November 18, 2009

TO:    The Honorable President and Members
        of the Baltimore City Council
    Room 400 City Hall
    **Attn. Karen Randle**

FROM:    James H. Green, Deputy Chief Legal Counsel
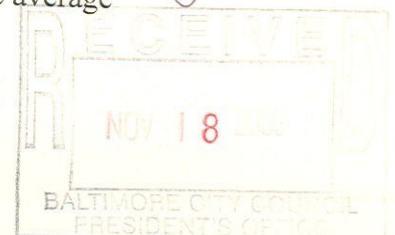    Baltimore Police Department

RE:    City Council Bill 09-0157R-Informational Hearing-Baltimore Police
    Department-Police Report Availability

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD) has reviewed City Council Bill 09-0157R-Informational Hearing-Baltimore Police Department-Police Report Availability which requests that the Police Commissioner report to the Council on the procedures for handling citizen requests for police reports and to discuss measures that can be taken to improve overall responsiveness to these requests.

The Resolution states that many individuals have difficultly in obtaining copies of incident or accident reports and that a process which explains this procedure is needed so that the public can access the needed reports in a timely fashion. In October 2009, the BPD updated the Department's website regarding procedures for obtaining a police report. The website can be accessed at www.baltimorepolice.org and a copy of the form which is now available is attached. The request of a police/accident report must include the date of the incident, time, BPD complaint number, type of report, location of incident, victim (if applicable) and additional information. It must also be accompanied by a self addressed stamped envelope and a $10.00 processing fee.

The BPD provides to victims of crime or persons involved in traffic accidents the necessary information which includes the incident data and complaint number associated with the incident in order that any request for the reporting can be expedited and the necessary information can be included in the request. The Central Records Section reports that as of October 31, 2009 the Department has received in excess of 17,000 requests of this type. The average

"turnaround" time for the request is two (2) days. This "turnaround" is dependant on the report going through the departmental review process to insure its accuracy and receipt to the Central Records Section. The Department remains committed to expediting its processes however must ensure the accuracy of the information or allow the completion of the investigation before the report is disseminated to the public.

Currently, the BPD is also exploring different ways to disseminate accident reports when they are requested such as by e-mail return of the request. This process is in development stage and its progress will be shared with the Council at the scheduled hearing. In addition to making a direct request to Central Records for accident reports, citizens can obtain accident reports at the police district where the accident occurred and this too expedites the obtaining of these reports.

We look forward to discussing these matters with the Council. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this legislation.


Attachment

cc:     Frederick H. Bealefeld III, Police Commissioner, BPD
        Angela Gibson, Mayor's Legislative Liaison

# Baltimore Police Report Request Form

To:          Baltimore Police Community Correspondence Unit

From:        _____
                       (Person or Company making the Request)

Subject:     Police Report Request

Date of Request:_____

Date of Incident:_____Time of Incident:_____

Baltimore Police Complaint Number:_____

Type of Report:      ☐Offense          ☐Accident

Location of Incident:_____

_____

Victim:_____

Please provide additional details that may aid in processing your request.

_____
_____
_____
_____

If you have any questions regarding this request, contact the Community Correspondence Unit directly at (410) 396-2222 between 7AM x 3 PM.

This written request must be accompanied by:

1. A self addressed stamped envelope
2. A $10.00 check or money order payable to the Director of Finance. (The $10.00 search fee is **non-refundable).**

Mail your requests to:
Baltimore Police Department
242 W. 29th Street
Baltimore, Md. 21211

Attention: Community Correspondence Unit