

Chapter 560

(House Bill 209)

AN ACT concerning

Corporations and Associations – Revisions

FOR the purpose of altering certain provisions governing the issuance of stock, convertible securities, and scrip; clarifying the authority of corporations to hold annual meetings by remote communication; clarifying the application of certain provisions of law to the conversion of a corporation; requiring a real estate investment trust that voluntarily dissolves to file a notice of termination with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation; authorizing the charter or bylaws of a nonstock corporation to provide for the service of certain ex officio directors; providing for the application of certain provisions of law regarding voting rights to statutory trusts; and generally relating to corporations and associations.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Corporations and Associations

Section 2–203, 2–210, 2–214, 2–501(b), 2–503(c), 4–601, 4A–402(a)(5), 5–202(b), and 8–502

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2014 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Corporations and Associations

Section 2–501(a), 2–503(a), and 4A–402(a)(8)(viii) and (9)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2014 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Corporations and Associations

Section 12–307

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2014 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Corporations and Associations

2–203.

(a) Before the issuance of stock or convertible securities, the board of directors shall adopt a resolution that:

(1) Authorizes the issuance;

(2) Sets the minimum consideration for the stock or convertible securities or a formula for its determination; and

(3) Fairly describes any consideration other than money.

(b) In the absence of actual fraud in the transaction, the minimum consideration stated in the charter or determined by the board of directors in its resolution is conclusive for all purposes.

(c) For purposes of this section, the consideration for stock issued as a stock dividend is the resulting capitalization of surplus.

(d) This section does not apply to the issuance of stock or convertible securities as part of:

(1) A reclassification of stock effected by amendment of the charter; or

(2) A consolidation, merger, [or] share exchange, **OR CONVERSION**, including a consolidation, merger, [or] share exchange, **OR CONVERSION** to which a wholly owned subsidiary of the corporation is a party.

(e) If its issuance is authorized in accordance with this subtitle, stock with par value and securities convertible into stock with par value may be issued as full paid and nonassessable even if the price or value of the consideration received is less than the par value of the stock issued or the stock into which the securities are convertible.

(f) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section or § 2–204 or § 2–206 of this subtitle, a corporation may issue stock or other securities of the corporation pursuant to § 2–103(13) of this title without consideration of any kind.

2–210.

(a) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c) of this section, each stockholder is entitled to stock certificates [which] **THAT** represent and certify the shares of stock [he] **THE STOCKHOLDER** holds in the corporation.

(b) A stock certificate may not be issued until the stock represented by it is fully paid.

(c) (1) Unless the charter or bylaws provide otherwise, the board of directors of a corporation may authorize the issue of some or all of the shares of any or all of its classes or series without certificates.

(2) The authorization under paragraph (1) of this subsection does not affect shares already represented by certificates until they are surrendered to the corporation.

(3) For shares issued without certificates, on request by a stockholder, the corporation shall send the stockholder, without charge, a statement in writing or by electronic transmission of the information required on certificates by § 2-211 of this subtitle.

(D) A CORPORATION MAY NOT ISSUE A STOCK CERTIFICATE IN BEARER FORM.

2-214.

(a) A corporation may, but is not obliged to:

(1) Issue fractional shares of stock;

(2) Eliminate a fractional interest by rounding up to a full share of stock;

(3) Arrange for the disposition of a fractional interest by the person entitled to it;

(4) Pay cash for the fair value of a fractional share of stock determined as of the time when the person entitled to receive it is determined; or

(5) Issue scrip or other evidence of ownership which:

(i) Entitles its holder to exchange scrip or other evidence of ownership aggregating a full share for a certificate which represents the share; and

(ii) Unless otherwise provided, does not entitle its holder to exercise voting rights, receive dividends, or participate in the assets of the corporation in the event of liquidation.

(b) The board of directors may impose any reasonable condition on the issuance of the scrip or other evidence of ownership, including a condition that:

(1) It becomes void if not exchanged for a certificate representing a full share of stock before a specified date;

(2) The corporation may sell the stock for which the scrip or other evidence of ownership is exchangeable and distribute the proceeds to the holders; or

(3) The proceeds of a sale under paragraph (2) of this subsection are forfeited to the corporation if not claimed within a specified period not less than three years from the date the scrip or other evidence of ownership was originally issued.

(C) A CORPORATION MAY NOT ISSUE A CERTIFICATE REPRESENTING SCRIP IN BEARER FORM.

(D) FOR SCRIP ISSUED WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE, ON REQUEST BY A SCRIPHOLDER, THE CORPORATION SHALL DELIVER TO THE SCRIPHOLDER, WITHOUT CHARGE, A STATEMENT IN WRITING OR BY ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION OF THE INFORMATION REQUIRED TO BE ON A CERTIFICATE UNDER § 2-211 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

2-501.

(a) Each corporation shall hold an annual meeting of its stockholders to elect directors and transact any other business within its powers.

(b) (1) If the charter or bylaws of a corporation [registered under] **THAT IS AN INVESTMENT COMPANY AS DEFINED IN** the Investment Company Act of 1940 so provides, the corporation is not required to hold an annual meeting in any year in which the election of directors is not required to be acted upon under the Investment Company Act of 1940.

(2) If a corporation is required under paragraph (1) of this subsection to hold a meeting of stockholders to elect directors, the meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting of stockholders for that year.

2-503.

(a) Unless the charter provides otherwise, meetings of stockholders shall be held as is:

(1) Provided in the charter or bylaws; or

(2) Set by the board of directors under the provisions of the charter or bylaws.

(c) If authorized by the board of directors and subject to any guidelines and procedures that the board adopts, stockholders and proxy holders not physically present at the meeting of the stockholders, may, by remote communication:

(1) Participate in the meeting of the stockholders; and

(2) Be considered present in person and may vote at the meeting of the stockholders, whether the meeting is held at a designated place or **PARTIALLY OR** solely by remote communication, if:

(i) The corporation implements reasonable measures to verify that each person considered present and authorized to vote at the meeting by remote communication is a stockholder or proxy holder;

(ii) The corporation implements reasonable measures to provide the stockholders and proxy holders a reasonable opportunity to participate in the meeting and to vote on matters submitted to the stockholders, including an opportunity to read or hear the proceedings of the meeting substantially concurrently with the proceedings; and

(iii) In the event any stockholder or proxy holder votes or takes other action at the meeting by remote communication, a record of the vote or other action is maintained by the corporation.

4-601.

(A) [A] SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION, A consolidation, merger, share exchange, [or] transfer of assets, **OR CONVERSION** of a close corporation shall be made in accordance with the provisions of Title 3 of this article.

(B) [However, approval] APPROVAL of a proposed consolidation or merger, a transfer of [its] assets, **A CONVERSION**, or an acquisition of [its] stock in a share exchange requires the affirmative vote of every stockholder of the **CLOSE** corporation.

4A-402.

(a) Except for the requirement set forth in § 4A-404 of this subtitle that certain consents be in writing, members may enter into an operating agreement not inconsistent with the articles of organization to regulate or establish any aspect of the affairs of the limited liability company, the conduct of its business, or the relations of its members, including provisions establishing:

(5) (i) The right to have and a procedure for having a member's membership interest evidenced by a certificate issued by the limited liability company, which may **NOT** be issued in bearer form [only if specifically allowed by the operating agreement];

(ii) The procedure for assignment, pledge, or transfer of any membership interest represented by the certificate; and

(iii) Any other provisions dealing with the certificate;

(8) Procedures relating to:

(viii) Any other matter with respect to the exercise of voting rights by members; or

(9) That a membership interest, an economic interest, or a noneconomic interest may or shall be transferred or assigned in whole or in part to one or more persons, including on the occurrence of any of the events described in § 4A–606 of this title, regardless of whether the persons to whom the interest is transferred or assigned are members.

5–202.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, the charter or bylaws of a nonstock corporation may:

(1) Divide the directors or members of the corporation into classes;

(2) Prescribe the tenure and conditions of service of its directors, but no class of directors may be elected to serve for a period shorter than the interval between annual meetings unless:

(i) All or a class of directors must be members; and

(ii) Qualifications for membership have the effect of shortening their tenure of service;

(3) **PROVIDE THAT AN INDIVIDUAL MAY SERVE AS A DIRECTOR BY REASON OF SERVING IN A SPECIFIED OFFICE OR POSITION WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE CORPORATION AND PRESCRIBE THAT THE INDIVIDUAL SHALL SERVE AS A DIRECTOR DURING THE INDIVIDUAL’S SERVICE IN THE SPECIFIED OFFICE OR POSITION;**

(4) Prescribe the rights, privileges, and qualifications of its members;

[(4)] (5) Prescribe the manner of giving notice of any meeting of its members;

[(5)] (6) Provide for the number or proportion of voting members whose presence in person or by proxy constitutes a quorum at any meeting of its members;

[(6)] (7) Provide that any action may be taken or authorized by any number or proportion of the votes of all its members or all its directors entitled to vote;

[(7)] (8) Deny or limit the right of its members to vote by proxy;

[(8)] (9) Provide for the right of members to vote by mail or by electronic transmission on a stated proposal or for the election of directors or any officers who are elected by members;

[(9)] (10) Regulate the management of the business and affairs of the corporation; and

[(10)] (11) Regulate the exercise or allocation of voting power between or among the directors and members.

8-502.

(a) A real estate investment trust may terminate its existence by voluntary dissolution[. The Department shall be notified of the effective date of the dissolution.] **IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.**

(b) [A real estate investment trust may curtail or cease its trust activities by partially or completely distributing its assets.]

(1) IN ORDER TO TERMINATE ITS EXISTENCE, A REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST MUST FILE A NOTICE OF TERMINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT THAT INCLUDES:

(i) THE NAME OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST;

(ii) 1. A STATEMENT THAT THE TERMINATION OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST BY VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION WAS APPROVED IN THE MANNER AND BY THE VOTE REQUIRED BY LAW AND BY THE DECLARATION OF TRUST OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST; AND

2. A STATEMENT DETAILING THE MANNER OF APPROVAL;

(iii) ALL OTHER PROVISIONS THE BOARD OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST CONSIDERS NECESSARY TO DISSOLVE AND TERMINATE THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST; AND

(iv) A STATEMENT THAT THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST IS DISSOLVED AND TERMINATED.

(2) THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION SHALL BE EXECUTED BY:

(i) THE CHAIRMAN OR VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES;

(ii) THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER;

(III) THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER;

(IV) THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER;

(V) THE PRESIDENT OR A VICE PRESIDENT; OR

(VI) IF AUTHORIZED BY THE BYLAWS OR A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, ANY OTHER OFFICER OR AGENT OF THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST.

(c) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST IS DISSOLVED AND TERMINATED ON THE LATER OF:

(I) THE TIME THAT THE DEPARTMENT ACCEPTS THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION FOR RECORD; OR

(II) THE TIME ESTABLISHED BY THE NOTICE OF TERMINATION, NOT TO EXCEED 30 DAYS AFTER THE NOTICE IS ACCEPTED FOR RECORD.

(2) THE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUST CONTINUES TO EXIST FOR THE PURPOSE OF:

(I) PAYING, SATISFYING, AND DISCHARGING ANY EXISTING DEBTS OR OBLIGATIONS;

(II) COLLECTING AND DISTRIBUTING ASSETS; AND

(III) TAKING ALL OTHER ACTIONS REQUIRED TO LIQUIDATE AND WIND UP ITS BUSINESS AND AFFAIRS.

[(c)] (D) (1) The Attorney General may institute proceedings to dissolve a real estate investment trust **[which] THAT** has abused, misused, or failed to use its powers.

(2) The proceedings shall be brought in the manner and on the grounds provided in Title 3, Subtitle 5 of this article with respect to dissolution of a corporation for misuse of its franchise.

[(2)] (3) The venue of an action under this subsection is in a county where an officer or resident agent of the real estate investment trust is located.

12-307.

(A) NOTWITHSTANDING § 3-709 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE PROVISIONS OF TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 7 OF THIS ARTICLE APPLY TO A STATUTORY TRUST FORMED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2023, THAT IS A CLOSED-END INVESTMENT COMPANY AS DEFINED IN THE INVESTMENT COMPANY ACT OF 1940.

(B) NOTWITHSTANDING § 3-709 OF THIS ARTICLE, THE GOVERNING INSTRUMENT OF A STATUTORY TRUST FORMED BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2023, THAT IS A CLOSED-END INVESTMENT COMPANY AS DEFINED IN THE INVESTMENT COMPANY ACT OF 1940 MAY PROVIDE THAT TITLE 3, SUBTITLE 7 OF THIS ARTICLE APPLIES TO THE STATUTORY TRUST.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2023.

Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2023.