

Njuguna Gishuru

As a private developer from outside of the Skyway community receiving public funds to clean up this site and profit from it, I believe it's essential that they make this project affordable for Skyway residents. The State of Washington is funding this clean up in exchange for a defined public benefit, affordable housing. In the context of this community, the Blackest and most BIPOC community by percentage in our state, affordability must be tied to our local area median income. We must also recognize that our residents are significantly cost burdened and generally spend over 30% of their income on housing. If housing is developed that is affordable for residents outside of our community but not those combating housing inaccessibility in our community we will be accelerating displacement and gentrification. Public funds will be supporting a large development that will draw in wealthier and whiter residents who are being priced out of higher cost areas. We will be creating the illusion of equity and affordable housing for this community while the developer builds an engine of displacement that drives our housing insecure primarily BIPOC residents out. It's imperative that this development make at least 50% of its units affordable based on Skyway-West Hill's AMI. It's also critical that the developer work with and respect the leaders and residents of this community. On August 3rd 2022 on the Boathouse Inc. Renton Skyway Cleanup Site Public Meeting Zoom Call Jaebadiah S. Gardner insulted our community elder Dinah Wilson, a long time public servant and people's champion with decades of tireless investment in our community and many more in the county. It was reprehensible for a young Black professional to insult an exemplary Black woman his mother's age in a public forum and we were all shamed and appalled by his actions. We were also appalled by the Department of Ecology staff's refusal to reprimand Mr. Gardner and protect Ms. Wilson. The Skyway community demands an apology for Ms. Dinah from both parties and hopes Mr. Gardner can pray and reflect on his misguided actions. Our community's future can only be built on a strong foundation of respect, solidarity and empowerment. Without those key ingredients no amount of cash or "clout" will entitle anyone to our support. I hope we all remember that the community's well being is priority #1. Environmental and economic justice are ours rights not favors from the Department or the developer.