



Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmembers Middleton, Clarke

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - The Park Heights Renaissance, Inc.

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

Recitals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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