


FROM	NAME & TITLE	Jason W. Mitchell, Director	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	Department of Public Works 600 Abel Wolman Municipal Building		
	SUBJECT	City Council Resolution 22-0101R		

July 8, 2022

TO:

Economic and Community Development Committee

I am herein reporting on City Council Resolution 22-0101R introduced by Council Members Ramos, Bullock, and Porter.

The purpose of the Resolution is to invite the City Administrator, the Deputy Mayor of Community and Economic Development, the City Solicitor, the Commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Director of Finance, and the Director of the Department of Public Works, to appear before the Baltimore City Council to present the findings and recommendations of the Mayor’s 30-Day Review for eliminating privately and publicly owned vacant and abandoned properties.

On March 11, 2022 the City announced the commitment of \$100 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding that would address “...housing initiatives designed to protect residents, prevent blight, create affordable housing initiatives, and implement vacancy recommendations made through Mayor Scott’s 30-day directive to address Baltimore’s vacant housing stock.”¹ The Mayor’s Directive was issued on January 31, 2022, and required agencies to “...conduct an internal review of all operations, procedures, and processes connected to how City government manages private and publicly owned-vacant properties.”² The loss of three firefighters responding to a fire in a privately owned vacant building on South Stricker Street was the impetus for this directive. A working group of senior officials from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the City Solicitor’s Office, the Department of Public Works, and the Department of Finance was formed and the members developed a list of recommendations for the Mayor’s review.

The Department of Public Works has been involved in the Vacant Housing Executive Workgroup since its formation, and is represented by the Acting Bureau Head of Solid Waste.

¹ [City’s Review of Vacant Properties Complete, Mayor Announces \\$100 Million ARPA Commitment Towards Housing Equity | Mayor Brandon M. Scott \(baltimorecity.gov\)](#)

² [Microsoft Word - 30 Day Vacants Memo 3.10.22.docx \(baltimorecity.gov\)](#)

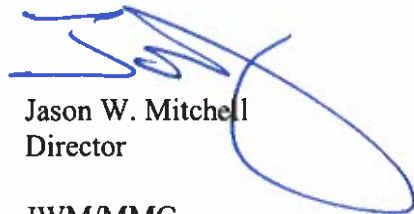
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The Department is listed as the responsible party for the stepped up cleaning and boarding of vacant buildings. An initial list of properties that have been boarded five or more times has been compiled, with the Solid Waste team monitoring those properties biweekly to ensure they stay secured. During the months of March through June, Solid Waste boarded 654 vacant properties, performed 2,518 cleanings, and abated 2,820 high grass and weeds complaints.

In addition, the Department's Office of Compliance and Research has examined its internal processes over the past 6 months, and has made the following efforts that may affect vacant and abandoned properties and their potential for rehabilitation or redevelopment:

- Met with DHCD's demolition program regarding processes / notifications for demolition projects. Conducted DPW-internal meetings regarding demolition processes and utility service abandonment procedures for all three utilities to improve asset management, in addition to reducing risk to the environment via uncapped sewer connections.
- Implemented an on-line plan review workflow for natural resources (all reviews required under Article 7 of the City Code) using the same software (ProjectDox) as DHCD's eplans system, albeit, a newer version with cloud-based storage. This system allows 24-7 submittal of plans to DPW, Department of Planning/ Office of Sustainability, and BCRP-Forestry for review.
- Implemented (with MDE approval) a standard plan review process for minor disturbances (< 5,000 Square Feet, but 100-1000 Cubic Yards of earth disturbance) that does not require a professional to develop the plans and the process can be completed in one phase (instead of 3). Typically, review / approvals can be provided within five work days. DPW is pursuing a similar process for demolition projects which may exceed disturbance over 5,000 SF, trying to capture impervious area removal and service abandonment information in the same submittal / review.

Representatives of the Department of Public Works will attend the hearing on City Council Resolution 22-0101R to participate in the discussion on the Mayor's 30-Day Review addressing privately and publicly owned vacant and abandoned properties.



Jason W. Mitchell
Director

JWM/MMC