

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 11-0258R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmember Holton, President Young, Councilmembers D’Adamo, Branch,
Cole, Middleton, Curran, Spector, Welch, Reisinger, Kraft, Clarke, Henry, Conaway
Introduced and read first time: February 28, 2011
Assigned to: Committee of the Whole

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Housing and Community Development

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Vacants to Value Initiative**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting representatives from the Department of Housing and Community
4 Development to appear before the Council to discuss the Vacants to Value initiative, and to
5 establish reporting mechanisms that will allow the City Council, and the public at large, to
6 track and monitor the effectiveness of Vacants to Value at meeting its goals.

7 **Recitals**

8 The “Vacants to Value” initiative, Baltimore Housing’s new approach to the longstanding
9 problem of vacant properties in the City, is intended to meet a number of ambitious goals for
10 neighborhood improvement. In order to attain these goals, it will need to approach old issues in
11 a new way; and rally the support of many different stakeholders throughout the City.

12 Neighborhood groups, developers, City agencies, and many others must have a full
13 understanding of how Vacants to Value is intended to operate, and what its specific goals are, if
14 it is to have any hope of succeeding.

15 In order to foster this understanding, the public should be given a full explanation of how the
16 multi-pronged Vacants to Value effort differs from past approaches to the problems caused by
17 vacant properties. As part of this explanation, details about how small local developers can
18 participate in the rehabilitation of individual homes, or whole blocks, under different programs
19 within the Vacants to Value effort should be discussed. Exactly how neighborhoods suffering
20 from high vacancy rates can take advantage of any new tools to improve their situation included
21 within Vacants to Value should also be made clear.

22 Although the Administration has taken steps to publicize this new initiative, no opportunity
23 to further engage the public in the effort to address Baltimore’s vacant property problems, and to
24 ensure that any new approach is truly aligned with the City’s needs, should be overlooked. A
25 full public hearing before the City Council would provide another opportunity for both the public
26 at large and the public’s representatives on the Council to further educate themselves about
27 Vacants to Value. It would allow for valuable feedback from the communities most affected by
28 these problems to be heard. The stage could also be set for equally valuable follow up
29 conversations between policy makers, affected citizens, and those directly implementing new
30 programs as the Vacants to Value initiative proceeds.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, That the
2 Council invites representatives from the Department of Housing and Community Development
3 to appear before it to discuss the Vacants to Value initiative, and to establish reporting
4 mechanisms that will allow the City Council, and the public at large, to track and monitor the
5 effectiveness of Vacants to Value at meeting its goals.

6 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Housing
7 Commissioner, the Mayor, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.