



Oakland Mills Community Association
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December 6, 2022

Dr. Opel Jones, Councilmember District 2
Mr. Michael Harris, Special Assistant to Dr. Jones
Ms. Ashley Alston, Administrative Aide to Dr. Jones

Dear Dr. Jones, Mr. Harris, and Ms. Alston,

The Oakland Mills Village Board supports any assistance the county can provide to HOA communities that are unable to raise funds to repair or replace interior, private roads. Just as there are programs to help homeowners who may be struggling with the upkeep on aging infrastructure, we believe there should be options for private communities facing infrastructure challenges to ensure safety and quality of life for all Howard County residents.

The Oakland Mills Village Board appreciated the presentation by Mr. Kris Jagarapu, DPW Chief, Bureau of Highways, at our August 9th Board meeting concerning the HOA internal roadway issue. Section 18.250-18.259 of the County Code is the only existing way the county would take over ownership of a private HOA internal roadway. In a pre-COVID meeting on this subject a county staff member stated that in the previous 15 years only one HOA had inquired about the takeover process but did not follow through. This is an indication that the process may be too stringent, and other options are needed to assist HOAs short of a full county takeover with all the requirements to achieve county public roadway standards.

We believe the county has the authority to be creative much like the use of tax increment financing in the development of downtown Columbia. Other options are possible such as grants or low-interest loans payable over the expected useful life of a repaved or replaced roadway. If the county wants to determine the specific costs involved, Holly Court HOA in Oakland Mills has volunteered to serve as a test case.

It is now time for Howard County government to create a solution that ensures aging HOA communities unable to raise the funds to maintain or replace their infrastructure are not left behind. A positive step in that direction is to initiate a pilot program that would test the concept of providing grants, low-interest loans, or some other funding vehicle to HOAs for repairing their internal roads. Our Board is an advocate for such a program and requests a meeting with the County in early January 2023 to explore it further.

Sincerely,

Jonathan L. Edelson, Chair
Oakland Mills Board of Directors