



# Oakland Mills Community Association 2020 Village Elections Candidate Statements



## Board of Directors Candidates and Columbia Council Rep. Candidates (listed below Board listing)

### BOARD CANDIDATES

*There are **eight (8)** candidates running for the **seven (7)** seats on Oakland Mills Community Association 2020-2021 Board of Directors. Names were randomly selected and this is the order the names as they appear on the ballot.*

#### **Bill McCormack Jr.**

##### **Experience**

Village Board – 10 years

Revitalization, Housing, Master Plan, Open Space Committees, Community Plan Task Force – 13 years

##### **Accomplishments**

- Appointed by County Executive as Co-Chair of the Housing Opportunities Master Plan Task Force to provide inclusiveness and equity in creating and preserving housing opportunities for residents of all incomes.
- Continued advocating with county and state officials to resolve inequity issue of town home development driveway ownership – some are owned by homeowners' association some are owned by county.
- Co-ordinated with county traffic engineers on resolving design issues to increase safety at the Stevens Forest Road – Farewell Road Roundabout.
- Consulted with CA on placement of a pollinator garden near the Stevens Forest Pool.
- Submitted evaluation criteria to CA for use in the pilot tot lot study.

##### **Priorities/Objectives**

- Advocate for creation of “Public Nuisance” law to deal with bad landlords.
- Advocate for consultant led design of CA open space for next 50 years.

#### **Paul Verchinski**

I like to see results! Currently, I have spent the last 7 years as the OMVB representative to the CA Senior Advisory Committee. I am running for my 7th year on the OMVB. For the past 3 years, have represented District 13 on the DC Metroplex BWI Roundtable. As many of you know, airplane noise has been a constant issue for OM since 2016 due to reorientation of flight paths. A new FAA Procedure should provide some relief. I was appointed to represent the public by Governor Hogan to the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Council. Our goal is to get 300,000 electric vehicles (EV) in Maryland. In 2018, I was instrumental in getting Howard County legislation (CB76) to require EV chargers in all new residential construction. Now there are 40 EV chargers located at the Merriweather garage. Have worked with CA in getting an EV charger located at the Other Barn.

#### **Rebecca Bryant**

This past year on the board was my first and I learned a lot. Going forward, I want to continue advocating for alternative transportation, the environment, and those in our community that most need a voice. **(continued on next page)**

**(Bryant, cont.)**

I advocated for many in our neighborhood when school redistricting planned to tear their immediate community apart. And I'll continue to work towards minimizing the hurt that the current plan threatens towards our most vulnerable students.

I'm currently working with CA and the open space committee, to improve upon bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

I'm currently working on encouraging landscaping practices that benefit native plants and curtail skyrocketing costs associated with our streams.

I love working with the OM Board, hearing different opinions, and discussing calmly and logically to understand issues from all sides. And if you'll have me, I would love to continue growing in this role, serving our community.

**Larry Pretlow II**

Since June 2018, I have served on the OMCA Board of Directors. I am the former chair of the outreach committee which I proposed to be named "Community Together". I have worked tirelessly with local property managers and community leaders to bring the community to the doors of many residents who struggle with attending events or being as engaged as others. I have personally funded "OM Fun Day at The Verona" to ensure all residents experience the greatness of Oakland Mills and that every resident values that "We Value Connections." I have certainly enjoyed working towards the continuity of that hallmark. I believe community service builds character and that it is imperative to continue the great impact of the ongoing civic work in our community. Thank you for the opportunity to serve two terms and I hope that I have earned your vote for another term.

**Jonathan Edelson**

I'm honored to serve as the Chairperson of the Oakland Mills Board and to advocate for our community. We must continue to push for what's best for the Oakland Mills community, such as the long-awaited rebuild of Talbott Springs Elementary school and continued investment in our Village Center and Neighborhood Centers. I'm proud to have been part of a board for six years that is recognized as the most active in Columbia for community advocacy across a range of issues. I will continue to work for Oakland Mills to make this the best community it can be and to show others what a gem of a Village we have in OM. I have experience working with officials at many levels, including CA, Howard County government, state government, and the school system. This is our hOMe; I am a strong voice for all it has to offer and can achieve!

**Bageshwar Verma**

In 2019 you re-elected me to the OMCA Board of Directors. I'm seeking your vote this year as well to continue working for you and the community.

**Some accomplishments:**

- Worked toward the completion of the roundabout at the intersection of Farewell and Stevens Forest - that helped our neighbors achieve greater road safety and prevent accidents. Provided help to our neighbors in overcoming potential hazards while walking by curbs/pavement.
- Working on youth outreach in our community, successfully reached out to the Oakland Mills High School on a joint project aimed at creating greater awareness among the youth toward the dangers of climate change.

**WHO I AM:** I've worked for over 40 years in global and national media as journalist, broadcaster, writer, and analyst, including the BBC World Service in London, UK, and the US government's US Agency for Global Media in Washington, DC.

**Ian Kennedy**

I am running to serve on the Oakland Mills Village Board because I want to give back to the community that has given me so much. I have lived here for the last 14 years and I cannot think of a better place to be raising my children—amidst the beautiful open space and **(continued on next page)**

**(Kennedy, cont.)**

bountiful social opportunities. Our village association is vital to the success of our neighborhoods, and I have extensive experience in public service, non-profit management, and community advocacy that I would bring to the board.

We need selfless, collaborative leadership on our village board, and that is what I would offer. Oakland Mills is stronger when we work together, and if elected, I will work diligently to help us overcome our challenges and maximize our village's potential by working to preserve and enhance that which makes this such a special place to live.

**Lynn-Steven Engelke**

Like my fellow candidates, I have dreams for Oakland Mills. As a four-term Board member and three-term Architecture Chair, I've helped advance many concrete improvements, and I hope to complete many others in the future. Going forward, however, my absolute priority is to promote a return to the core Board standards that have made me proud to serve our community. Inclusiveness, Transparency, Respect, and Responsiveness. These are more than just words. Together, they define our responsibility to our residents, and without them we cannot be truly effective. No one should ever again feel shut down or shut out -- from information, during discussions, or in decisions that impact everyone. If elected, I will adhere to these standards as I continue to collaborate with the entire Oakland Mills community to assist residents, resolve issues, and work for on-going positive change and pride in our Village.

**COLUMBIA COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE CANDIDATE**

*There are two candidates for the one seat as Oakland Mills Representative on Columbia Council.*

**Lena Kennedy**

I have lived in Columbia for nearly 30 years, the last 14 in Oakland Mills. I love this community and have been a staunch advocate for improving our neighborhoods, pools, playgrounds, open space, and schools in many settings.

But I have watched with frustration as our village's needs have been neglected and progress has stalled on important matters related to our community's future, like our village center. Meanwhile, other community assets that are well-liked—such as neighborhood centers and tot lots—have faced threats of closure. Oakland Mills and Columbia deserve better.

If elected, I will work to ensure the Columbia Association focuses its energy and resources on enhancing the indispensable experiences that make life in Columbia so great. I will also work to expand CA's role as a force for broader social good in our community, an area where it has been absent for too long. We deserve better.

**Virginia (Ginny) Thomas**

As your representative to the County Council, MD General Assembly, and OMVB, I always fought for the interests of Oakland Mills. I seek your vote to continue representing you on the CA Board so I can accomplish these goals:

- Begin a process whereby Columbia residents regain control of the 51 acres of land around Symphony Woods. This area is as vital to Columbia as Central Park is to New York. Residents should have the final say as to how it is used.
- Make sure Columbia residents have a key role in the county's Comprehensive General Plan for New Town, which may lead to zoning changes within Columbia.
- Vote against increases in your CA assessment, as I did 3 times this year.
- Implement creative transportation solutions, like a circulator bus. Implement pro-environment practices identified by CA's Climate Change and Sustainability Committee.
- Support CA's before-and after-school programs and camps.