

Baltimore City Chamber of Committee
MONTHLY COMMITTEE CHAIR REPORT
Due each Tuesday before monthly Board Meeting

Committee Name: Public Policy Committee (PPC) _____

Committee Chair/Co-Chair: Hal Resnick _____

Committee Report Date: October 2020 _____

Date of Last Committee Meeting: October 13, 2020 _____

Date of Next Committee Meeting: November 10, 2020 _____

Upcoming Event and Date (if applicable): _____

Old Business/Issues:

- 1) Due to a negligible response from the candidates to the planned October General Election Candidate Meet and Greet (GECM&G) for the Mayoral and City Council President offices, the event has been cancelled.
- 2) City Bill (20-0488) requiring a “project labor agreement” with contractors on major City contracts awaiting action by Labor Committee. Possible adverse impact on small/minority businesses. No action reported since 3/9/2020.
- 3) City Bill 20-526 Baltimore City COVID-19 Renter Relief Act passed by City Council and signed by Mayor (Ordinance 20.364). Significant concerns have been raised about the post 90-day effect of the Ordinance that could result in evictions of renters unable to pay past-due rents and further financial burden on businesses. Financial relief (possibly subsidies or tax mitigation) for small businesses will likely be required if many of those businesses are to survive.
- 4) City Bill 20-535 COVID-19 Premium Pay for essential Workers has been introduced in City Council and is in review by the Labor committee. No action reported since 5/21/2020.
- 5) City Bills 20-543 (COVID-19 Employee Retention) and 20-544 (COVID-19 Laid-Off Employees Right of Recall) have been passed by the City Council and sent to the Mayor for action. These Bills could challenge the Employment at Will standard in Maryland.
- 6) Several Bills related to taxing services remain under consideration by the General Assembly, either for override of the Governor’s veto or as a new initiative. These include HB 732 (Tobacco Tax, Sales and Use Tax, and Digital Advertising Gross Revenues Tax), HB 1354 (Sales and use Tax and Personal Property Tax – Services, Aircraft Parts and Equipment, and Data Centers) and HB695/SB002 (Digital Advertising Gross Revenues – Taxation). HB 1300 – Blueprint for Maryland’ Future – Implementation (“Kirwin Bill”) is also an issue since some funding for it may be provided by the forgoing taxes.

Progress Report:

- 1) Aerial Surveillance Program. An interim report on the pilot program indicates a “minimal” effect on crime- fighting in Baltimore, helping to increase arrests by about five percent. The Baltimore Police Department (supported by independent researchers) will continue the evaluation process. Opposition to the program continues to exist, however, by advocates of civil liberties who believe the planes to be an invasion of privacy. ([Baltimore Sun, 9/12/2020](#))
- 2) Preakness/Pimlico. The Racing and Community Development Act of 2020 authorizes the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue bonds to fund the rehabilitation of Pimlico and ensure that the Preakness remains in Baltimore. However, opposition—largely on financial grounds—continues to exist without recognition of the cultural, traditional, and historical importance to Baltimore.

New Business/Issues: 1) The Maryland Chamber of Commerce has released its 2021 Legislative Session Legislative Priorities and Anticipated Critical Issues. The COVID-19 pandemic raises the need for Liability Protection from frivolous lawsuits as well as relief from excessive increases in the cost of Unemployment Insurance and unfair Unemployment Experience Ratings caused by the pandemic.

Action Items to Report Next Meeting:

1) Old and new business /issues (above)_____

2) _____

3) _____

Please maintain list of all committee members here: Beverly Williams, Chris Costello, Faviola Donato-Galindo, James Dorf, Kimya Dennis, Mostafa Razzak, Moshe Pelberg, Philip Cronin, Sonny Morstein, Will Honablew, Hal Resnick