



Legislation Text

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The official copy considered by the City Council is the first reader copy.

Introductory*

City of Baltimore Council Bill R (Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Ramos

A Resolution Entitled

A Council Resolution concerning Informational Hearing - Permit Reforms

For the purpose of inviting representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore City Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal, and other relevant parties to provide information on reforms to the Department of Housing and Community Development's permit process.

One of the factors that will successfully lead Baltimore City toward its goal of removing vacant and abandoned properties is an efficient and effective permit process to review applications, conduct inspections, and issue permits in a timely manner for homeowners, community development organizations, and developers. In the interest of expanding our Main Street business corridors, the City needs a permit process that can meet challenging demands.

Contractors, homeowners, and small businesses across the City have reported difficulties working with the Department of Housing and Community Development's "One-Stop Shop Permit Center" (the "Center") including timely processing, approval of plans, scheduling inspections, and treatment by inspectors, among additional complaints. Businesses along our Main Street corridors also report difficulty navigating the permit process, citing instances where they are told one thing by the Center and something different by the Fire Marshal or other entities. Finally, there have also been examples of building plans being approved by the Center and then inspections failing because the plans should not have been approved initially.

In addition, there has been a sharp increase in work completed without permits. When contractors avoid the permits process they may end up doing substandard work in our communities and put residents in danger. Certain contractors even refuse to do business in the City, which leaves residents and businesses with fewer options to complete work

These instances offer just a few examples of issues encountered with the Center and City permit process overall. While there is an intention to reform the Center, this hearing is necessary to give the public an opportunity to outline the challenges they have faced in navigating the permit process, as well as to allow the Department of Housing and Community Development to detail the reforms they will commit to in order to improve the Center.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the City Council of Baltimore, That the Baltimore City Council invites representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Office of the City Administrator, the Baltimore City Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal, and other relevant parties to provide information on reforms to the Department of Housing and Community Development's permit process

And be it further resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the City Administrator, the Chief of the Baltimore City Fire Department, and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.