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November 20, 2014

To: Montgomery County Council

Subject: Opposition to County Bill 45-14 (Required training for HOA officers)

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) represents over 35 homeowner and civic associations in the Olney Master Plan area. For over thirty years, GOCA has promoted the civic, cultural, and economic welfare of the Olney community.

At our November 11, 2014 meeting, GOCA overwhelmingly passed the following resolution in opposition to County Bill 45-14:

*Whereas GOCA members recognize and agree with the need for homeowners association officials to act in the best interest of their communities, Bill 45-14's presumptive premise, i.e. that current officials of common ownership communities (hereafter homeowner associations for short) are inadequately trained, has not been demonstrated; and*

*Whereas Bill 45-14's requirement for mandatory training will serve as a disincentive for individuals to volunteer for their homeowner associations; and*

*Whereas it is GOCA's experience that residents who volunteer for association positions typically have broad professional, business, and/or managerial skills, the scope and responsibility of which far surpass the minimal and superficial educational standards proposed in Bill 45-14; and*

*Whereas Bill 45-14 is defective as written in several procedural respects, such as creating situations where boards will fail to have quorums for decision making if officials are summarily dismissed if they reach the 90-day mandatory training point without receiving training; and*

*Whereas current homeowner association governing documents provide for communities to address complaints with officials via their own HOA guidelines and elective process, and that further remedies are available via the Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC), thus rendering Bill 45-14 superfluous in almost all respects;*

***Now therefore be it resolved that the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) opposes Bill 45-14.***

GOCA members observe that the County's Office of Common Ownership Communities already offers online videos to train both officers and homeowners in common ownership communities on laws, roles, responsibilities, and enforcement procedures affecting the respective parties. If an officer feels the need for support in his role, there are plenty of resources available today.

GOCA members also feel that placing additional education and certification requirements on volunteer positions will only increase the likelihood that prospective community

leaders will be discouraged from volunteering. GOCA members also have concerns that failure to meet the certification standards proposed in the bill could result in an inability to govern due to lack of availability of incumbent officers.

GOCA believes education and training are positive endeavors and encourages the County to take action to further publicize the current availability of existing resources for those common ownership community leaders who feel they need additional support in their roles.

Sincerely,

John Webster  
President