



January 21, 2022

Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary  
House Ways and Means Committee  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support of HB 93

Ms. Atterbeary,

At the meeting of the River Hill Community Association (RHCA) Board of Directors on January 18, 2022, the Board voted by unanimous consent to support House Bill 93, *Candidates for Offices of Municipalities and Common Ownership Communities - Reports of Donations and Disbursements*. The Board of Directors appreciates the flexibility this legislation would allow in the design of a campaign finance system, either at the local level or in conjunction with existing state election statutes. This legislation represents an important first step in making large Common Ownership Community elections more transparent to its members.

During the April 2021 Columbia Association election cycle, outside, third-party interests spent a significant amount of money in an attempt to influence the election to the Columbia Association Board of Directors, which is comprised of a CA Representative from each of the ten villages. This was highly unusual as previous elections had almost no campaign spending.

The RHCA Board of Directors would like the House Ways and Means Committee to add text to further strengthen the legislation as follows: "When a candidate raises monetary or in-kind contributions in excess of a one-thousand-dollar threshold, the candidate will be required to follow the state campaign finance system." The state system imposes stricter requirements on candidates including the establishment of a campaign committee and appointment of a separate treasurer, to ensure the integrity of highly funded campaigns. Ensuring transparency in the election of volunteer members of the Columbia Association Board of Directors and the ten Villages' (Community Associations) Boards of Directors should be the objective of everyone who believes in Jim Rouse's original vision for Columbia, "a garden for the growing of people" in which "individual citizens seek the truth and communicate it."

Sincerely,



Matthew Levine

River Hill Community Association  
Chair