

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 09-0120R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Middleton, Clarke, Henry, Young, Cole, Welch, Curran, Kraft,  
Conaway, Holton, Spector, Branch

Introduced and read first time: March 16, 2009

Assigned to: Community Development Subcommittee

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REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Department of Housing and Community Development,  
Planning Commission, Baltimore Development Corporation

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A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing – The Park Heights Renaissance, Inc.**

3 FOR the purpose of requesting the Commissioner of Housing and Community Development and  
4 the CEO of Park Heights Renaissance, Inc., to report to the City Council on the success of  
5 the Vacant Housing Initiative in marketing City-owned vacant properties; to discuss the  
6 feasibility of expanding the program to include privately-owned vacant houses; and the  
7 practicability of duplicating the program in other Baltimore City neighborhoods endangered  
8 by a proliferation of vacant houses.

9 **Recitals**

10 The Park Heights Renaissance, Inc. (PHR), is a nonprofit organization incorporated in  
11 November 2007, “representing residents, businesses, religious institutions, schools, agencies,  
12 and other stakeholders committed to shaping a better future for Park Heights.” Under the  
13 direction of the Pimlico Community Development Authority, the PHR will manage the  
14 components of the Master Plan related to housing, economic development, and human services  
15 to secure the successful revitalization of Park Heights.

16 *Park Heights*, a February 2006 publication of the Department of Planning, describes Park  
17 Heights as a challenged community that, like the rest of Baltimore, has been losing population.  
18 Park Heights, however, has experienced nearly double the City’s rate of out-migration since the  
19 trend began in the 1970s. The neighborhood contains more than 2,000 vacant lots and buildings  
20 – “driving along the main streets of Park Heights, the devastation is plain to see: half the  
21 buildings, both residential and commercial, are vacant and boarded up ...”

22 PHR is working with the Department of Housing and Community Development to  
23 implement the Vacant Housing Initiative (VHI) to market through their website  
24 [www.parkheightsmd.org](http://www.parkheightsmd.org) City-owned properties in the Park Heights Master Plan Area. Visitors  
25 to the website are able to take a virtual tour of the exterior and interior of available properties,  
26 view still photos of the exterior of the property, and examine a HUD certified scope writeup with  
27 cost estimation on the rehabilitation cost of each property. PHR will assist purchasers by  
28 providing homebuying counseling/workshops and a pipeline of qualified purchasers interested in  
29 buying in Park Heights.

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

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1 The working partnership between the Park Heights Renaissance and the Department of  
2 Housing offers an innovative approach to the intractable problem of vacant properties that  
3 threatens the stability and quality of life of our Baltimore City neighborhoods. The VHI  
4 warrants a closer look to determine the effectiveness of the current program, the possibility of  
5 including privately-owned properties, and the feasibility of applying the VHI approach to other  
6 inner-city communities.

7 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the  
8 Commissioner of Housing and Community Development and the CEO of Park Heights  
9 Renaissance, Inc., are requested to report to the City Council on the success of the Vacant  
10 Housing Initiative in marketing City-owned vacant properties; to discuss the feasibility of  
11 expanding the program to include privately-owned vacant houses; and the practicability of  
12 duplicating the program in other Baltimore City neighborhoods endangered by a proliferation of  
13 vacant houses.

14 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the  
15 Commissioner of Housing and Community Development, the Director of Planning, the President  
16 of Baltimore Development Corporation, the CEO and Board Members of Park Heights  
17 Renaissance, Inc., and the Mayor's Legislative Liaison to the City Council.