

Chapter 584

(Senate Bill 764)

AN ACT concerning

Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces

FOR the purpose of establishing the Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces; providing for the composition, cochairs, and staffing of the Workgroup; prohibiting a member of the Workgroup from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Workgroup to study and make recommendations regarding certain matters; requiring the Workgroup to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before a certain date; providing for the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces.

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That:

- (a) There is a Workgroup on Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Commercial Spaces.
- (b) The Workgroup consists of the following members:
 - (1) two members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate;
 - (2) two members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
 - (3) the Secretary of Housing and Community Development, or the Secretary's designee;
 - (4) the Secretary of Planning, or the Secretary's designee;
 - (5) one member of the Maryland Association of Counties;
 - (6) one member of the Maryland Municipal League; and
 - (7) the following members, jointly appointed by the Presiding Officers of the General Assembly:
 - (i) one representative of a commercial real estate developer;
 - (ii) one representative of a construction agency specializing in the rehabilitation and renovation of commercial buildings;

- (iii) one representative of an organization for owners and operators of multifamily dwellings;
- (iv) one representative of an organization ~~for financial institutions~~ representing credit unions operating in the State; ~~and~~
- (v) one representative of an organization providing legal services and advocacy for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness;
- (vi) one representative of an organization that specializes in low-income housing financing;
- (vii) one representative of a residential real estate developer;
- (viii) one representative of a veterans rights organization;
- (ix) one representative of a nonprofit organization that specializes in rapid rehousing;
- (x) one architecture professional with expertise in adaptive reuse or affordable housing; and
- (xi) one representative of an organization representing banking institutions operating in the State.

(c) The Presiding Officers of the General Assembly shall jointly designate the cochairs of the Workgroup from the members of the General Assembly appointed by the Presiding Officers.

(d) The Department of Housing and Community Development shall provide staff for the Workgroup.

(e) A member of the Workgroup:

- (1) may not receive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but
- (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

(f) The Workgroup shall:

- (1) study the feasibility and limitations of converting vacant or underutilized commercial spaces into residential or mixed-use residential and commercial spaces in order to increase the availability of affordable housing stock in the State, including:

(i) housing exclusively for the benefit of persons receiving rental assistance through a federally sponsored or State-sponsored program; and

(ii) mixed-use housing designed to house market rate renters and renters receiving rental assistance through a federally sponsored or State-sponsored program;

(2) identify the sources of State funds available to developers interested in developing affordable housing by converting existing commercial spaces into residential or mixed-use residential and commercial spaces for the purposes identified in item (1) of this subsection, including any conditions on the receipt and use of these funds;

(3) identify and study any programs developed by other states for the purpose of converting vacant commercial spaces into affordable housing; and

(4) make recommendations regarding legislation necessary to facilitate the conversion of vacant or underutilized commercial spaces into residential or mixed-use residential and commercial spaces.

(g) On or before November 30, 2021, the Workgroup shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June 1, 2021. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of June 30, 2022, this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 30, 2021.