

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 16-0306R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke, President Young, Councilmembers Scott, Costello,
Middleton, Holton, Henry, Stokes, Spector, Kraft, Curran, Mosby, Reisinger, Welch, Branch
Introduced and adopted: June 6, 2016

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

2016 AFRO Clean/Green Block Campaign – ‘Our Community - Our Responsibility’

FOR the purpose of supporting the AFRO’s 2016 Clean/Green Block campaign, and encouraging communities throughout Baltimore to participate by stepping up to beautify our City one block at a time.

Recitals

The AFRO Clean Block Club is back, revitalized and renamed AFRO CLEAN/GREEN BLOCK CAMPAIGN: Our Community - Our Responsibility 2016.

Launched on Saturday, June 4, 2016 the program will run through the summer until public schools reopen on August 27.

The AFRO Clean Block Club was one of the earliest community initiatives in the history of the AFRO - American Newspapers. It was initiated in 1934 by Ms. Frances L. Murphy, daughter of AFRO founder John H. Murphy, as a program created to get children of Baltimore involved in the community during the summer. As the AFRO wrote years later, in 1968, “The AFRO sponsors the campaign in the hopes that Clean Blockers will learn the value of respect for property, for one another and for the community.”

Any child could be appointed as block captain and, after registering their block at the AFRO headquarters, he or she was responsible for coordinating and organizing their neighbors. The newspaper would contribute cleaning supplies like brooms, trash cans, and trash bags to make the effort a success.

Traditionally, the contest ran from the end of the school year in June, until the beginning of the new school year in September. From its inception, Clean Block became more than just a contest; it became an expression of pride among neighbors and neighborhoods. City blocks were treated with adornments like American flags, flower boxes in windows, and painted steps. Every week the AFRO printed the names of newly registered block captains and streets, and monitored their progress throughout the summer.

Contest winners were determined by AFRO appointed judges, who would patrol neighborhoods block by block and observe the changes within the community. At the end of the summer, all block captains and participants were invited to the closing ceremonies, which were often held at local theaters and halls. Winners of the contest received cash prizes, trips, and the prestige of leading their block to victory.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 According to the AFRO, “At its height, the AFRO Clean Blockers was an army of 8,000
2 children using brooms, buckets of paint and elbow grease to take back their neighborhoods one
3 inch of pavement at a time. The initiative aimed its’ entire arsenal at combating urban decay and
4 crime seen in neighborhoods across Baltimore City and they were more than just successful- they
5 started a movement”.

6 To revive this tremendously successful legacy program community organizations are needed
7 to sign-up and recruit, where possible, at least four (4) blocks within each community. Plans are
8 to increase to 50 organizations with 200 blocks for this years’ initiative. The project would like
9 to ask citizens and organizations to help recruit others and join this city-wide project.

10 This year’s effort will receive additional support from DPW. In conjunction with DPW’s
11 ongoing Clean Corps program, Block Captains will receive:

- 12 • Clean Corps Training.
- 13 • Baltimore City Clean Guides.
- 14 • Captain Kits that include cleanup materials such as bags, trash grabbers, and gloves.
- 15 • Organizational/ grant writing assistance.
- 16 • Request Clean Corps representative/DPW liaisons for community meetings.
- 17 • Street Sweeping signs.
- 18 • Trash and debris collection from DPW.

19 In return, Block Captains will be responsible to:

- 20 • Organize weekly cleanups from June 4 thru August 27, 2016. We strongly encourage
21 “First Saturday Cleanups” thereafter.
- 22 • Provide DPW with collection data. (i.e. number of bags collected, date of cleanup,
23 location).
- 24 • Remain in contact with the block residents...listen to their needs and ideas.
- 25 • Keep their Clean Corps representative informed about block activities, meetings, and
26 plans.
- 27 • Act as advocates and speakers for their block, by reporting instances of dirty alleys,
28 illegal dumping etc.
- 29 • Distribute information related to trash collection.
- 30 • Encourage neighbors to use municipal trash cans, and place trash out properly.
- 31 • Educate and encourage recycling.
- 32 • Place street sweeping signs up on designated quadrant sweeping days.

33 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
34 Council supports the AFRO’s 2016 Clean/Green Block campaign, and encourages communities
35 throughout Baltimore to participate by stepping up to beautify our City one block at a time.

36 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
37 AFRO’s Clean Block Coordinator, the Director of Public works, and the Mayor’s Legislative
38 Liaison to the City Council.