



Oakland Mills Community Association
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January 22, 2023

TO: Members of the Maryland Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Oakland Mills Community Association
Jonathan Edelson, Chair, Board of Directors

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 0029

The Oakland Mills Community Association (OMCA) supports House Bill 2023-0029 “Residential Owners in Common Ownership Communities Bill of Rights.” OMCA proudly already meets or exceeds the potential rights outlined in this bill, where applicable. We respect the rights of our residents, as without them, we would not have a community association. Our governing documents make not only owners, but also renters as members of our association, and we feel this bill should set a floor, rather than a ceiling, for membership so we can continue to serve everyone who lives in Oakland Mills. We support codifying these rights across the State of Maryland.

However, as a Columbia, Maryland Village Association, OMCA has a unique relationship with the Columbia Association (CA). CA owns the four buildings we manage on its behalf – The Other Barn and three neighborhood centers. These facilities are larger than the typical clubhouses or community rooms in smaller communities and provide services and event space beyond the boundaries of Oakland Mills and Columbia. Due to this unique relationship with CA and the unique nature of these facilities, we believe special consideration should be given to provisions in the Bill of Rights pertaining to budget and fees for use of these facilities.

OMCA does not maintain a capital fund and does not make capital investments in the facilities it manages. CA is responsible for all capital investments on these facilities and its Open Space within Oakland Mills. OMCA does manage, on behalf of CA, the four facilities mentioned above. As part of this management, OMCA is responsible for non-capital maintenance items, janitorial services, event staffing, and professional services such as event coordination for weddings and other events held in the facilities. All of OMCA’s spending is accounted for in our annual operating budget, which is discussed and voted upon in open meeting.

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This unique arrangement, as well as the size of these facilities, should be considered before applying a strict formula to the cost incurred by residents versus nonresidents of OMCA or CA. Otherwise, the overhead and professional services costs invested by OMCA could make it difficult to charge no more than half what we would charge to nonresidents for long-term leases or large-scale events in our facilities. We could be forced to lose money on events for residents or set nonresident prices artificially high, thus pricing our facilities out of the market. For example, The Other Barn is currently a popular wedding venue throughout the Baltimore-Washington area, and a venue of its size could not be supported with such a substantial distinction between residents and nonresidents.

We hope the facilities situation can be studied further and revised to recognize the size of homeowners' associations as well as situation where the association managing the facility is not the owner of the facility.

Beyond that, we support a statewide baseline set of rights for residents of all common ownership and HOA communities.