

**BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND**  
**Department of Permits, Approvals and Inspections**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

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**MEETING DATE:** Thursday, April 9, 2020

**ATTENDEES:** Listed below

**RE:** Last Code Enforcement Work Group Meeting held via WEBEX

**I. Introductions/Roll Call/Attendees:**

Michael Mallinoff, Director, PAI, Chair  
Councilman Izzy Patoka, Co-Chair  
Lionel Van Dommelen, Code Enforcement  
Adam Whitlock, Code Enforcement  
Robyn Clark, Code Enforcement  
Peggy White, Deputy Director, PAI  
Kimmy Routson, Office of the County Executive  
Kristin King, Office of the County Executive  
Mary Clay, Office of the County Executive  
Gabrielle Slokam, Office of the County Executive  
Sonia Almonte, Office of the County Executive  
Peter Kriscuman, Office of the County Executive  
Carmen Christiana, Office of the County Executive  
Drew Vetter, Office of the County Executive  
Joseph Cosentini, Office of IT  
Brian Morris, Legislative Aide for Councilman Quirk  
Justin Silberman, Councilman Patoka's office  
Valerie Schwab, District 1  
Eric Rockel, District 3  
Vivian Paysour, District 4  
Greg Bauer, District 5  
Cliff O'Connell, District 7  
Eric Rockel, citizen  
Alan Zuckerberg, Pikesville Community Corporation, President  
Mike Pierce, citizen  
Michael Whitfield, Pikesville Community Corporation, District 2  
Caitlin Klimm-Kelner, District 6  
Margaret Stokes, District 6, Office of Councilwoman Bevins  
Cathy Engers  
Tracey Marcantoni, District 5

## II. New 3-1-1 System

Joe Cosentini with Baltimore County Office of IT (OIT) presented a power point on the new 3-1-1 System and the BALCOGO Mobile App. The “call-in” reporting system provides an easy way for Baltimore County residents to report Code Enforcement and Department of Public Works issues and also serves as an information Directory to the Departments in Baltimore County Government. Issues such as downed stop signs, illegal signs, potholes, and debris/junk/trash can easily be reported. Health and Human Services reporting is not included, as they are a Maryland State agency.

Ms. Paysour asked if it was better to call 3-1-1 or continue to call Code Enforcement directly. She was advised to continue to call Code Enforcement. The 3-1-1 System was created as a fast way for the general public to report a problem without calling Code Enforcement directly.

## III. Round Table Discussion

Ms. Paysour said she was pleased with Baltimore County’s Code Enforcement Department’s progress in recognizing the need to deal with vacant properties, weekend inspections, and trash pick-up in common areas.

Eric Rockel acknowledged the email he sent following the previous meeting was included in the last minutes.

Cliff O’Connell recommended that we review our codes and add stricter regulations. Adam Whitlock offered the opportunity for the work group to email any code change suggestions. Director Mallinoff stated we would have to go through the County Executive’s Legislative Office to make any changes.

Michael Whitfield complimented our efforts with the Code Enforcement work group. However, he said it is unfair to make the property owners clear trash that someone else dumps on their property. He said they can’t call the police, because they have to know who did the dumping. Adam Whitlock said it is difficult for Code Enforcement to determine when it is a hardship and when it is just someone wanting the county to pick up their junk or trash.

Mr. Whitfield also said the county should have a zero tolerance for illegal signs violators.

Alan Zuckerberg, speaking on behalf of the Long Meadow Association, referenced a complaint #CC200234. He said he sent an email on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, concerning 3515 Autumn Drive. Our system shows the complaint as closed, however the witnesses were never contacted.

Tracey Marcantoni said Code Enforcement has done a good job in sending notices to trash violators in her area. She also said that she wishes we could make the owners of rental properties responsible for the fees for violations, as often the tenant will show up at the hearing and pay the fine. Adam Whitlock said the property owner is responsible, however, the tenant may show up at the hearing and often the fine is reduced since they are only a renter.

**It would be better if the Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) would require the property owner to be accountable for the full fee and a repeated history of violations. Director Mallinoff said he would discuss this with the ALJ.**

#### **IV. Code Enforcement Initiatives**

**Director Mallinoff discussed the ten Initiatives of the Code Enforcement Department.**

- 1. "Special Fund"**  
This is a revolving fund that would be set up to collect the violation liens, fees and fines and these funds would be used to pay for the cost of clean-up and mitigate.
- 2. Proactive Inspections and Off-hours/Weekend Inspections**  
The goal moving forward would encourage the inspectors to "report it, if they see it."
- 3. Additional Administration Law Judge (ALJ)**  
The addition of one more ALJ would ease the hearing backlog and possibly allow for evening and weekend hearings as well as live streaming of hearings.
- 4. Multifamily Inspections and Landlord Responsibilities**  
This initiative would introduce a new level of multifamily building inspections and add additional resources for each district. This program may also assist in regulating landlords who have multiple unrelated renters in one home.
- 5. Additional Code Enforcement Inspectors**  
The code enforcement staff has decreased from 34 to 18 Inspectors. Additional staff members would be critical to increase the level of service.
- 6. Vacant Property Registration**  
This initiative would require a vacant property to be registered or be subject to a fine. It will have to be monitored to track how long a property sits vacant. It would be beneficial to have community involvement.
- 7. Improve Communication and Bilingual Communication**  
In addition to the bilingual Rat Eradication door hanger and the sign brochure, which is not yet bilingual, other forms of communications need to be created. This could include a "Push List" or "Email Blast" to the communities.
- 8. Improve Enforcement of Sign and Trash/litter Violations**  
Bulk trash pick-up and clean-up of private property dumping areas would make a difference.
- 9. Improve Technology**  
PAI will soon have a new Land Management System, which should improve the reporting of cases to the public. In the interim, immediate improvements can be made

to Accela to make the reporting more thorough and accurate.

10. **Rat Eradication**

There are concerns that the warm winter may increase the rat infestation problems this summer. Heightened concern will keep this as a main focus.

V. **Comments on the Initiatives**

Valerie Schwab would like us to focus on making the landlords more responsible for their properties. She would also like to see the county do more bulk pick-ups.

Eric Rockel supports the vacant property registration, but feels the timing could be an issue. Eric complained that our Accela reporting system is bare bones and insufficient.

Vivian Paysour would like to see the county do something about the vacant commercial properties that are used as flea markets and car washes. She said these property owners don't seem to care about the citations they are issued. They move from vacant lot to vacant lot on Liberty Road in Randallstown. She asked if we could enforce fines on the Used Car Sales Companies.

Tracey Marcantoni has concerns that people are renting unrelated people and is wondering how this can be addressed.

Caitlin Klimm-Kelner supports the vacant property registry and suggests that community associations should be able to register or report vacant properties. She hopes that when we move to the new reporting system, all Code Enforcement agents will submit their reports the same way.

Cliff O'Connell said there are many "hotel" homes with multiple families in each home. He said contractors buy the homes and rent them to their employees. They take the rent out of their paychecks. Cliff also stated that bulk pick-up is desperately needed. Since COVID-19 closed the landfills, contractors are dumping in other businesses' dumpsters.

Mike Pierce said Accela shows written notices but not verbal warnings for sign violations. In Accela he was told the verbal notices are shown as "no violation found." Adam Whitlock said they only have a handful of options for coding a violation. He said he will work with OIT to see if we can add more codes. He would also like to see if we can add the inspector's notes and photographs to the violation report.

Alan Zuckerberg said he will not back any additional funding until the existing inspectors are trained to identify existing violations.

Councilman Patoka agrees Professional Development has not been a priority in Baltimore County across the departments as well as in the Council.

**Director Mallinoff stated that he has implemented staff meetings twice a month. He also mentioned that Lionel Van Dommelen worked with the police to give training for all of our inspectors.**

**Greg Bauer would like to see more proactive inspections. He then reported a "junk yard" property at 59 Burke Avenue and 28 Autumn Terrace. Both properties have the same ownership. Code Enforcement Officer Robyn Clark said they have visited that site and although there are a lot of items stored on the property, it is not in violation of the code.**

**The motion to send the recommendations to the County Executive was moved by Cliff O'Connell, and seconded by Vivian Paysour.**

**Director Mallinoff closed the meeting thanking everyone for their time and effort to provide information to the work group.**

**Councilman Patoka echoed Director Mallinoff's comments and asked for everyone's patience during these trying times and said nonetheless, the county is still trying to do their job and is still focusing on Code Enforcement.**