

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 15-0204R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Stokes, President Young, Councilmembers Middleton, Costello,
Scott, Mosby, Curran, Branch, Henry, Welch, Clarke, Reisinger
Introduced and read first time: February 23, 2015
Assigned to: Taxation, Finance and Economic Development Committee
Committee Report: Favorable, with floor amendments adopted
Adopted: November 9, 2015

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING

**1 Establishing a Baltimore City African American Business, Tourism, Entertainment &
2 Heritage Preservation Commission**

3 FOR the purpose of calling on representatives from Baltimore's tourism, entertainment, business,
4 and heritage preservation communities to meet with the Baltimore City Council in a hearing
5 to determine how best to fashion and establish a Baltimore City African American Business,
6 Tourism, Entertainment & Heritage Preservation Commission, the mission of which would
7 be to increase communication and collaboration among representatives of the City's African
8 American attractions, heritage and tourism community, in order to support individual
9 businesses and sites as well as to assist ongoing city-wide efforts to promote and preserve
10 Baltimore's rich African American history and cultural assets; and to seek a source of
11 designated funding for the Commission, the funds of which should be new funds and in no
12 way should be drawn from or impact the budgets of those agencies that are already working
13 in the areas of tourism promotion and heritage preservation, including, but not limited to,
14 Visit Baltimore, the Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation, and the
15 Baltimore Heritage Area Association, agencies with whom the Commission would
16 collaborate and not compete.

17 Recitals

18 Baltimore City is the birthplace and home to many of America's greatest African American
19 public servants and national icons. Baltimore City has literally hundreds of historic sites that are
20 in desperate need of increased awareness and appreciation, and in many cases in need of
21 immediate preservation efforts, and should be recognized as national and local historic sites of
22 interest to the citizens of the State of Maryland and to the nation's domestic and international
23 tourism and preservation communities. Additionally, many of these sites are cared for by the
24 nonprofit community to which funding sources are not widely known or readily available.

25 Historic anniversaries are another item of concern as Baltimore continues to celebrate and
26 commemorate its history and heritage of certain individuals and dates and seemingly overlook or
27 not have awareness of the other neglected and too often overlooked historic events that occurred
28 in Baltimore City.

29 A Baltimore City African American Business, Tourism, Entertainment & Heritage
30 Preservation Commission, properly staffed and funded, can alleviate this oversight and ensure

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

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1 that this essential part of Baltimore’s history and heritage is not lost or forgotten, which deprives
2 present citizens, and, if not corrected, future generations of the knowledge of the achievements
3 and contributions of people of African American descent to Baltimore’s diverse history. The
4 Commission would provide a formal body under which representatives from Baltimore’s
5 tourism, entertainment, business, and heritage preservation communities could work together to
6 research, identify, catalog, and link the history of Baltimore’s African American community and
7 could share those findings with interested persons and organizations, including prospective
8 funders, etc. The Commission would also serve as an added resource and unified voice in
9 liaising with the tourism and historic preservation agencies of the City and the State of Maryland.
10 ~~Representatives from Baltimore’s tourism, entertainment, business, and heritage preservation~~
11 ~~communities could work together on the commission to research, identify, catalog, link, preserve~~
12 ~~the history of Baltimore’s African American community, and to share these findings with~~
13 ~~interested persons and organizations and with the nation’s tourism industry as well as with~~
14 ~~tourism agencies of the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland.~~

15 Baltimore City remains a city of two distinct and unconnected locales. On one side of town
16 there are multi-million dollar districts and destinations, multi-million dollar tourism sites,
17 multi-million dollar Inner Harbor attractions and businesses including the National Aquarium,
18 MD Science Center, Phillips Seafood, Spirit Cruises, Barnes & Noble, Bubba Gump, M&T Bank
19 Stadium, Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore Horseshoe Casino, Harbor East, Fell’s Point,
20 Federal Hill, Mt. Vernon Cultural District, Power Plant Live, etc.

21 Yet, there are tourism deserts in Baltimore, historic sites are situated in tourist un-friendly
22 locales, markers, plaques and signs are missing from historic buildings and districts, historic sites
23 are facing deteriorating conditions, in need of landscaping, beautification, etc. These adverse
24 conditions have a negative impact on the communities in which they exist and thus limit
25 opportunities for Baltimore small businesses to engage in the City’s \$3-5 billion tourism industry
26 and restricts the ability of local artists and craftsmen to generate revenue and serve as pillars and
27 positive influences in their own communities.

28 More could, and should, be done to celebrate and highlight the full range of what Baltimore
29 has to offer from it’s rich history and cultural heritage. Establishing an African American
30 Business, Tourism, Entertainment & Heritage Preservation Commission would be an important
31 step towards this goal.

32 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
33 Council calls on representatives from Baltimore’s tourism, entertainment, business, and heritage
34 preservation communities to meet with the Baltimore City Council in a hearing to determine how
35 best to fashion and establish a Baltimore City African American Business, Tourism,
36 Entertainment & Heritage Preservation Commission, the mission of which would be to increase
37 communication and collaboration among representatives of the City’s African American
38 attractions, heritage and tourism community, in order to support individual businesses and sites
39 as well as to assist ongoing city-wide efforts to promote and preserve Baltimore’s rich African
40 American history and cultural assets; and to seek a source of designated funding for the
41 Commission, the funds of which should be new funds and in no way should be drawn from or
42 impact the budgets of those agencies that are already working in the areas of tourism promotion
43 and heritage preservation, including, but not limited to, Visit Baltimore, the Commission for
44 Historical and Architectural Preservation, and the Baltimore Heritage Area Association, agencies
45 with whom the Commission would collaborate and not compete.

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1 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
2 President & CEO of Visit Baltimore, the Director of Finance, the President of the Baltimore
3 African American Tourism Council, the Executive Director of Baltimore Heritage, the Executive
4 Director of Preservation Maryland, the President & CEO of the Baltimore Development
5 Corporation, the President of the Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts, and the Mayor's
6 Legislative Liaison to the City Council.