

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE REPORT

2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-059-2024
Draft No.:	2
Committee:	PLANNING, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Date:	7/15/2024
Action:	FAVORABLE (A)

REPORT: Committee Vote: Favorable, as amended, 5-0 (In favor: Chair Dernoga, Vice Chair Ivey, Council Members Harrison, Hawkins, and Olson)

The Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee convened on July 15, 2024, to consider CB-059-2024. The PHED Committee Director summarized the purpose of the legislation and informed the Committee of written comments received on referral. As presented on July 2, 2024, Draft-1 of the bill is for the purpose of requiring certain application disclosures for certain single-family rental facility or multifamily rental facility housing, requiring that certain information be provided including, but not limited, to the name and the physical address of the owner of a corporate body and the name and physical address of their agent and the name and physical address of the owner's mortgage holder; requiring that certain disclosure.

Council Member Watson, the bill sponsor, explained that the legislation was drafted based on security, health, and safety concerns at the Charlestown North Apartments in Greenbelt, Maryland, in September 2023. Council Member Watson worked with the City of Greenbelt on the proposed legislation and contacted the Maryland Attorney General's Office to review the dire situation and assist with locating the property owners to hold them accountable for their neglect. Citizens were suffering under unsafe conditions.

The proposed legislation provides much-needed information; it provides citizens with access to information on the owners of a corporate body authorized and registered agents for single-family rental or multifamily rental housing facilities as part of the license application made available on an online searchable public database of all licensed single-family and multifamily rental facility housing in the County maintained by the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement. In addition, the legislation requires that all required disclosure information regarding mortgage holders and insurance companies be made available by the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE) to the public in a timely manner upon request. The legislation will also help keep the owners accountable for the housing facilities they maintain.

CB-052-2024 (DR-2) Report

Ms. Sakinda Skinner, County Council Liaison to the County Executive's Office, thanked the bill sponsor for the legislation and stated that the Administration supports the legislation with a few friendly amendments.

Ms. Lori Parris, Senior Advisor to the Director of DPIE, explained that the agency already requires the physical address and owner information in the single-family and multifamily rental license applications. The Council Committee members discussed whether they wanted to change the authorized agent to a registered agent.

Council Member Dernoga explained that there is a difference between a “registered agent” and an “authorized agent.” After a brief discussion, all parties agreed that the legislation should include “authorized” and “registered” agents.

Council Member Harrison asked what happens when a mortgage holder changes and how that information is tracked. Ms. Parris responded by explaining that DPIE could add a requirement to the license application stating there is a duty to amend the license within 30 to 45 days when a mortgage holder changes.

The Division on Budget and Policy’s policy analysis outlined that this bill will not have a significant direct or indirect fiscal impact. Minor additional administrative work may be required by DPIE staff to adjust the existing application to include the newly required information. The enactment of CB-059-2024 will provide further transparency for single-family and multifamily housing residents where information about the property owner has been previously unknown. The legislation may help keep property owners accountable for issues of property neglect.

Ms. Kathy Canning, Legislative Attorney, discussed Council Members Watson and Olson’s amendments to the proposed bill. The amendments are as follows:

Council Member Watson’s amendments

On page 2, in line 3, strike “insure” and insert “ensure.”

On page 2, strike beginning with the first “the” in line 5 down through the first “and” in line 6.

On page 2, line 6, strike “their” and substitute “an owner’s authorized.”

Council Member Olson’s amendments

On page 1, in line 6, after “agent” insert “on an online searchable public database of all licensed single-family rental facility and multifamily rental facility housing in the County maintained by the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement.”.

On page 1, in line 7, after “holder,” insert: “proof of insurance and the name and physical address of the insurance company.”

On page 2, in line 6, strike the comma. On page 2, in line 6, after “agent” insert “on an online searchable public database of all licensed single-family rental facility and multifamily rental facility housing in the County maintained by the Department of Permitting, Inspections and Enforcement”.

CB-052-2024 (DR-2) Report

On page 2, in line 7, after “holder” insert: “and proof of insurance and the name and physical address of the insurance company.”

On page 2, line 7, strike “Information required in this Section shall be.”

Council Member Dernoga’s amendment

On page 2, in line 6, strike “their” and in the same line, before “agent” insert “authorized”; and on page 2, in line 6, after “agent” insert “and resident agent.”

Mr. Ryan Washington, with the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan (AOBA), spoke in support of the legislation and its proposed amendments.

Mr. Josue Salmeron, the City Manager for the City of Greenbelt, strongly supported the legislation. Mr. Salmeron explained that the property owners at the Charlestown North Apartments in Greenbelt have failed the residents by not paying utility and water bills, almost causing 200 residents not to have water and electricity. He thanked Council Member Watson for proposing the legislation to require property owners to fulfill their responsibilities and protect residents' quality of life.

On motion of Vice Chair Ivey, seconded by Council Member Olson, the PHED voted 5-0 favorably on CB-059-2024 as amended.