



VOTING SESSION

Bill: 22-0101R

Informational Hearing - Mayor's Recommendations - 30-Day Review of Strategies to Eliminate Vacant and Abandoned Properties

Committee: Economic and Community Development

Chaired By: Councilwoman Sharon Green Middleton

Hearing Date: March 7, 2023

Time (Beginning): 2:00 PM

Time (Ending): 3:20 PM

Location: City Hall; Clarence "Du" Burns Chambers and WEBEX

Total Attendance: ~20

Committee Members in Attendance:

John Bullock Ryan Dorsey Odette Ramos Robert Stokes

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

Video 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: Councilmember Ramos

Seconded by: Councilmember Bullock

Final Vote: Favorable

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Councilmember Odette Ramos, Sponsor
- Faith Leach, Acting Chief City Administrator

- Robert Cename, Deputy Director, Department of Finance
 - Alice Kennedy, Director, Department of Housing and Community Development
 - Hilary Ruley, Law Department
 - Aaron Degraffenreidt, General Counsel, Office of the President
 - Kimberly Washington, Baltimore City Fire Department
-

Major Issues Discussed

1. Councilmember Middleton opened the meeting, introduced committee members and read the bill into the record.
 2. Councilmember Ramos commented in support of the resolution.
 3. Faith Leach provided a summary of current initiatives underway for managing and preventing vacancies. The City has 14,000 identifiable vacancies.
 4. Robert Cename testified about the City’s two key indicators (debt ratio and debt repayment) that may impact bond rating. Interest rates and State mandated education funding can create limitations on borrowing. The Tax Incrementing Financing process is being reviewed. The federal infrastructure bill has also been reviewed for additional funding.
 5. Alice Kennedy presented a Department of Housing and Community Development report outlining the Mayor’s strategies for eradicating vacancies. Strategies related to funding, impact investment areas, vacancy prevention, legal and regulatory, and project improvements. She shared a handout, “Vacants Review Recommendations Status Report”, which is uploaded to Legistar.
 6. Kimberly Washington spoke about the “red squares” program that the Fire Department implemented to improve vacancy safety. Persons should not enter a building that has a red square. There was also discussion about an “X” on buildings which signifies that the structure is unsafe.
 7. There was discussion about accuracy of data on the Vacancy Dashboard; the Housing Authority of Baltimore City sales; City Hubs; and inclusion of equity data on the Vacancy Dashboard.
 8. Terry Simms, via a WEBEX text suggested the creation of a youth construction training program that focuses on rehabbing vacancies.
 9. The committee approved a motion to recommend the bill favorably.
 10. The hearing was adjourned.
-

Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

Committee Vote:

Sharon Green Middleton, Chair:..... Yea
John Bullock: Yea
Mark Conway: Absent
Ryan Dorsey: Yea
Antonio Glover: Absent
Odette Ramos: Yea
Robert Stokes:..... Yea

Jennifer L. Coates, Committee Staff

Date: March 8, 2023

cc: Bill File
OCS Chrono File