



HEARING NOTES

Bill: 23-0465

Tree Removal on City Property – Permits and Procedure

Committee: Health, Environment, and Technology

Chaired by: Councilwoman Danielle McCray

Hearing Date: January 24, 2024

Time (Beginning): 10:25 AM

Time (Ending): 11:30 AM

Location: Council Chambers

Total Attendance: Approximately 24

Committee Members in Attendance:

Danielle McCray Mark Conway Ryan Dorsey
James Torrence

Table with 4 columns: Question, YES, NO, N/A. Rows include: Bill Synopsis in the file?, Attendance sheet in the file?, Agency reports read?, Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded?, Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?, Evidence of notification to property owners?, Final vote taken at this hearing?

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Matt Rescott, Forestry Division - Recreation and Parks
• Ty'lor Schnella, Mayors Office
• Shelly Mintz, Assistant Attorney General, Baltimore City Law Department
• Katie Lauder, Baltimore Green Space
• Darin Crew, Blue Water Baltimore
• Amanda Cunningham, Baltimore City Conservation District Board
• Tracy Smith, Friends of Herring Run Parks
• Ryan Alston, Baltimore Tree Trust

Major Issues Discussed

1. Council Bill 23-465 addresses tree removal on city property. The bill aimed to establish clear standards and requirements for authorized tree removal along certain rights-of-way.
2. The primary concern was codifying mitigation requirements for tree removal, ensuring that replacement standards are specified and aligned with existing city and state codes. The bill sought to make permanent the agency's longstanding policy of tree replacement.
3. The discussion highlighted the deficiencies in the current code, specifically the absence of detailed procedures for tree replacement. It was mentioned that the existing code does not provide clear guidelines, leading to fines without a well-defined process for authorized removal.
4. The bill aimed to align with state roadside tree permit requirements, emphasizing that adherence to such standards could prevent potential legal issues.
5. Need for a Permit Process: Concerns were raised about the lack of a well-established permit process for tree removal. Council members discussed the importance of having a clear system for residents to apply for permits, ensuring accountability and tracking of self-help initiatives.
6. The committee requested clarification on how the administration plans to operationalize the permit process and track self-help initiatives by residents, particularly in cases where forestry maintenance may be delayed.
7. Highlighting the importance of balancing different climate goals, especially in instances where there might be disagreements between agencies, such as stream restoration projects. The need for informed decision-making and considering forestry expertise in such situations was emphasized.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

1. The committee requests the establishment of a clear and standardized permit process, specifying the approvers involved and outlining the quality assurance (QA) procedures it undergoes. Clarity is sought on whether this process will be administered by the Housing Department or Parks and Recreation.

A work session was called for Wednesday, February 21, 2024 at 10AM.

Deontre Hayes

Committee Staff: Deontre L. Hayes
Direct Inquiries to: (410) 396-1260

Date: January 26, 2024

City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Meeting Minutes - Final

Health, Environment, and Technology

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

10:02 AM Virtual/Du Burns Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall, Phone:
+1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 2335 787 7855, Password:
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=mf83f85cf633418a1a4e0bfb2ede74b32)
MTID=mf83f85cf633418a1a4e0bfb2ede74b32

23-0465

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

Present 4 - Danielle N. McCray, Mark Conway, Ryan Dorsey, and James Torrence

Absent 3 - John T. Bullock, Phylcia Porter, and Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

23-0465

Tree Removal on City Property - Permits and Procedure

For the purpose of establishing certain standards and requirements for authorized tree removal along certain rights-of-way; requiring that the Department of Recreation and Parks approve any tree removal on land operated by the Department; specifying the procedure for tree removal mitigation on land operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks; conforming, clarifying, and correcting related provisions; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the removal of trees on certain City properties.

Sponsors: Administration City Council, Mark Conway

Recessed

ADJOURNMENT