

TO: ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
FROM: REGENCY PARK CONDOMINIUM

HB306 - OPPOSE with concerns.

Regency Park is a 60-home condominium in Baltimore County, Maryland. While we appreciate the leadership from Delegate Holmes on condominium issues, our Board reviewed HB306, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective.

HB306 (Establishment of Common Ownership Community Ombudsman Unit and related requirements): **OPPOSE with concerns.**

Like many communities, all our governing documents, including Declaration, By-Laws, Rules, and a Handbook, among other materials, are available on our management company's website and copies are provided to each new resident. Little would be accomplished by requiring those to be submitted to a public database. This is an unnecessary expense and chore to be incurred by the community. In particular, the inclusion of "rules", of which there are many and which are frequently amended, would be burdensome. More significantly, we oppose the concept of the local commissions that would hear or refer to mediation or arbitration disputes between the governing council of the community and homeowners, particularly considering the list of actions by a Board that could be subject to the dispute process. How would these commissions be funded? Would there be a fee involved? Who would serve on them, and what would their qualifications be?

The bill appears to provide a mechanism for homeowners who are merely unhappy with a decision of the Board to try to overturn or stall the action. If a Board takes an action that violates law or the condominium association's governing documents, there are existing legal remedies that can be sought. However, the way this bill is written it appears to allow a great deal of second guessing of necessary and lawful Board decisions. There are no cost and low-cost mediation services available in many areas, and these could be used if needed. Note too that serving on a Board is voluntary, taking considerable time with no compensation.

Perhaps the bill could be re-written so that there are local commissions established to which a governing body and a homeowner could mutually agree to submit a dispute rather than going to court, but the bill as written goes too far.

We have reviewed this legislation with other condo communities in Baltimore County and Baltimore City, and they share these concerns.

In its current form, we oppose this bill.

Thank you for your consideration, and we are available to work with you on this.
Regency Park Condominiums, Baltimore County, Maryland
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