

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council (BVRC)

Minutes

February 10, 2026
Greater Baltimore Committee
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

The meeting recording can be found here: [February 10 BVRC Meeting Recording](#)

BVRC members in attendance:

- Jake Day, Secretary, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (Council Chair)
- Alice Kennedy, Commissioner, Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (Council Vice Chair)
- Rebecca Flora, Secretary, Maryland Department of Planning
- Faith Leach, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Baltimore
- Michael Mocksten, Director, Department of Finance, City of Baltimore
- Leslie McMillan, Co-Chair, BUILD
- Matt Gallagher, President & CEO, Goldseker Foundation
- Beth Blauer, Associate Vice Provost for Public Sector Innovation & Associate Professor of Practice, Carey Business School
- Mark Anthony Thomas, President and CEO, Great Baltimore Committee
- Nick Henninger, Maryland Economic Development Corporation
- Gary McGuigan, Maryland Stadium Authority
- Casey Tiefenwerth, Maryland Department of Labor
- Otis Rolley, President and CEO, Baltimore Development Corporation

Call to Order

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Council Chair Jake Day called the meeting to order. Chair Day noted that the majority of the meeting would be spent in closed session.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Chair Day called for a motion to adopt the minutes from the December 16, 2025 meeting. Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the December 16, 2025 minutes were approved.

Chair Day noted that the Council meetings have switched to every other month so there was no meeting in January.

Monthly Production Report

Henry Waldron, staff, presented the monthly production report. Ms. McMillan asked for clarification on the expected demolition timeline. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that the demolitions reflected in the dashboard had been funded by the City of Baltimore and not with BVRI funding from the state. She stated that notices to proceed had been sent to MSA for BVRI-funded demolitions, which were expected to proceed in the spring.

Ms. McMillan asked how many demolitions are with MSA. Kari Snyder, staff, indicated that 74 demolitions had been given NTPs or ENTPs out of about 130 on the eligible list. Ms. McMillan asked to confirm that the goal was 200 demolitions for the year. Ms. Snyder confirmed that this was the goal in the dashboard. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that 200 demolition goal in the dashboard included both City and State funded demolitions, but the completed total in the dashboard only reflected demolitions funded by Baltimore City. CAO Leach stated that the figure in the dashboard did not include any state funded demolitions because those had not taken place yet. CAO Leach stated that MSA can continue to demolish any properties for which they are sent NTPs. She stated that she serves on the MSA Board and, while MSA does not break out their demolition counts between those that were BVRI or CORE funded, she has requested this information. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that MSA has been given 74 NTPs and now they are working through their procurement process. She stated that they have been given 21 stabilization NTPs.

Chair Day stated that the 200 goal demolitions reflects the total VBN abatements that will occur through demolition, though several new housing units can be constructed due to the abatement of one VBN. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that the Eutaw Marshburn demolition will remove one VBN but lead to multiple units of new construction.

Mr. Waldron continued presenting the monthly production report. Chair Day stated that the expansion of the in rem pipeline may be stalled by court processes, and he stated that State DHCD and the Council are available to help remove this roadblock. CAO Leach stated that she believed the onboarding of additional staff for the courts had recently gone to the ECC. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that this approval would allow the new positions to be posted. Ms. McMillan asked how many new positions would be posted. Vice Chair Kennedy responded that three new positions would be opened. Ms. McMillan stated that determining the recruitment timeline and the intended use of these new positions would be helpful. CAO Leach suggested that representatives of the court should be invited to the next Council meeting.

Mr. Waldron continued presenting the monthly production report. Ms. McMillan asked if acquisition totals were increasing. Chair Day responded that the acquisition on targeted areas were increasing and stated that he believed acquisition totals were about to increase rapidly. Mr. Mocksten stated that acquisitions totals have been steadily increasing and the improvements in the acquisition pipeline would lead to accelerated increases in the coming year. Chair Day noted

that in the first six months of FY26 the total acquisitions in FY25 had been surpassed. Mr. Mocksten noted that these increases in acquisitions are supporting an increase in year-over-year VBN reduction.

Mr. Waldron continued presenting the monthly production report. Chair Day stated that the Council should review the negotiation and condemnation process. Ms. Blauer complimented Mr. Waldron's participation with the Data Working Group. Vice Chair Kennedy introduced City DHCD's new Vacants Data Scientist, Patrick Barnett.

Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Investment Progress Report

Chair Day announced that the FY27 BVRI funding round opens February 18 to provide the opportunity for Community Development Organizations in Baltimore to receive BVRI funds.

Chair Day noted the release of the Residential Market Potential Report by Live Baltimore.

Ms. Snyder and Ira Kowler, MCIC, presented the BVRI Progress update. CAO Leach noted that in the future representatives from Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) could present to the Council on their process. Chair Day requested that Ms. Snyder work to schedule this presentation with MSA.

Mr. Kowler presented the MCIC disbursements to and production performance by BVRI CDOs. Mr. Thomas asked whether the total site control percentage represented a good number for the program. Mr. Kowler stated that staff are working with the CDOs to more consistently define their vacancy reduction target geography.

Vice Chair Kennedy asked whether the properties acquired column includes properties that CDOs already control. Ms. Snyder stated that the column included properties the CDOs already owned prior to the beginning of the BVRI program and that the properties acquired since July 1st could be listed out for the next Council meeting.

CAO Leach suggested that the CDOs could provide feedback on the process of acquiring properties for production. Chair Day stated that representatives of CDOs could attend a future Council meeting. CAO Leach stated that BVRI CDOs should also notify relevant City staff when a permit for a BVRI project is submitted. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that upcoming permit submissions could also be indicated by CDOs during regular coordination meetings. Mary Colleen Buetner, staff, noted that upcoming permits are currently being tracked through the regular coordination meetings. CAO Leach stated that the timeline for BVRI properties to receive a permit would be a metric tracked by City staff. Ms. Snyder stated that this information would also be collected to be reported out to the Council in the future.

Ms. McMillan asked for the definition of In Production from the BVRI CDO Performance Report. Mr. Kowler stated that In Production is tied to the date that a property received a construction permit. Ms. Snyder stated that this would be the first permit a project receives. Mr. Kowler stated that a little more than half of the properties the CDOs have under site control have received their

first permit. Ms. Blauer stated that she had been involved in ongoing discussions to see whether there would be a way to get coding in the permitting system to better track the time it takes for permits to be issued. CAO Leach stated that this type of tracking was currently available in the permitting system. Vice Chair Kennedy noted that various sources of data can currently be pulled on permit timelines. Ms. Blauer stated that determining whether any properties in the targeted areas are in protracted permitting delays would be good. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that the review happening in the coordination meetings includes determining whether any permits are stuck in protracted delays for the CDOs. CAO Leach stated that the average permit time for the BVRI properties could be reported at the next Council meeting. Chair Day asked Ms. Blauer to clarify whether she was requesting data for just BVIR properties or for all properties in the priority geographies. Ms. Blauer stated she was interested in permit timelines for all properties within the VRPGs. Chair Day stated that he was also interested in the fastest possible permit timeline for vacant remediation projects. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that the median turnaround time for residential permits was down to three days.

Mr. Kowler continued presenting the BVRI CDO Performance Report. Ms. McMillan asked if every CDO had received BVRI funds. Mr. Kowler stated that four CDOs had not received any funds so far but all had signed loan documents, which indicates that they are able to draw funds once they submit an approved budget.

Chair Day stated that an additional column should be added to the Property Progress - City/MSA slide that indicates the breakdown of property strategies on the approved BVRI list for City DHCD. Ms. Snyder stated that this column can be added to the slide. Ms. Blauer asked for confirmation that the properties approved for acquisition funds for the City are not related to those for the dashboard. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that the acquisitions on the approved BVRI list for City DHCD would all be acquired by City DHCD and will be reflected on the dashboard. Ms. Snyder stated that the dashboard currently does not indicate if acquisitions were completed with City funding or with State funding but that that information could be better reflected.

Mr. Kowler presented on the progress of the BVRI Support Fund. Mr. Gallagher asked whether funds would be held back in the Support Fund from the initial \$1.6 million. Mr. Kowler responded that he expected some would be retained based on the applications received and the funds remaining. Mr. Gallagher stated that he believed there was continued interest in renewing commitments to the support fund, but he stated that he would recommend that a bit of funding be retained in case an opportunity emerges between cycles of funding commitments. Ms. Snyder confirmed that some funding would be retained.

Mr. Kowler presented on the creation of the Reinvest Baltimore DPA program in partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services.

NY Investors Update

Vice Chair Kennedy presented an update on the NY Investor situation. Ms. McMillan asked how many families are impacted. Vic Chair Kennedy stated that she was unsure of the number of families impacted but would estimate anywhere from 137 to over 400 based on rental licenses

in the portfolio. Ms. McMillan asked whether the bad actors had all been identified. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that she believed they had all been identified, but that more had been identified since the December Council meeting.

Mr. Henninger asked how other bad actor landlord groups could be identified in the future. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that City DHCD collects data on several of Baltimore's larger landlord groups, but that the current situation includes several ownership groups who are using similar practices and may be tied with one another. Mr. Thomas asked whether the federal proposal to ban institutional investors in housing would impact the vacancy reduction work. Chair Day noted that less than half of one percent of mortgages are currently impacted by large scale institutional investors. He noted that institutional investors are seeking markets where housing supply is restricted because this would lead to increased costs. Vice Chair Kennedy stated that she believes several institutional investors have stepped back from acquisitions in Baltimore.

Ms. Blauer asked whether there are policy solutions that could fix the conditions that made Baltimore ripe for the NY Investors situation. Chair Day stated that additional oversight of the appraisal process is likely needed. Vice Chair Kennedy suggested that additional oversight and education for all parties in a real estate transaction, such as title companies, could flag suspicious behavior. CAO Leach noted that City attorneys had noticed the NY Investors situation months before the public became aware, so an early warning system could potentially be set up. Mr. Henniger noted that Title Companies are likely aware of suspicious circumstances occurring in the market.

Working Group Updates

Ms. Blauer stated that the City's I-Team will present to the Data and Economic Opportunities Working Groups on their Vacancy Prevention efforts at the next working group meeting. Ms. McMillan stated that the Finance Working Group was working on coordinating its agenda for upcoming efforts. Mr. Gallagher stated that the Delivery Chain Working Group would be reviewing property donations and permitting and they would be creating a developer focus group to discuss disposition proceedings.

Closed Session

Chair Day asked for a motion to close the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 3-305(b)(3) in order to discuss the acquisition of real property and matters directly related to that acquisition and 3-305(b)(13) in order to discuss confidential commercial information protected from disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act. Mr. Gallagher moved as such and Mr. Thomas seconded.

Time of closed session: 2:18 PM

Place: Greater Baltimore Committee Office, 111 S Calvert St., Suite 1700, Baltimore, MD 21202, USA

Purpose(s): to discuss the acquisition of real property and matters directly related to that acquisition and confidential commercial information protected from disclosure under the Maryland Public Information Act.

Members who voted to meet in closed session: Jake Day, Alice Kennedy, Rebecca Flora, Jasmin Torres, Faith Leach, Michael Mocksten, Leslie McMillan, John Bullock, Mark Anthony Thomas, Matt Gallagher, Beth Blauer, Cory McCray, Stephanie Smith, and Otis Rolley.

Persons attending closed session: All members; MD DHCD Assistant Sec. of Neighborhood Revitalization Carol Gilbert, City DHCD Dir. of Research and Analytics Henry Waldron, City DHCD Program Manager Victoria Olivier, City DHCD Deputy Commissioner of Development Wendi Redfern, MD DHCD Project Manager Alexandra Laham, MD OAG Assistant Attorney General Ruhe Mauck, MD DHCD Dir. of Community & Economic Development Partnerships Kari Snyder, MD DHCD Program Officer David Birkenthal, City DHCD Research Analyst Cleopatra Ibukun, MD OAG Assistant Attorney General Kallie Butts, Maryland DHCD Assistant Director Larry Brown, Maryland Governor's Office Deputy Chief of Staff Michael Huber, Maryland Department of Planning Carter Reitman, Maryland Community Investment Corporation Ira Kowler, City DHCD Project Manager Dashay Roscoe, City DHCD Project Manager Noro Adamu, City DHCD Chief of Strategic Communications Tammy Hawley, City DHCD Chief of Policy & Research Kimberly Ruben, City DHCD James Turner, City DHCD Patrick Barnett, Maryland DHCD Benjamin Penserga.

Authority under § 3-305 for the closed session: #s 3 & 13

Topics actually discussed: (1) Property-level data from Baltimore City's FY25 and FY26 Block Level Planning process and BVRI property acquisition targets.

Actions taken: None

Each recorded vote: None

Closing

Chair Day adjourned the meeting.