households purchased homes at 1262 Talbert  
31 Street, S.E., in a building that has been called several different but similar names: River East at  
32 Grandview, Grandview Estate, Grandview Estates, Grandview Estates II, Gardenview, River  
33 East, RiverEast, River East at Anacostia, River East at Anacostia Metro Station, River East at  
34 Grandview, and, simply, Talbert Street (“River East at Grandview”).

35 (e) Many of the 46 households were led by Black women becoming homeowners for  
36 the first time using the District’s Home Purchase Assistance Program (“HPAP”), and the  
37 newly formed community included retirees, recent graduates, young couples, veterans, parents,  
38 and parents-to-be.

39 (f) By August 2021, the community faced an insurmountable obstacle: An engineering  
40 firm hired by the Condominium Association gave an emergency recommendation to fully  
41 evacuate the building within 2 weeks due to serious structural concerns within the brand-new  
42 building into which many had just poured their savings, hearts, and future plans.

43 (g) Since the evacuation almost 3 years ago, River East at Grandview owners have  
44 worked diligently to untangle the tremendous financial, legal, and emotional web into which  
45 they were thrown.

46 (h) Owners have described horrific experiences stemming from this tragic outcome,  
47 including diminished mental health, persistent frustration, immense stress, distrust and  
48 disappointment, and fear over their next steps.

49 (i) The District has provided some support, including immediate cash assistance and  
50 case management to find rental units at the time of the evacuation, as well as ongoing rental  
51 support that the Executive said will end in June 2024.

52 (j) However, River East at Grandview owners remain responsible for their first trust  
53 mortgages, despite being unable to move back into a building that has been deemed unlivable  
54 and worth \$0 in value.

55 (k) For years, owners – represented by the River East at Grandview Condominium  
56 Association – engaged with the Executive to attempt to find common ground on a solution,  
57 while groups of owners also sought relief and accountability through the courts.

58 (l) By the fall of 2023, there was still no resolution, and the owners continued to suffer  
59 in a state of limbo.

60 (m) In November 2023, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Housing  
61 held a joint roundtable to hear from the River East at Grandview owners, the Department of  
62 Buildings (“DOB”), and DHCD over what went wrong and how to determine and implement  
63 next steps.

64 (n) Later that month, DHCD, DOB, the Department of Insurance, Securities, and  
65 Banking (“DISB”), representatives from Chairman Mendelson’s and Housing Committee  
66 Chairperson Councilmember Robert White’s offices, and River East at Grandview  
67 Condominium Association board members met to discuss a path forward.

68 (o) At the November meeting, DOB representatives confirmed the inhabitability of the  
69 building, indicating it is unlikely that any part is salvageable and the ultimate outcome may be  
70 complete demolition.

71 (p) At the same meeting, DHCD confirmed that owners would not be able to leave with  
72 equity in their purchase because the building has no value.

73 (q) From December 2023 through March 2024, owners continued to engage with

74 DHCD, as DHCD sought to produce a relief proposal in time for implementation ahead of the  
75 rental assistance cut-off in June.

76 (r) On March 8, 2024, DHCD held a meeting with River East at Grandview owners to  
77 introduce them to the Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (“NACA”) and  
78 discuss the potential for partnership with NACA in securing new homeownership opportunities  
79 for owners.

80 (s) Founded in 1988 by Bruce Marks and Reverend Graylan Hagler, who was also co-  
81 chair of DC’s recent Black Homeownership Strike Force, NACA seeks to provide affordable  
82 homeownership opportunities to communities who have systematically been kept out of the  
83 real estate market through reducing barriers to ownership.

84 (t) Since the March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting, NACA counselors have completed individual housing  
85 counseling sessions with a majority of the River East at Grandview owners.

86 (u) The counseling sessions, and the feedback from owners, have highlighted the  
87 critical need for deep financial assistance for many River East at Grandview owners to  
88 successfully compete in today’s housing market and to finally move on from this dilemma.

89 (v) The Mayor and the Council strongly support the provision of new homeownership  
90 and mortgage opportunities for the River East at Grandview owners, including the elimination  
91 of their existing River East at Grandview mortgages, any future obligations associated with the  
92 River East at Grandview mortgages, and any negative impact of the River East at Grandview  
93 mortgages on obtaining new mortgages.

94 (w) These measures are immediately necessary to ensure that River East at Grandview  
95 owners can access stable housing before their rental supports expire and to begin to provide an

96 overdue solution to 46 households who have endured ongoing uncertainty and stress since the  
97 devastating loss of their River East at Grandview homes almost 3 years ago.

98           Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances  
99 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the  
100 Relief for River East at Grandview Condominium Owners Emergency Act of 2024 be adopted  
101 after a single reading.

102           Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.