



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 18, 2025

We, the members of **16th United**, an advocacy group working to identify and articulate the priorities of the 16th District regarding growth, feel compelled to respond to comments made by Council Member Ginny Welsch on the Sept. 15 edition of the *City Cast Nashville* podcast.

We are dismayed that Council Member Welsch – having been presented with data and first-person testimony from hundreds of community members about their hopes and concerns for District 16 as it grows – **has resorted to insults and veiled accusations of racism.**

On *City Cast Nashville*, Council Member Welsch discussed with host Marie Cecile Anderson her proposal to rezone 620 acres of the 16th District. During this discussion, **Ms. Welsch cited zoning as a historical tool for discrimination and implied that those who oppose her current rezoning efforts may be motivated by a desire to exclude others.** She said:

“Right now, we kind of use zoning as a tool of exclusion. There’s a very vocal segment of this city that wants to live in the past. I guess that’s the only way that I could say it. They don’t want anything to change. They want to pull up the ladder behind them. They hold on to single-family zoning that, if you know anything about zoning, you know that single-family zoning started from a very racist proposition. It was meant to be exclusionary. It was meant to keep the lower classes and minorities from, you know, living side by side with wealthier, lighter-skinned, whiter people.”

It is regrettable that Ms. Welsch has decided to take a historical wrong in Nashville and apply it, in this context, to assume the worst of her constituents. Members of 16th United have canvassed every corner of the proposed rezone to bring residents into the process, making extra efforts to reach our Spanish-speaking neighbors. We have posted signs in Spanish next to Metro’s standard zoning signs, with QR codes to a website that has been regularly updated in Spanish, offered focus groups in Spanish, and engaged *Nashville Noticias* directly to help spread the word further. **What similar efforts, if any, has Ms. Welsch made to engage this community?** Furthermore, in our survey of hundreds of residents, 44% of respondents listed “preserving diversity” as a top priority. **It is outrageous that volunteers asking basic questions about affordability, infrastructure and the tree canopy, and seeking broad engagement and participation using every tool at their disposal, would be labeled exclusionary and possibly worse, discriminatory, by their own council member.**

Ms. Welsch later characterized opponents of her bill as “selfish,” “privileged” and “entitled.” When asked what people need to hear to get on the same page, she responded:

“I think people need to hear that they’re being selfish. They really are pulling the ladder up behind them. And they’re being very privileged, because I think that people feel like they are holding on to something that they feel very entitled to, while others behind them are simply trying to get a foot on the rung.”



Residents of the 16th District are not “entitled” or “privileged” – we are a working-class district with working-class concerns. And contrary to what Ms. Welsch said during her appearance on *City Cast Nashville*, there is no evidence of an "old guard" and a "new guard" with competing visions for the neighborhood; overwhelming majorities of residents, both new and generational, have shared the same priorities, which were presented to Ms. Welsch and the public at a community meeting on Aug. 21. We do not understand why Ms. Welsch seems unable or unwilling to truly listen to the community, as the Metro Planning Commission entreated her in disapproving her proposal on April 24. She has, in public remarks, repeatedly referred to a “community-driven” plan, now suggesting residents are quietly happy with her proposal. Data collected by multiple groups working independently states the opposite. Notably, **Ms. Welsch has not hosted a single public forum about this topic since April** and has yet to provide any evidence that her plan has broad or even mild support in any cross-section of our community. All available information says otherwise.

Council Member Welsch's words on *City Cast Nashville* were demeaning and dismissive of the many concerns the community has proactively expressed to her. If she truly has the District's best interests at heart, as she claimed to on *City Cast Nashville*, **Ms. Welsch will apologize and thoughtfully engage her constituents**. 16th United remains committed to its goal of giving voice to our community through inclusive and constructive dialogue.

For 16th United,

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Note: Council Member Welsch’s comments can be heard on the Sept. 15 edition of *City Cast Nashville*, titled, “Why This Council Member Wants to Audit the Office of Homeless Services,” beginning at 14:35.

Link: <https://nashville.citycast.fm/podcasts/why-this-councilmember-wants-to-audit-the-office-of-homeless-services>