



BALTIMORE HOUSING

SHEILA DIXON
Mayor

PAUL T. GRAZIANO
Executive Director, HABC
Commissioner, HCD

MEMORANDUM

To: The Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council
c/o Karen Randle, Executive Secretary

From: Paul T. Graziano, Commissioner

Date: March 3, 2008

Re: City Council Bill 08-0039 Vacant Lot Registration – Repeal of
Registration Fee

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has reviewed City Council Bill 08-0039, which was introduced for the purpose of abolishing the registration fee imposed for registration of vacant lots.

The current law requires owners of vacant lots to file annually a registration form that provides the city contact information such as a telephone number and address. This basic information is essential for DHCD should the need arise to contact the owner if there is a problem associated with the lot such as sanitation. In addition to completing the form, the owner is required to pay a \$25.00 fee that contributes to our code enforcement efforts including the registration program. Consequently, DHCD opposes the elimination of the fee.

Instead of abolishing the registration fee across the board, DHCD proposes that the law be amended to include specific exceptions to lot registration. These exceptions should cover: 1) Lots immediately adjacent to the owner's home and are effectively an extension of the homeowner's yard; 2) Properties that have the parking pad separate but within several feet of the owner's home; and 3) Properties with part of the lot in the City and part in the a county. These three circumstances tend to generate the majority of the negative reaction to the registration requirements and DHCD therefore would support their exception from the current law.

With these items discussed and resolved, the Department of Housing and Community Development would oppose adoption of City Council Bill 08-0039 absent the incorporation of the specific proposed amendments presented above.

PTG:pmd

cc: Ms. Angela Gibson
Mr. Demaune Millard

