



**Odette Ramos**

**Baltimore City Councilwoman**

**District 14**

(410) 396 - 4814

[odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov)

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 506

Baltimore MD 21202

**Testimony**

**22-0140R – Informational Hearing – Permit Reforms**

**November 28, 2023**

Honorable Chair Middleton and Distinguished Members of the Economic and Community Development Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to hear resolution 22-0140R – Informational Hearing – Permit Reforms. This will be our second hearing about this issue. Our first hearing took place on March 7, 2023.

This hearing will allow the Department of Housing and Community Development to outline their plans for reforms of the permit office since the last hearing. For instance, during the last hearing, we were told the roll out of the new technology will be this coming January. DHCD will have a chance to let us know the status of this and other reforms.

I am optimistic that we will continue to rehab vacant and abandoned properties to help our communities and grow our population. We need an efficient, effective permit office to ensure developers and homeowners they can pull permits and get results, while residents know their homes are safe as a result of good inspections.

Some topics we will explore during this hearing:

- Timeline for reforms of the Permit office, and what those reforms are
- Timeline for reforms of the Fire Marshal's reviews and inspections
- Specific answers to the following:
  - Hiring of a navigator to help homeowners who just purchased what they thought was a rehabbed property but ends up having a vacant building notice.
  - Inspectors missing appointments while residents take off work to meet them.
  - Phone availability
  - Inaccurate information being conveyed to residents and contractors
  - Language barriers

The Department of Housing and Community Development has been provided a specific list of items we will be addressing during the hearing. Please feel free to ask your questions as well, as this is an extremely important issue that I know all of us have struggled with.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos  
Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14