

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORT
2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.: CB-107-2024

Draft No.: 2

Committee: COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Date: 11/12/2024

Action: FAVORABLE

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable, 8-0 (In favor: Council Members Blegay, Burroughs, Dernoga, Fisher, Hawkins, Olson, Oriadha and Watson)

The County Council convened as the Committee of the Whole on November 12, 20024, to consider CB-107-2024 (DR-2). On Tuesday, October 22, 2024, the County Council introduced CB-107-2024 (DR-2), a bill for the purpose of amending provisions of the Prince George's County Code requiring landlords to provide for emergency evacuation plans for age-restricted senior housing, providing for compliance with certain codes; providing for the posting of the emergency evacuation plans in certain areas; providing for the placement of the emergency evacuation plans online; providing for the optional placement of certain stickers on units identifying persons with physical disabilities; and generally regarding emergency evacuation plans in age-restricted housing.

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development Director gave an overview of the Bill and the Policy Analysis submitted by the Budget and Policy Division on CB-107-2024 (DR-2). The Policy Analysis stated that the bill may have a slight adverse fiscal impact because there may be DPIE administrative costs associated with enforcing it and the Fire Department's requirement to distribute stickers upon request. The enactment of CB-107-2024 (DR-2) will have a favorable indirect fiscal impact because it requires emergency evacuation plans for the County's largest vulnerable population and creates additional safety measures and protections for seniors.

Ms. Sakinda Skinner, County Council Liaison from the County Executive's Office, requested an amendment to existing law within the bill, which allows the Office of Budget Management to give high occupancy dwelling facilities a one-time \$5,000.00 rebate for security cameras. The amendment was to list the correct Prince George's County agency responsible for issuing the rebate. There was also a question about how CB-107-2024 (DR-2) differed from a previously enacted law about security cameras. Lastly, Ms. Skinner discussed language under the State of Maryland Code, which already requires buildings to have evaluation plans, and asked how the proposed legislation differs from the state code.

Ms. Dinora Hernandez, with the Office of Law, stated that the bill is in proper legislative format, legally sufficient, and has no impediments to its enactment.

Council Member Oriadha explained that the purpose of the legislation is to make sure residents have access to the evaluation plans; the language states the plan must be visible and available in the leasing office, residents must be sent a copy of the plan online and provide window stickers for residents who may not be able to go down the stairs. Council Member Oriadha explained that during her tour of senior living facilities, there were facilities where landlords had not posted emergency evaluation plans, and residents needed clarification on procedures during a fire emergency. The stickers will allow fire personnel real-time visibility, showing who cannot use the steps to leave the building.

Council Member Watson asked if apartment and condominium buildings must post evaluation plans. Council Member Oriadha explained that the Apartment & Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) supports the proposed legislation and that Montgomery County passed a more robust version of the proposed bill. Also, Council Member Oriadha stated that residents with mobility concerns needed clarification on evaluation procedures, so this legislation would allow them to have an online version of the evaluation plan and provide them with stickers.

Council Member Hawkins stated that when working for Prince George's County Emergency Management, they worked diligently to ensure senior buildings had emergency evacuation plans posted on the walls, but stated he was not sure if that practice was mandatory and requested Ms. Skinner check with Homeland Security Director Ronald Gill and Fire Department Chief Tiffany Green to see what is already in place and how the proposed legislation will enhance current practices. He then thanked Council Member Oriadha for proposing the legislation. Council Member Oriadha explained that the proposed bill might be occurring as a best practice. Still, the facilities toured did not have the emergency evacuation plans posted, and citizens were unsure what to do in an emergency.

On motion of Council Member Oriadha, seconded by Council Member Burroughs, the County Council Committee of the Whole voted 8-0 favorably on CB-107-2024 (DR-2).