

Daily Record

Dixon: Waterfront law gives balance

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Baltimore is marking a 10-year extension on Tuesday of a law that reserves much of the city's waterfront for industrial development.

Mayor Sheila Dixon has scheduled ceremony to celebrate an extension of the Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District, or MIZOD, which was created by the city in 2004 and bars a large portion of Baltimore's shoreline from non-industrial development.

Dixon signed the law early last month, just after its passage by the City Council. She said in an interview Monday that the law should provide a good balance for economic development.

"I felt very strongly that it was important to extend that and show that commitment not only to the Maryland Port Administration, but also to people who work in that industry," she said.

The law sets aside land to avoid conflict between residential and other developments drawn to the city's waterfront areas and the industrial activities that depend on the deep water access around the port. Port businesses are often noisy or operate at hours that can conflict with residents' schedules.

One element in the extension law allows property owners to petition the city for the removal of a parcel from the MIZOD, but not until 2014.

The law had been set to expire in 2014, but many in business around the Port of Baltimore pushed for several years to move forward with an early extension. The district is now in law through 2024. One of the chief concerns around the port was that it would become difficult to secure financing for projects and improvements given the uncertainty.

The discussion of port land use is not over. The city continues to work this year on a comprehensive zoning plan, which is being updated for the first time since the 1970s. Through the update, the city could enact longer-term and potentially different land use rules.

Though the law passed the City Council easily, it did encounter some opposition from developers and other businesses that questioned the city's strategy for maintaining port uses.

Alfred Barry, whose consulting firm, AB Associates, represented the Key Highway restaurant Little Havana during the debate, said the law should have more exclusively identified port use, but allows for broader industrial development.

“I think the benefits of the zoning restrictions are overstated, in that the intent on the part of the city and the Maryland Port Administration overlooks that if the issue was protecting port land for port-related purposes, the bill doesn’t really do that,” he said.

Little Havana, which is not in the MIZOD, has attempted to move to a nearby location that is within the MIZOD, and has not been allowed.

Bill supporters argue that limiting MIZOD development to uses that are specifically defined as maritime might be too restrictive. There are other industries that are related to port uses or depend on the port that could be well served by proximity to deep water, said John Redding, chairman of the Baltimore Industrial Group, an organization of local industrial business owners and operators.

“It was a compromise from the original 2014 date, and one of the driving forces was that Baltimore needs to have a balance of industrial property as well as residential, mixed use and office,” he said.

Rupert Denney, who heads the Baltimore Port Alliance, a trade organization for private port businesses, said the city has made a positive gesture toward the business community with the extension, and should take advantage of it as an economic development opportunity. He said Baltimore is ahead of the curve nationally on this issue.

“Now that the legislation has passed through, this is the moment for both the city of Baltimore, and the Baltimore Development Corp., and the Baltimore industrial community to shout this from the rooftops,” Denney said. “We’re basically saying that we’re interested in blue-collar business in the city of Baltimore, and we won’t harass you. Come invest.”

Mayor Dixon signs bill protecting Port of Baltimore's maritime zoning until 2024

Baltimore Business Journal - by [Scott Dance](#) Staff

Mayor Sheila Dixon signed a bill Tuesday to extend a protective zoning district around the Port of Baltimore, a move port advocates say will help foster growth in maritime-related industry.

Industrialists, developers and city officials had worked for more than a year on a compromise on the issue. The district helps maintain a separation between port and residential or commercial land uses. The law extends the life of the district, called the Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District, another decade through 2024.

Port business owners had complained that with a previous sunset of 2014, banks were unlikely to finance improvements or expansion to port facilities. There was still a possibility that in a few years, condos or shops could move in next door and force industry to be less productive. But with another decade to continue their businesses unaffected, port business owners they say the law invites more shippers and cargoes to the port.

“Baltimore is sending a message to the international business community that it intends to stay open for business, well ahead of the widening of the Panama Canal in 2014,” John Redding, chairman of the **Baltimore Industrial Group**, said at a bill signing ceremony at the **Baltimore Museum of Industry**. The canal widening is expected to bring larger ships and more cargo that could previously only call on West Coast ports.

Helen Delich Bentley, a former congresswoman and the state-owned port terminals’ namesake, said the protections preserve jobs for “people who don’t want college, but want to tinker with their hands.”

Maryland Port Administration Executive Director James J. White said: “The importance of this bill is huge for this region. It secures our position as a world-class port long-term.”

Port leaders thanked Dixon and the City Council for their work examining the issue. **Council President Stephanie Rawlings-Blake had commissioned a study by the Abell Foundation** whose conclusions on how to balance the interests of industry and development played a significant role in the final compromise.

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WJZTV

Development Crowds Out Some Baltimore Industries Reporting

Mike Schuh BALTIMORE (WJZ) —

The roots of Baltimore City can be traced to our natural harbor. Step by step, bigger and bigger ships came to town but now, as Mike Schuh reports, development is crowding out some of the very industries which led to the creation to Baltimore.

Condos and office buildings are here because the city allowed the zoning to coinage. Developers wanted those changes to continue, but five years ago, the city realized once the waterfront is no longer industrial, you "never get it back," said Bud Nixon.

So the remaining industrial waterfront needed a lifeline. It got it; the city changed the zoning, keeping condos and offices out...but that protection was about to expire.

These terminals work 24/7, which means trucks, noise and dust.

"And that's an irritant to someone who just spent \$500,000 for their condo so they pick up the phone and call the mayor and say, 'Can't you make these ships go away?'" Nixon said.

Norman Rukert spent \$20 million to keep them coming. That's what a new deep draft pier cost his company and bankers want to know if the land will stay industrial.

"When you contemplate a job like we just did for \$20 million, they want to know that there is a future in it for them, that they're going to get paid back," Rukert said.

Tuesday, that extension came. When you look at the views from some of this industrial land, it's absolutely incredibly but that's the point of this agreement: to make sure that this land--no matter what the view--stays industrial and isn't turned into condos.

"Thank the Lord for taking care of the Port of Baltimore," said former Congresswoman Helen Bentley.

"But it allows for future generations to have a sustainable opportunity for not only employment but to continue to build on the economy here," said Mayor Sheila Dixon.

In this economy, those who hold those 33,000 jobs credited to the port are breathing a bit easier.

"Hopefully someone in the Rukert family will be here to operate it 100 years from now," Rukert said.

The council extended the length of the agreement to 20 years because banks were reluctant to loan for improvements with only a 10-year agreement in place.

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Journal of Commerce

Baltimore Extends Port Zoning

Bill protects industrial zoning district until 2024

R.G. Edmonson

The port of Baltimore received a 10-year extension on special city zoning aimed at protecting its industrial viability, the Baltimore Business Journal reported.

Mayor Sheila Dixon on Tuesday signed a bill to extend the Maritime Industrial Zoning Overlay District until 2024. The zoning protection was due to expire in 2014.

The city passed the zoning district, known locally as “Mizrod,” to keep maritime industries in the port from being choked out by encroaching residential and commercial real estate development along high-value waterfront property.

Owners feared that expiration of the Mizrod in 2014 would discourage banks from financing industrial activities in the zone, the paper said.

The paper reported that city officials worked for a year with industrial and development interests to work out a compromise on the port’s land use.