

My name is Sylvia Bailey-Charles. I am a resident and owner of Burnt Mills Condominiums in Silver Spring, Maryland in the White Oak community. Burnt Mills consists of 108 Townhomes in a beautiful community that sits between Columbia Pike and Lockwood Drive on Oakleaf Drive. We function as condominiums because we share water, gas, and common areas. The community was established in 1968. In spite of its beauty, the community needs plenty of work to ensure its survival for another 50 years. I served on the board of directors for 10 years. I ended my service in November 2024.

I am concerned about the community and our ability to survive financially for the next 50 years. We've had management companies that on some occasions do not serve the interests of the entire community. There is an inability to push back on board members when they can see members are attempting to vote on items that may go against the bylaws or Maryland State laws. Being a member of the board has been a learning process for all owners. We all attended the training, but that does not make us experts at managing the community's finances and catching violations ranging from large owner delinquencies, to illegal structures, and more. We have owners whose home should be placed on Sheriff Sales right now, but board members are attempting to please owners who voted for them by not enforcing the rules. Good owners are paying for delinquent owners. We have many capital projects that need to be started. The newest board said they collected a signed petition from owners to override the original 2025 budget vote on by the previous board. The community and the newest board decided not to increase assessments. There has been no increase in many years. Since when do owners sign a petition to override a budget that is approved by a board? The management company allowed this move forward. The signed petition has never been shared with the greater community. I asked the management company for the petition, but it never materialized.

Over the last two months, I had to send multiple emails to the property management company to request a copy of the association's reserve account bank statement. I was told I'm no longer on the board and I can't have it. I explained to the manager that I am an owner. I am entitled to know what's in the account. After posting an unfavorable Google customer review, I received one statement. I requested statements for December, January and February with earned interest and any withdrawals. The financial reports, posted by the company, are never accurate. Owners have a right to know which board members have access to our reserve bank accounts. One member should never have sole access to the bank account. When I joined the board in 2014, we approximately \$20,000 in the bank account. We had to get a loan to purchase a water heater or boiler. As of today, we have 40 times that amount in our reserves because previous board members demanded bank statements and took control from a property manager which was left on autopilot to manage our finances. In the past, we had members who were trained accountants, program managers and licensed real estate professionals on the board to help. Most of our owners do not have these backgrounds but everyone can be trained on what to look for.

Property management companies should be licensed, regulated and made to take continuing education classes the same as real estate agents. They should be fined in the same manner as real estate agents who commit crimes or violations. Presently, our management company has access to our operating funds and possibly reserves, if they collaborate with an unethical board member. We could lose all of our money we've saved. Burnt Mills is not protected by the state of Maryland at present. Many of the owner are elders. They will not survive, if we have a major catastrophe in our community. Many owners do not know their rights. They believe the management company is the sole driver of the community. Most owners only show up to meetings when we tried to increase condo assessments, paint the community or install security cameras (which they hated).

Sorry to ramble. I wanted to send you my thoughts before today's hearing. Burnt Mills is a beautiful community with lots of potential for homeowners.

• Thank you for your time and attention.

Sylvia Bailey-Charles

Owner

Burn Mills Townhome Condominiums