



HEARING NOTES

Resolution: 21-0047R

Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces

Committee: Education, Workforce, and Youth
Chaired by Robert Stokes, Sr.

Hearing Date: Thursday, August 19, 2021
Time (Beginning): 10:00 AM
Time (Ending): 11:15 AM
Location: Virtual "WebEx" Meeting
Total Attendance: Approximately 50

Committee Members in Attendance:

Robert Stokes, Sr. James Torrence
John Bullock Phylicia Porter
Antonio Glover Zeke Cohen

Excused: Sharon Green Middleton

Bill Synopsis in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Christopher Shorter, City Administrator
- Jason Hessler, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Victor Tervalá, Law Department
- Kimberly Knox, Planning Department

- Liam Davis, Department of Transportation
 - Stephanie Murdock, Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Jenny Morgan, Department of Recreation and Parks
 - Marcia Collins, Department of Public Works
 - Robert Cename, Department of Finance
 - Andy Frank, Comptroller's Office
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Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilman Burnett, primary sponsor of the Resolution gave opening remarks. Some highlighted remarks were:
 - Concern/goal– to have mowing completed in a timely manner
 - Concern – need to know the duties/responsibilities of each agency
 - Intent to create a workgroup
 - The purpose of the Resolution is to continue the conversation about this issue
2. The City Administrator talked about the ways his Office is working to address this issue. Some highlighted remarks were:
 - There are five (5) city agencies responsible for this task
 - Talked about the role of Clean Stat
 - Talked about what is expected of each agency
 - Does not believe the responsibilities should be assigned to just one city agency
 - There may be unintended consequences if responsibilities are placed under just one agency
 - Office is already working on improving ground maintenance
 - Is concerned about a lack of coordination and his quest is making sure agencies are working together
3. Several committee members asked the City Administrator questions and gave remarks/comments. Some highlights from same were:
 - **Questions/Concerns/Comments**
 - Have any assessments been done on the cost analysis for having 1 agency perform the duties versus having multiple agencies?
 - Concern: Five agencies responsible for 5 separate contracts! Is this a common practice in other cities? (Best practice)
 - How do we (agencies) prepare the cutting schedules at the start of the season?
 - Concern: Need to know why we don't have a cutting schedule!
 - Comment: Need to be pro-active!
 - What are the current rates that we (city) pay our vendors?
 - Requested by: **Councilman Torrence**: Provide the rates paid to the vendors, and
 - Provide updated information regarding Clean Stat
 - How are you enforcing and making sure the privately-owned properties are being mowed?
 - **Responsibility of Agencies** – is of concern:
 - Who is responsible for what?

- Has any discussion been done regarding the role and/or responsibilities of each agency?
 - 311 Reports/Complaints/Citations
 - Do we (agencies) pull those reports to address the overgrown sites?
 - What is the timeline (benchmark) for addressing these issues?
 - Requested by Councilwoman Porter: Submit a follow-up report before years' end regarding the timelines implemented
 - What is the timeline used to follow-up once a citation(s) is issued?
 - Suggestion(s):
 - Land Development Contractors
 - When the contractors are developing properties, they should be responsible for cutting grass on those properties instead of city agencies
 - Procurement
 - Concern – different contract awards and/or no standard rate
 - Is there one solicitation for that bid?
 - Communication
 - One very important thing is missing, “lack of communication between agencies”
 - Better communication is needed
 - Educating the public – there is a lack in educating the public about which agency does what!
 - Comments:
 - There seems like there are too many “cooks in the kitchen”
 - There seems to be a lot of confusions that falls on the councilmembers (constituents' concerns on this issue)
 - Quality Control – is of concern
 - Contractor(s) doing inadequate work
 - Is there any follow-up by the agencies on the contractors' performance?
 - Agencies
 - Is any conversation being held by the agencies for “pro-active mowing?”
 - Requested by Councilman Burnett: Provide the number of lots each agency is responsible for
4. The agency representatives talked about his/her report and/or some of their responsibilities. Some highlighted remarks were:
- Per the Department of Transportation
 - There are over 500 locations that the Department is responsible for mowing
 - Per the Department of Public Works
 - The Department can receive up to 4,000 request per month for mowing
 - Works closely with other city agencies

- Talked about data/statistics regarding mowing and cleaning requests
- Per the Department of Finance
 - The report they submitted summarizes the functions of each agency
 - There are different requirements in each agency
 - Having separate agencies to complete the responsibilities appears to be the best process; using one agency may have unintended consequences
 - Have not completed a detailed analysis for this issue but will do so as part of a working group

5. Hearing was called to recess.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

Marguerite M. Currin

Marguerite Murray Currin, Committee Staff

Date: August 24, 2021

cc: Bill File
OCS Electronic File

City of Baltimore

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

Meeting Minutes - Final

Education Workforce and Youth

Thursday, August 19, 2021

10:00 AM Virtual/Du Burns Chambers, City Hall, 4th Floor: Phone:
+1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 179 185 5990, Password:
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/onstage/g.php?MTID=e7962fb357dbbe10f173e7911c296cb36)
MTID=e7962fb357dbbe10f173e7911c296cb36

Education Workforce and Youth

Meeting Minutes - Final

August 19, 2021

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CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

- Present** 6 - Robert Stokes Sr., John T. Bullock, Zeke Cohen, Antonio Glover, Phylicia Porter, and James Torrence
Excused 1 - Sharon Green Middleton

ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

21-0047R

Upkeep and Maintenance of Vacant Lots and Public Green Spaces

For the purpose of requesting the Director of the Department of Recreation and Parks, the Director of the Department of Planning, the Director of the Department of Transportation, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Head of the Bureau of Solid Waste, the Sustainability Coordinator, a representative from the Office of the Comptroller, and the Chief of the Bureau of Budget and Management Research to report on the annual cumulative total of calls for service for the upkeep and maintenance of vacant lots and green spaces; and recommending to the Administration that a single City agency be charged with the responsibility for mowing all City-owned lots, parcels, parks, and green spaces.

Sponsors: Kristerfer Burnett, Zeke Cohen, Ryan Dorsey, John T. Bullock

Hearing recessed.

ADJOURNMENT