



**SYNOPSIS**

**Committee: Health, Environment, and Technology**

**City Council Resolution: 21-0064R**

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**Investigational Hearing - Urban Farming**

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**Sponsor:** Councilmember Burnett, et al

**Introduced:** October 4, 2021

**Purpose:**

For the purpose of inviting the City Solicitor and representatives from the Office of the City Administrator, the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Code Enforcement Division, the Baltimore City Health Department’s Office of Animal Control, the Baltimore Police Department, the Environmental Control Board, the Department of Planning, and other relevant stakeholders to brief the City Council regard the standards, procedures, policies, and practices for regulating urban farms in Baltimore City, and to discuss possible revisions of current standards to allow urban farms to operate safely and successfully in Baltimore City.

**Effective:** Upon enactment

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**AGENCY REPORTS**

City Administrator	
Department of Planning	Defers to Sustainability
Department of Housing and Community Development	Favorable
Department of Health	Favorable
Police Department	No Objections
Office of Sustainability	Favorable
Environmental Control Board	Comments
City Solicitor	Favorable

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## **ANALYSIS**

The resolution invites representatives from City agencies and other relevant stakeholders to brief the City Council on the standards, procedures, policies, and practices for regulating urban farms in Baltimore City, and to discuss possible revisions of current standards to allow urban farms to operate safely and successfully in Baltimore City. Depending on its particular operations, an urban farm in Baltimore may be regulated under the Zoning Code, the Building, Fire, and Related Codes, and the Health Code.

The Zoning Code includes use categories and standards for Community-Managed Open Space Gardens<sup>1</sup>, Community-Managed Open Space Farms<sup>2</sup>, and Urban Agriculture<sup>3</sup>. In non-industrial districts, Community-Managed Open Space Gardens are a permitted use, and Community-Managed Open Space Farms and Urban Agriculture are conditional uses. Those uses are also allowed as permitted or conditional uses in some industrial districts.

Appendix C of the Building, Fire, and Related Codes (BFRC) includes standards and requirements for certain agricultural buildings. Additionally, the BFRC includes general maintenance requirements for all exterior lots and premises that can potentially impact farming activities.

The Health Code and related regulations set standards and requirements for the keeping of animals used for agricultural purposes, such as chickens, rabbits, goats, and honeybees, and generally require permits for those animals issued by the Office of Animal Control in the Health Department.

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<sup>1</sup> “Community-managed open-space garden” means an open-space area that is maintained by more than 1 household and is used for traditional community-garden activities of planting, cultivating, harvesting, maintaining, and distributing fruits, flowers, vegetables, or ornamental plants.

<sup>2</sup> “Community-managed open-space farm” means an open-space area that is maintained by more than 1 household and, in addition to the uses permitted in a community-managed open-space garden, is used for the keeping of livestock and animals, temporary farm stands, or the receipt and free redistribution of organic waste material for composting.

<sup>3</sup> “Urban agriculture” means the cultivation, processing, and marketing of food, with a primary emphasis on operating as a business enterprise.

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Fiscal Note:** None

**Information Source(s):**

- Baltimore City Code, Article 32: Zoning
- Building, Fire, and Related Codes of Baltimore City
- Health Code of Baltimore City
- Baltimore City Health Department, Regulations for Wild, Exotic and Hybrid Animals, <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/node/2207>
- Reporting Agencies
- Resolution 21-0064R

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