

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT, Mayor



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

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HEARING NOTES

Resolution: 22-0125R

Informational Hearing – Occupancy Permits – Inspections and Code Enforcement

Committee: Ways and Means
Chaired by: Councilman Eric T. Costello
Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2022
Time (Beginning): 10:00 AM
Time (Ending): 11:25 AM
Location: Council Chambers
Total Attendance: Approximately 20 in person
Approximately 10 virtually

Committee Members in Attendance:

Eric T. Costello
Robert Stokes, Sr.
Danielle McCray
Ryan Dorsey
Kristerfer Burnett
Sharon Green Middleton
Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer

Bill Synopsis in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Attendance sheet in the file? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Agency reports read? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners? [] yes [] no [X] n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing? [X] yes [] no [] n/a
Motioned by: Councilmember Burnett
Seconded by: Councilmember Middleton
Final Vote: Favorable

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Jeffrey Hochstetler, Law Department
Chief Derek Ready, Fire Department
Stephanie Murdock, Department of Housing and Community Development
Jason Hessler, Department of Housing and Community Development
Nneka Nnamdi, Public Testimony (Speaker)

Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilmember Burnett, primary sponsor of the Resolution gave opening remarks. Some remarks were:
 - Have received a lot of calls about these permits
 - There is a lot of redevelopment and re-acquisitioning happening in his district
 - Concerns: That customers/residents received the information needed to obtain permits and having proper signage on properties
 - Objective today is to know what are the processes in place for permits, inspections and code enforcement
2. The chairman went over the agency reports with the agency representatives.
3. Two representatives from the Department of Housing & Community Development talked about the processes associated with issuing permits, the application and for performing investigations
4. Committee/council members asked questions, made comments and etc. Some were:
 - Employees, Jobs and Qualifications
 - How many employees do you have processing the over “40,000” requests you receive annually? **Answer: There are 18 employees but only 8 of them handles permits.**
 - Comment: You will never catch up with processing permits with just eight employees; there will always be problems!
 - What are some of the requirements and/or background needed to becoming Inspectors?
 - How does the Fire Department fit in? What are their requirements/backgrounds needed to inspect?

Questions

- What information is provided to homeowners at closing regarding the permit process?
- Does the Fire Department partnership with high schools? If so, do they train any of the students toward becoming Inspectors?
- What is your connection with CHAPS? Talk about this!

Other

- Councilmember Ramos stated that another hearing regarding permits is forthcoming and said, “issuing permits is difficult!”
- Comments regarding “Disclosures”
 - Are Realtors and Title companies given any training? Talk about this!
 - When will the training begin? We need to make it happen!
 - Who will be responsible for training?
 - Have anyone filed any lawsuits against Realtors and/or the Real Estate Board?
 - Selling homes without a contract – talk about this.
- Some discussion regarding “lien sheets,” this is of concern and is a huge delay
- Permit Process
 - There are a variety of issues regarding the process
 - A lot of things that are required are not necessarily needed to get a permit
 - Are there any permits that are on the table that you may be willing to rescind? (Such as: Site Plans)?
 - Are you willing to rollback some of your requirements?
 - There are basic things that are needed to be done but the process is just too difficult!

- The permit process should be for protection! For investing in the city!
- What do you think the next step(s) are to getting people to invest in properties?

Permit Office – Phone System

- Comments given regarding the phone system
- Comments given regarding the new e-System in place
 - When was e-Permits launched?
 - Will all permit systems be processed within one office?
 - Why wouldn't DPW's permit processing be moved over so all permit processing can be under one office?

Staffing

- How many vacancies do you have currently? **Answer: two (2)**
- When will your Permit Liaison position be filled?

Violations

- On an annual basis, how many violation complaints do you received for unabated vacant buildings?

Inspectors//Inspections

- Several comments and questions were made/asked regarding duties and processes
- What is the average person suppose to do when an Inspector(s) is being a problem?

5. One person gave public testimony. She expressed a need for creating a more accurate, concrete pipeline for permit processing stating it is a very difficult process.
6. Vote taken on bill; passed – Favorable. Hearing concluded.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

Committee Vote:

E. Costello:..... Yea
 K. Burnett..... Yea
 R. Dorsey..... Yea
 D. McCray: Yea
 S. Green Middleton: Yea
 I. Schleifer..... Out of Chamber
 R. Stokes, Sr..... Yea

Marguerite M. Currin

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff

cc: Bill File

OCS Electronic File

Date: April 4, 2023

BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE VOTING RECORD

DATE: 3-28-23

RESOLUTION #: 22-0125R

RESOLUTION TITLE: Informational Hearing – Occupancy Permits – Inspections
and Code Enforcement

MOTION BY: Burnett SECONDED BY: Middleton

- FAVORABLE FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS
 UNFAVORABLE WITHOUT RECOMMENDATION

NAME	YEAS	NAYS	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Costello, Eric - Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Burnett, Kristerfer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dorsey, Ryan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
McCray, Danielle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middleton, Sharon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schleifer, Isaac	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>out of chambers</i>
Stokes, Robert	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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TOTALS	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>—</u>

CHAIRPERSON: Eric T. Costello,

COMMITTEE STAFF: Marguerite M. Currin Initials: M.M.C.



Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

Subject: Resolution – Informational Hearing – Occupancy Permits – Inspections and Code Enforcement	Resolution #: 22-0125R
Committee: Ways and Means	Chair: Eric T. Costello
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023	Time: 10:00 AM
Location: Council Chambers	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY



First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	Testify	What is your position on this bill?		Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*	
				For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stephanie	Murdock	DHCD					
Jason	Hesslow	" "					
Jeffrey	Hochstetler	Law Dept					
Chief Derek	Ready	Fire Dept					

*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

City of Baltimore

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

Meeting Minutes - Final

Ways and Means

Tuesday, March 28, 2023

10:00 AM Virtual/Du Burns Chambers, 4th Floor, City Hall: Phone:
+1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 2349 852 4367, Password:
Public, Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=mc39812dd14cbf1290c9afc02a20f2f4a)
MTID=mc39812dd14cbf1290c9afc02a20f2f4a

22-0125R

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

Present 7 - Eric T. Costello, Kristerfer Burnett, Ryan Dorsey, Danielle N. McCray, Sharon Green Middleton, Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, and Robert Stokes Sr.

ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

22-0125R

Informational Hearing - Occupancy Permits - Inspections and Code Enforcement

For the purpose of requesting that representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Baltimore City Fire Department, and other interested parties appear before the Council to discuss the process of conducting building inspections and code enforcement prior to the issuance of an occupancy permit for a property in Baltimore City, problems that may occur during the process in connection with an unabated vacant building notice, and ways the process can be improved.

Sponsors: Kristerfer Burnett, John T. Bullock, Sharon Green Middleton, Odette Ramos

A motion was made by member Burnett, seconded by member Middleton, that City Council Resolution 22-0125R be Recommended Favorably. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Costello, Burnett, Dorsey, McCray, Middleton, and Stokes Sr.

Out-Chamber: 1 - "Yitzy" Schleifer

ADJOURNMENT

THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC