

Opening of the Neighborhood HomeBase

McNichols Avenue

April 25, 2019

Good morning everyone. And thank you Stephanie.

What brings us together today is collaboration. Among organizations, to be sure. But powered by the collaborative energies and commitments of several individuals. I want to recognize a few of those.

First, Stephanie. This is my first time meeting Stephanie, but you can see immediately why we asked her to open this morning. Organizations like the San Juan Block Club are the indispensable bedrock of community. Where social capital is built among residents whose roots run deep and long. Where neighborhood identity is forged. Where visions are translated into reality.

Second, Mayor Duggan. Mayor, I've lost track of the number of collaborations between City Hall and Kresge that you've encouraged and nurtured during your tenure. Just within a mile radius of where we sit, Motor City Match . . . The Civic Commons . . . Detroit Home Mortgage. And particularly the Strategic Neighborhood Fund, in which you gently persuaded Kresge to make the first \$15 million commitment.

Third, Dr. Antoine Garibaldi. Dr. Garibaldi, I can't help but recall a similarly sunny day two years ago on the lawn of Detroit Mercy, where you, community representatives, and Kresge gathered to announce the formation of the Live6 Alliance, a novel entity among Detroit neighborhoods. Your continuing commitment to the Alliance has cemented its role as a steward of neighborhood aspirations and has helped build its capacity to engage the residents of this community in forging their future.

Which brings me to Cecily King, who leads Live6. Cecily and her colleagues will be among the most important presences in the Neighborhood HomeBase. This space reflects the vision of Cecily and her colleagues as well as that of Dan Pitera and his colleagues at the UD Mercy Detroit Collaborative Design Center. They have worked tirelessly to create a space that will bring together different sectors and segments of our community in the shared purpose of neighborhood renewal.

The Neighborhood HomeBase also stands as a powerful symbol of three vitally important energies.

First, it is a symbol of the kind of collaborative planning and concerted action that will be necessary for Detroit to revitalize in a way that is driven by, and benefits, Detroiters who have been in their homes for years, who have weathered the city's challenges with a tenacity of spirit and a residual of hope for a better day.

Second, it is a symbol of the potential power of activating the city's commercial corridors. We've seen that power in the re-emergence of neighborhood-owned businesses along the Avenue of Fashion on Livernois. We see its green shoots in Detroit Sip, the labor-of-love coffee shop next door on McNichol – owned and run by Jevona Watson, who lives in the neighborhood and who has brought us our refreshments this morning.

And third, Neighborhood HomeBase is a symbol of the Mayor Duggan's vision of a complete neighborhood of opportunity. A neighborhood in which commercial revitalization feeds, and is fed by, home ownership . . . by access to parks and open space like the Civic Commons and Ella Fitzgerald Park . . . by the anchoring presence of a great university like UD Mercy . . . and by the kind of continuum of cradle-to-career educational opportunity that is shaping on the Marygrove campus, in which Kresge is partnering with Starfish Family Services, the University of Michigan's School of Education, the Detroit Public School Community District, and Marygrove College.

Cutting a ribbon on a newly-revitalized building can be just one more moment in the life of a resurgent city. But this is not just any building. And this is not just any city. We – all of us here and many, many more – are recommitting through a celebration like this to the idea that, as Mayor Duggan reminds us continually, that every Detroit neighborhood has a past to be honored and a future to be celebrated.

And so, let me ask the Mayor to come forward. I would simply add that as I travel throughout the country, I tell people that here in Detroit, we have the best mayor in America. Full stop. Nothing less will do. But we should never take that for granted. Thank you Mayor for your vision, your passion, your skill – for what you have enabled this city to accomplish.

Mayor Duggan.