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	SUBJECT	City Council Bill 22-0101R – Informational Hearing – Mayor's Recommendations – 30-Day Review of Strategies to Eliminate Vacant and Abandoned Properties		

TO The Honorable President, and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400

DATE: July 8, 2022

The Mayor's Office via the City Administrator is herein reporting on City Council Bill 22-0101R, Informational Hearing – Mayor's Recommendations – 30-Day Review of Strategies to Eliminate Vacant and Abandoned Properties, the purpose of which is to present to the Baltimore City Council the findings and recommendations of the Mayor's 30-day review for eliminating privately- and publicly-owned vacant and abandoned properties.

Background

In response to the tragedy which occurred on January 24, 2022, in which three firefighters died in the line of duty, Mayor Brandon Scott announced an official directive to all City agencies to conduct an internal review of operations, procedures, and processes related to how City agencies respond to vacant properties. There are just over 15,000 vacant houses in Baltimore City, 90% of which are privately owned. On March 4th, 2022, the results of the internal review, along with a series of recommendations, were released in a 9-page memorandum, which will inform the City's strategy in addressing vacant properties.

Status Update

As of Monday, July 11th, 2022, there are 14,780 vacant buildings in the City of Baltimore, **a reduction of 210 vacant homes since the memo was originally published on March 4th, 2022.** Of the current vacant buildings, 1,155 are city owned, 187 are owned by other government entities, and the remaining 13,420 are in private ownership.

After the memorandum was published in early March, the Mayor's Executive Vacant's Workgroup, the cross-agency team who developed the recommendations for the Mayor's consideration, transitioned to the cross-agency team responsible for implementation. The Workgroup is being facilitated by DHCD Acting Chief of Policy and Partnership, Kimberly Rubens and began meeting bi-weekly and using Planner, a tool from the Microsoft Office suite, to track the implementation of the recommendations made to Mayor Scott.

Microsoft Planner is a high-level project management tool. Its online capabilities allow workgroup members from across agencies to both access and track progress towards implementing the recommendations. The benefits of this tool are threefold:

- First, it is a central repository for all progress made to address vacants which can be accessed at any time.
- Second, because it is an enterprise technology solution, all agencies have access to the tool, thus eliminating the need for special access to an agency's data systems.
- Third, since the tool allows for updates to be made ahead of workgroup meetings, the inter-agency team can focus on the nuanced coordination that needs to take place to tackle the complex issue of vacant properties in Baltimore City.

Through planner, each recommendation has been turned into its own virtual task card. In each card, the recommendation is assigned an action owner, a due date, it outlines the scope of work necessary to execute the task, and space through the notes section to update the Executive Workgroup team on progress.

We have categorized all the various actions outlined in the memorandum into actions we believe can be accomplished in 3-month, 6-month, 9-month, 1 year and 2-year segments. We have also pulled out actions that require separate financial allocations and are working diligently with our budget and finance teams to properly prioritize funding needs year over year.

Conclusion

A resolution is an appropriate way for the City Council of Baltimore to conduct an informational hearing. See, e.g., *Inlet Assocs. v. Assateague House Condominium*, 313 Md. 413, 428 (1988). Therefore, the Mayor's Office via the City Administrator will attend the hearing on City Council Resolution 22-0101R to participate in the discussion on the Mayor's 30-Day Review addressing privately and publicly owned vacant and abandoned property.