

CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON SCOTT – MAYOR



ZEKE COHEN - COUNCIL PRESIDENT



OFFICE OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NANCY MEAD – DIRECTOR

100 N. HOLIDAY STREET

BALTIMORE MD, 21202

HEARING NOTES

Bill:LO25-0028

Title: Acquisition Strategy & IN REM Filings

Committee: Housing & Economic Development

Chaired by: James Torrence

Hearing Date: 10/21/2025

Time (Beginning): 6:35 PM

Time (Ending): 7:45: PM

Location: Du Burns Council Chamber / Webex

Total Attendance: Approximately 30

Committee Members in Attendance:

James Torrence, Odette Ramos, Jermaine Jones, Zac Blanchard,

Bill Synopsis in the file? ☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A
Attendance sheet in the file? ☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A
Agency reports read? ☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A
Hearing televised or audio-digitally recorded? ☒ YES ☐ NO ☐ N/A
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ N/A
Evidence of notification to property owners? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ N/A
Final vote taken at this hearing? ☐ YES ☐ NO ☒ N/A
Motioned by:
Final Vote:

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

Alice Kennedy – Housing Commissioner

Justin Williams – Director for Permitting

Shamiah Kerney – Deputy City Administrator

Major Issues Discussed

- The Chair opened the hearing, noting the bill and the members in attendance.
- The floor was open to comments from DCA Kearney
- The floor was open to a presentation from Director Williams (slides in the bill file)
- The floor was open to questions from the committee topics included:

- JIRA records and reports requested at the last hearing – why did we think this would be such a burden?
 - Exporting is simple but superficial – would not include attachments.
 - Actual JIRA tickets would not always be up to date.
- *Select inspectors were brought in for testing – need additional notes on who was testing, need dates, times, names, positions, any notes – those not technically deliberative. In the discovery phase for Accela.
- *What role did BCIT play in the discovery phase – what were their oversight and quality control functions? Include staff, positions, and notes.
- Technical issues for why there is an issue with a permit – i.e., a stamp needed, or some tech problem. Who fixes those issues?
 - It depends on what the issue is. Some issues between Project DOX and Accela – or other bottlenecks in payment ect...
 - They should move to BCIT for batch stamps ect... try to fix internally, then move to tech producer
- *Monitoring - for inspections – we need to be proactive and build in inspections at times for when a property is applying for a permit. Asking for a plan to address unpermitted work, including the number of inspectors needed. 1 month – 3 months
 - For auto permits – applicants don't get to choose – fraud would still be fraud.
 - Working on an evaluation for staff needs, and material needs (vehicle licensing ect...)
 - Issues may exist in the efficiency based on the ability to access for the inspectors and others.
 - Using community aids to help with tracking in some blocks –
 - Can we use an auto dial?
- Has the permit backlog has grown?
 - Team has fixed the intake issues and is now working on getting permits moving through
- Use and Occupancy permits – 3 months timeline
 - Permit is dependent on the applicant moving the process moving forward – there are issues with each applicant that drives that timeline.
- What would be a better metric
 - *The application to inspection phase – city controlled* for next hearing
- Sandwich shop looking to open 2nd location in cross street market with state grant – limited scope – floor drain, shelving, ect.... How long should this take.
 - That is going to depend on complexity and staff workload.
- Closing comment from the Chair
- The floor was open to Public Testimony – a member of the public signed up but was not in the chamber to testify.

Further Study

Was further study requested?

☒ **Yes** ☐ **No**

If yes, describe.

- Memo outlining which staff were involved in the discovery phase for Acella, including names, positions, and any meeting notes about the discovery process that are not technically deliberative
- What role did BCIT play in the discovery phase – what were their oversight and quality control functions? Include staff, positions, and notes.
- A memo on how DHCD monitors for unpermitted work being done and how we can be more proactive in our efforts to address permitted work. How can inspections be made a part of the workflow process for applying for a permit so that we can be proactive about addressing unpermitted work? Include the number of inspectors that would be needed.
- A slide in the next 1/4 presentation on Use & Occupancy permits breaking down the time for use and occupancy permits from application to inspection phase

Committee Vote:

Chair:..... Yea
Vice Chair:..... Yea
Member: Yea
Member: Yea
Member: Yea

Tony Leva, Date: 10/21/2025

Cc: Bill File
 OCS Chrono File