



CCOC COMMUNICATOR

A Changing of the Guard at CCOC: Rand Fishbein, Eugenia Mays Take Charge

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Dr. Rand Fishbein (below left) and Eugenia Mays were elected Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively, of the CCOC at its January, 2015, meeting. They replace Elizabeth Molloy and Arthur Dubin (right), whose terms of office with the CCOC expired. (Continued on page 10)



LEGGETT SIGNS BOARD MEMBER TRAINING LAW

On February 11, 2015, County Executive Ike Leggett signed Bill 45-14. The new law—the first of its kind in the country—requires all directors of the County’s common ownership communities to take basic training in their duties from the CCOC. The law goes into effect on January 1, 2016, and applies to all directors elected or re-elected after that date. (continued on page 5)

Leggett Addresses Association Board Members, Promises More County Support

By Adam Landsman

County Executive Ike Leggett (far right) was the keynote speaker at ABARIS Realty’s Second Annual Board Member Education Day last October, 2014.

Speaking to the approximately 100 directors, Leggett praised them for their voluntary services to their communities and to the County generally. He reminded them that they are the guardians of the County’s most valuable resource--its residential real estate—and promised to support and expand the County’s efforts to educate association members and to assist them in their work. (Continued on page 2)



Leggett, Community Experts, Address Education Seminar

(continued from page 1)

The event also featured presentations by experts on community association law, accounting, engineering, insurance, property management, recent trends and changes in the law, followed by a lengthy question-and answer session that was an excellent opportunity for directors to get feedback from the experts on specific problems. This year, the speakers (from right to left in the photo on page one), in addition to Mr. Leggett, included Jason Fisher, Esq. (Attorney, Lerch Early & Brewer), Evan M Myers, Esq., (Attorney, Myers Rodbell & Rosenbaum), Harold Mohn, Jr. (CPA, Mohn & Allen, PC), John Manougian (President, Manougian Insurance), Chris Carlson (Chief Engineer, Engineering and Technical Consultants), and Peter Drymalski (CCOC staff).

The idea for the annual seminars originated with Abaris president Steven Landsman, who likes to say that managing an association is much like paddling a canoe—the crew must work together or the canoe will go in circles, or nowhere at all. An educated and well-informed board is a property manager's best partner in building and leading a successful community.

The seminars have other benefits as well. Listening to other board members describe their problems and concerns helps to create an overall context and a sense of community, of shared interests. And the opportunity to meet and to hear from experts in the field shows them that they are not alone, that there is a vast body of information and assistance out there that they can turn to when they need it. The feedback we receive from clients on the seminar is highly favorable. Our board members felt more confidence in their ability to manage their associations and to be able to find the assistance they needed to carry out their duties. And this service helps us build closer relationships with our clients.

The County's interest in mandatory education of board members emphasizes the importance of the work that volunteer directors perform, and the need for all experts to contribute to assisting board members in their duties. Our seminar shows just one way in which professional property managers can help. We encourage all managers to create their own ways of offering this extra resource for their clients.

(Adam Landsman, CMCA, AMS, is a professional property manager at Abaris Realty in Rockville, Maryland.)

County Council Agency Reviews CCOC, Recommends Major Upgrades in Funding, Staffing

The CCOC is under-funded and under-staffed, according to a recently released study performed by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO), and requires greater support from the County if it is to properly carry out its mandated duties. The report is based on an extensive review of the CCOC's activities and surveys of its users. The OLO, an agency of the Montgomery County Council, was asked by several council members to conduct the study and to make recommendations for its operations.

OLO found that 62% of those surveyed were satisfied with CCOC's educational classes and materials, especially this newsletter (90% satisfaction). An average of 66% found the complaint filing process easy, and 60% were satisfied with the hearing process. 76% of all CCOC complaints were resolved without hearings—either through mediation or directly by the parties—and only 12% had to be resolved by formal hearings. Lawyers took part in only 42% of all CCOC cases.

On the other hand, in spite of a County law requiring associations to notify their members of the CCOC, more than 50% of members reported that they did not learn of the CCOC from their associations; 40% felt that the hearing process was not fair or took too long. The average case lasted 169 days (5 1/2 months); cases resolved by hearings lasted an average of 300 days (10 months).

OLO also noted that the CCOC has only one full-time staff member to handle all the requests for information and advice (1,261 during a recent 18-month period), to manage its cases. (93 in 2014) and to serve the CCOC in its other functions.

OLO concluded that the CCOC needed additional staff to speed up the dispute resolution process, to computerize its operations, and to assist the CCOC in its other duties. The new law on mandatory training will also require additional staff to help implement the training and to monitor compliance with the law. The County Council will hold a public hearing on the report in the near future. The complete 43-page report (Number 2015-8) is online at [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2015_Reports/OLO Report 2015-8 Commission on Common Ownership Communities.pdf](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2015_Reports/OLO%20Report%202015-8%20Commission%20on%20Common%20Ownership%20Communities.pdf)

CCOC STUDIES RESERVES, QUORUMS

By Aimee Winegar

In mid-2014, the CCOC asked association leaders to answer a survey on board leadership, reserve planning, and the impact of quorum requirements. We received 277 responses, which is more than 25% of all the associations that register with the County.

The majority of responses (171) were from homeowner associations, 99 were from condominiums, and 5 were from cooperatives. 9 of the associations exceeded 500 units, and the smallest reported 5 members (of whom 3 had to serve on the board!). The 277 communities contained a total of 18, 566 homes.

41% had five board members, 11% had three, and 14% had 7 members. Out of a total of 1262 directorships, 88 (7%) were vacant.

12% of all associations (with 5% of all homes) reported that they had no capital reserve fund. This is actually good news because it means that 88% of the associations with 95% of all homes did have some sort of capital reserve fund. 157 associations (79% of all homes) have had reserve studies performed. Sadly, 6% of the associations (with 2% of the homes) reported no reserve studies and have had to impose special assessments as a result.

Almost half (44%) update their reserve studies every 5 years or more; 10% perform reserve studies more often than that.

40% stated that their reserve contributions reflected "full funding," 23% said their reserves were "baseline funded." Of those with full or baseline funding, only 6 (2%) reported that

they had to have a special assessment within the last 5 years. The clear lesson here is that reserve studies, followed by reserve planning, significantly reduces the likelihood that the association will have to impose a special assessment.

Another lesson to be learned from these results is that the smaller associations are less likely to be conducting reserve studies and properly planning for their future financial needs.

We also addressed the effect of the Maryland Condominium Act requirement that a two-thirds majority is required to amend condominium bylaws. This law affects the ability of

condominium associations to regulate rentals and to impose limitations on the number of rental units, which in turn affects their ability to meet FHA mortgage lending guidelines (the FHA won't back mortgages in condominiums if the percentage of rental unit is more than 50%).

The vast majority of those responding reported that they needed a quorum of at least 66 /23rds in order to vote on amending their bylaws, and two reported that they needed a quorum of 95% or higher!

The affected associations reported that the high quorum requirements adversely affected their ability to change architectural requirements, to adopt budgets and assessments, and to fund improvements in the common areas. Most claimed that they could have made the changes if the quorum were reduced to a simple majority (51%).



When asked if the law should be changed, 41% said they would support legislation reducing the quorum requirement to 50%; 25% favored no change; and 9% favored a proposal that would set the quorum at 75% of all votes cast at a meeting that was attended by at least 50% of the total vote of all members.

The CCOC will be using these results in its future planning. One example of how such information can be used pertains to the results of the survey on reserves. If indeed the smaller associations are less likely to be engaged in sound reserve planning, it raises the questions not only of how the government can reach out to assist these communities, but also why the government persists in allowing developers to create small communities that can lack the resources to run themselves effectively.

The CCOC plans to conduct annual surveys as part of the annual registration renewal requirement in order to gain more insight into the needs of our community associations and the contributions they make to the fiscal health of Montgomery County. We appreciate the time and effort of those who answer our surveys. With the information we gather, the CCOC can do a better job of being an effective and knowledgeable advocate.

(Aimee Winegar, CMCA, LSM, PCAM, is a professional manager and a member of the CCOC.)



“Green” Landscaping—With Goats!

By Aimee Winegar, CMCA, LSM, PCAM

Throughout Montgomery County, communities struggle with invasive weeds. Forested buffers, stream valleys and storm-water management ponds all suffer from nasty species such as Mile-a-Minute weed, poison ivy, primrose Americana, and other spreading and often thorny plants. Many of these cannot be removed by hand, as they spread by fragmentation—which means that if you try to pull them out, they will, like Hydra, sprout up in greater numbers than before. Herbicides can reduce them but some are resistant to even the strongest chemicals, and many community members oppose the use of strong weed killers in areas where children and pets walk and play.

But there is another alternative: **goats**.

My own experience with the use of goats as weedkillers occurred in 2011 at the Villages of Urbana, a large community association in Frederick County. The goal was to reduce invasive weed growth, particularly of species that spread through fragmentation, without introducing a large volume of chemicals into the environment. Through interviews with local goatherds we learned that scientific studies have shown that up to 90% of weed seeds that survive chemical applications die during digestion in a goat's stomach. Desirable plants, which could be killed or injured by herbicides, can be protected from goats by wrapping the plants in chicken wire. So goats, it seemed, were an option worth exploring.

The first step in using goats as landscapers is to identify the area in need of their attention. The area should be relatively compact so that the goatherd can fence it off in order to restrain and protect the animals. Typically, such fences have two layers—an inner belt to keep the goats contained and an outer, sometimes electrified, belt to keep “goatnappers” away. Dense forests and stream valleys can create difficulties for fencing. The goatherd will advise you in choosing the perimeter of the area to be eaten. He will also walk the area with you ahead of time to identify and protect with wire any desirable plants that the goats should not eat, as well as to remove the few plants that are poisonous even to goats.

The goats arrive at the site in large vans resembling horse trailers. Most of the goats are small—perhaps 35 to 40 pounds each—about the size of a sheepdog. I once asked how the goatherds managed to get the animals into the trailers and I was told, “We shoot them.” For a moment, I had a vision of a circus cannon firing goats instead of acrobats, until I realized he had actually said, “We *chute* them.” He meant they were herded into a long chute that led to the trailer, and with the assistance of a herd dog, the process was fairly quick.

Goat herders charge by the herd (which makes sense). A herd consists of between 20 and 35 goats. Since goats lose their appetites in very hot weather (who knew?), scheduling them for cool weather works best if you have a lot of weeds for them to devour. It's possible to schedule two or more herds at the same time, which will raise the fees but complete the project faster. If the goats cannot finish the meal overnight, you have to hire security for them, because the goatherds don't stay with the animals at night. Remember that when planning your budget for the job. My staff and I have had to chase down the more adventurous animals who discovered ways to escape the enclosures. I learned the hard way that goats can be very fast and very determined!



After the goats have feasted, the area will look rather bare, but there may still be thick stems and stalks. These must be cut down with machetes or weed whackers to prevent regrowth. This is an additional cost and can be performed by the goatherd or by the community's landscaper. Once the stalks have been removed, the addition of a thick layer of mulch or wood chips will help to prevent the weeds from returning. (My communities often use the wood chips from their own pruned or cut-down trees as mulch.)

The presence of goats fascinates the community's children and their parents, but not only them. During the Urbana project, one of our other contractors, a gentleman from eastern Europe, learned we were about to use goats and he came to me offering to help with them. “You will have goats? I love goats! In my country, they are a great delicacy!” Needless to say, I had to

politely decline his “help.”

You're probably wondering what it costs to hire goats. I found that it compares favorably to the cost of hiring a landscaping crew to clear the same area as thoroughly. Plus, the goats are more fun to watch, and you might get a good deal on the goat-herd's *fromage de chevre*!

Basic Training for All Directors Begins in 2016

(Continued from page 1)

The law, proposed by Council Chairman George Leventhal, exempts directors whose terms start before January 1, 2016; however, all directors elected, or reelected, after that date must take the training within 90 days of their election or re-election. All associations must report annually which directors have taken, or have not taken, the training.

The CCOC will provide the education at no charge through an online class, which will take between two and three hours to complete, and it is working closely with the University of Maryland's Institute for Governmental Service and Research to create the online class. (The Institute has already created a similar class on Open Meetings law for state and local agencies.) The class will be open to all who wish to take it, not just directors. The law also allows the CCOC to "license" training classes offered by private groups, such as management companies or the Community Associations Institute, provided their classes meet the CCOC's standards.

The law states that a director's failure to take the training will not invalidate that director's votes nor require that the director be removed from the board; but it can be taken into account if that association is involved in a complaint that has to be resolved by a CCOC hearing panel. A refusal to take the training can lead to a fine of up to \$500. "Imposing a fine will be a last resort," says Rand Fishbein, the CCOC's new chair. "Most directors will see the advantages that training offers and will take it voluntarily. And association members can use the class to learn more about their rights and good governance."

Pet Control and Pet Licenses

The Montgomery County Police Animal Services Division (ASD) is asking for help from the County's community associations. County law requires all cats and dogs to be licensed, and in order to qualify for a license the animal must have been properly vaccinated against rabies. Yet Debbie Darling Norris, ASD's Customer Service and Pet Licensing Supervisor, estimates that only a small minority of all cats and dog owners comply with the law.

According to Ms. Norris, licensing serves useful purposes. It protects people, and other pets, against rabies, and it helps the ASD return missing pets to their rightful owners. Beginning April 19, 2015, at County-sponsored vaccination clinics on the third Sunday of every month through September, pets will receive free rabies vaccinations with the purchase of a pet license. Owners can also have the pet microchipped for an extra \$10 fee—a significant savings for owners. In addition, lost pets being claimed by owners are subject to a fine of \$500 if the owner cannot prove the pet was vaccinated against rabies. A licensed pet won't incur such charges.



Community associations can play an important role in increasing the number of pets that are licensed by publicizing information in their community newsletters about the pet licensing law, the benefits of the license, and how to obtain the license. They can also provide this information when registering pets under their own rules.

The CCOC suggests that associations consider requiring proof of the license when registering pets, for obvious safety reasons, and recommends that associations review their governing documents on pet control to ensure that they have the authority to adopt a rule requiring proof of pet licensing. Many associations bylaws or covenants require that the residents obey all public laws, and this might be sufficient authority, but if there is any doubt, the association should consult its attorney.

For more information on pet licensing, and other topics, visit the Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center's website at www.montgomerycountymd.gov/asd.

Notes from the Chair

By Rand H. Fishbein, Ph.D.

CCOC Chairperson



I would like to begin this inaugural edition of Notes From the Chair with a few personal thoughts. On January 7, 2015, I was honored to be elected Chairman of the Commission on Common Ownership Communities along with Ms. Eugenia Mays, who will serve as Vice-Chairwoman. We are humbled by the vote of confidence of our colleagues and look forward, with enthusiasm, to leading this exceptional program into its second quarter-century of service on behalf of the 1,034 common interest communities throughout Montgomery County.

Words of heartfelt appreciation are due to our immediate predecessors, Commission Chair, Elizabeth Molloy, Esq., and Vice-Chair, Arthur Dubin, CPM, PCAM, CMCA, whose wisdom, patience, skilled mentorship and deep commitment to good governance principles, have set a high bar for all future leaders of the CCOC. We wish them well in all of their future endeavors and hope that the County will continue to benefit from their knowledge and experience.

Special gratitude also is due the Commission's sole professional staff member, Peter Drymalski, Esq., as well as Walter E. Wilson, Esq., Associate County Attorney and the legal advisor to the CCOC. Both men are to be commended for their contributions to the CCOC and for the role each has played in making the CCOC the national pacesetter in alternative dispute resolution.

Peter's consummate skills as a lawyer and administrator are matched only by his patient demeanor and generosity of spirit, traits that are well-known to anyone who has ever approached him for assistance. Shepherding fifteen volunteer commissioners and a separate team of volunteer attorneys, and deftly fielding the concerns of eager residents, property managers and boards of directors, is no small feat, but Peter does so with seemingly effortless aplomb. He also is the editor of this newsletter.

Walter's wise counsel and watchful eye have ensured that the Commission's reputation for openness and integrity have remained unshaken. His mastery of County law and procedure have proven indispensable on numerous occasions when circumstances required a nuanced interpretation of statutory intent. Both Walter and Peter are true professionals in every sense of the word.

The work of the Commission would not be possible without the ongoing support of Montgomery County Executive, the Honorable Isiah Leggett, and his staff, the Office of Consumer Protection under the direction of Eric Friedman, and the Members of the County Council whose commitment to the work of the Commission has spanned the decades. On behalf of the Commission, I wish to express our deepest appreciation for their commitment to the cause of good governance in all of the county's common ownership communities.

It was 1989 when the County's Homeowners' Association Task Force first conceived of the idea of a Commission on Common Ownership Communities and January, 1991, when it came into being with the enactment of section 10B of the Montgomery County Code. Since that time, the Commission's reputation for excellence in educational programming and legal review has steadily grown. In just the last two years the Commission has been honored with two awards for excellence by the National Association of Counties (NACo). At the same time, statistics continue to show that the decisions rendered by CCOC hearing panels are upheld on appeal well in excess of ninety-five percent of the time. By any measure, this is a most remarkable record.

Going forward, it is the goal of the Commission to continue to exercise its mandate with impartiality, integrity and dedication. We stand committed not only to building on our past accomplishments with new and innovative programming, but to working tirelessly to ensure that the services rendered to the citizens of Montgomery County are only strengthened with time.

Rand H. Fishbein, Ph.D.

Chairperson, CCOC



Securing the Future of the CCOC

By Rand H. Fishbein, Ph.D., CCOC Chairperson

From time to time, all organizations need to take stock of how effectively they are fulfilling their missions and explore how the availability of new technologies and processes might be used to better address the needs of the constituencies they serve. The CCOC is no exception.

Though its achievements are many, the Commission believes that the time has come to carefully review its operations, incorporate the lessons learned from past experiences, and make improvements as necessary. I am pleased to report that this activity already is underway with the inauguration of two new standing committees, one dealing with Policy and Procedures and the other with Budget and Administration. On an ongoing basis, both will consider the Commission's evolving needs and how it can improve its operations.

The committees will report their findings back to the full Commission, periodically, for deliberation and action. Members of the public are invited to submit their written comments to the committees through the CCOC office.

A key concern in the Commission's self-assessment is the issue of its resources and in particular whether the level of funding, administrative staff and available office facilities are sufficient to meet its broad statutory mandate and the growing demand for its services. In this task the Commission will draw upon the extensive and independent examination performed by the County's Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO). [Editor's note: see article beginning page 1.]

After much analysis, the conclusion reached by both the OLO and the Commission is clear: in order for the CCOC to continue to provide quality educational programming, training, and alternative dispute resolution services to an increasingly diverse and expanding population, it will need more resources. To this end, the Commission is working closely with both the County Executive and the Council to address this pressing need. We are grateful for the warm reception we have received from the County's leadership and the strong interest they have shown in addressing our concerns.

Since its inception in 1991, the Commission has operated on a modest budget and a shoe-string staff. Over the years it has struggled to keep up with a mounting caseload and the rising expectations of the residents and association boards it serves. The situation has only worsened with time as natural attrition and funding shortages have seen the CCOC office staff shrink from two professionals (one investigator and one clerical assistant in 2005) to just a single professional today and effectively no sustained administrative support.

Adding to this personnel deficit is the fact that the CCOC office has no modern computerized capability and no efficient ability to monitor trends among the county's burgeoning constituency of common ownership communities. This has meant that all of the administrative tasks handled by the Commission -- from educational programming, training and mediation to case intake, panel hearing and enforcement -- remain essentially paper-based.

Without a robust digital database, it is virtually impossible for the Commission to keep track of management changes in the County's associations, monitor the evolving needs and concerns of residents, or share information on best practices. With the help of partners in both the County and the State, the Commission hopes soon to have a plan in place for digital upgrade of its office operations.

The Commission is deeply committed to its mission of providing good governance education to the 340,000 residents and directors we presently serve. To that end, we will sponsor additional seminars this year in conjunction with the Community Associations Institute (CAI), and to update our publications. Also in the works is a new set of ten online videos intended to help association directors, managers and residents address ongoing issues in the administration and maintenance of their communities.

The Commission has been hard at work preparing for the implementation of the recently enacted Council Bill 45-14. The groundbreaking Act mandates training for the approximately 5,000 directors who serve on association boards in the County. Our plans call for the development of a free online course administered by the Commission that will be available for all. Once the CCOC establishes appropriate training standards and guidelines, other vendors, to include educational institutions, can be certified to offer courses under the program. The course will include instruction in the basic tools, techniques and legal requirements essential for the orderly operation of community associations. We aim at a user-friendly course lasting from two to three hours that is both informative and highly interactive. We hope that this will help to dispel some of the mystery and fear of governance that often discourages residents from volunteering for leadership positions in their communities.

(Continued on page 10)

Low Cost Tree Care Classes for Communities and Their Members

The Animal Services Division (see page 5) is not the only County agency offering low cost and useful assistance to our communities and their members. The County's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has partnered with Conservation Montgomery to offer "Home Tree Care 101" workshops.

These classes are held outdoors and offer hands-on demonstrations of proper tree pruning, mulching, watering, and many other tips on healthy tree care, with the overall goal of preserving the County's mature tree canopy. 85% of the County's trees are on private residential or commercial lots, and they provide fresh air, living space for wild life and birds, prevention of erosion, shade and protection of our watersheds.. Mature, healthy trees increase property values.

Under this program, a certified arborist will visit the property and tour it with the residents. The arborist will show how to keep the trees healthy. Equally important, the arborist will teach the "right tree in the right place" concept. For example, what trees can and cannot be planted under power lines or near houses or sidewalks? How can new trees be planted so that they will thrive?

Classes will be tailored to the needs of each community and participants are given a packet of information that summarizes what they learn.

Home Tree Care 101 workshops will be held Saturday mornings for two hours each, although they can go longer. There is a 15-person minimum per class, and Conservation Montgomery charges \$20 per person, which goes to its tree canopy fund. Since most arborists charge \$100 or more for their expert services, the workshops are a bargain.

To register for a workshops, visit <http://www.conservationmontgomery.org/Home Tree Care 101.html>



Teaching Is Not Only for the CCOC And Learning is Not Only for Directors

Our lead stories demonstrate the growing attention being given to the importance of community associations and the complexity of their operations. Montgomery County has not only perceived the need for effective and ongoing training of the community leaders, but adopted a solution as well, exemplified in Bill 45-14.

But education is not the County's duty only. Many professionals—especially property managers, accountants, and lawyers--depend on healthy community associations for their own livelihoods. They can do more than simply to react to their clients' needs. They are in an excellent position to take the extra step of telling their clients what they need to know.

ABARIS has shown an example by offering annual meetings of its clients with experts in various fields. Majerle Management offers an intensive class on association management to its clients at no charge. The law firm of Rees Broome is well-known for its free lunchtime seminars on specific topics, and Rockville attorney Tom Schild has an informative blog on association topics. Other experts should consider the different ways in which they can give something back to the associations that help to sustain them. In addition to making the experts' jobs easier, such efforts create closer relationships and help the members to understand better and to appreciate more what professionals do for them.

Education should not be aimed only at board members. Future directors will come only from the general membership. By helping the members to understand what the board does and why it needs professional assistance, the experts might encourage more interest in board service. They can also help to show members how to participate more effectively in the association's affairs. The feedback from such activities may, in turn, help the professionals and their clients better to understand community attitudes and issues.

Useful County Phone Numbers for Common Ownership Communities

You can now reach most County agencies by phone by dialing “311” during ordinary business hours. The operator will then refer the caller to the proper agency. This service includes non-emergency Police services such as reporting abandoned cars and community outreach, Libraries, the Circuit Court, Landlord-Tenant Affairs, Housing Code Enforcement, the Office of the County Executive, Cable TV regulation, the Department of Permitting Services and the Department of Transportation.

Some County agencies may be called directly or through 311, including:

Office of Consumer Protection	240-777-3636 (email: consumerprotection@montgomerycountymd.gov)
CCOC	240-777-3766 (email: ccoc@montgomerycountymd.gov) (email preferred)
County Council	240-777-7900
Parks & Planning Commission	
Planning Board	301-495-4605
Parks Headquarters	301-495-2595

City of Rockville: residents should still call their City agencies directly.

Emergency services: 911

For more information on the 311 system or to search for agencies by computer, go to: <http://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/331/Home.asp>

Sign up for our free “eSubscribe” emails by enrolling here:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MDMONTGOMERY/subscriber/new> (the CCOC is listed under Consumer Protection).

Commission Participants (as of March, 2015)

Residents of Common Ownership Communities:

Rand H. Fishbein, Ph.D., Chairperson

Jim Coyle

Marietta Ethier Esq.

Bruce Fonoroff

Elayne Kabakoff

Elizabeth Molloy, Esq.

David Weinstein

Ken Zajic

Professionals Associated with Common Ownership Communities:

Eugenia Mays, Vice-chairperson

Richard Brandes

Terry Cromwell

Arthur Dubin

Gianna Rahmani

Thomas Stone, Esq.

Aimee Winegar

Volunteer Panel Chairs:

Christopher Hitchens, Esq.

John F. McCabe, Jr., Esq.

Dinah Stevens, Esq.

John Sample, Esq.

Douglas Shontz, Esq.

Julianne Dymowski, Esq.

Corinne Rosen, Esq.

Ursula Burgess, Esq.

Greg Friedman, Esq.

Charles Fleischer, Esq.

Nicole Williams, Esq.

Rachel Browder, Esq.

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Walter Wilson, Esq.

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Peter Drymalski, Deputy Assistant Editor

A Changing of the Guard at the CCOC

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Dr. Fishbein is President of Fishbein Associates, a public policy consulting firm specializing in national security issues and a former professional staff member of the U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee and former Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye. He also serves as the vice president of the Maryland Homeowners' Association. Ms. Mays, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, is a professional property manager and President of Clarity Association Management Services. (See photo, right.)



After being elected by a unanimous vote, Dr. Fishbein praised Ms. Molloy for her accomplishments in extending the CCOC's outreach and educational activities. Among other things, she pushed the CCOC to create an "eSubscribe" email list, which now has over 1,000 members and she was the driving force behind the creation of the first CCOC instructional videos, which won an award in 2014 from the National Association of Counties. Mr. Dubin arranged the first formal contracts between the CCOC and the Community Associations Institute (CAI) under which CAI produced two sessions of its popular, day-long seminar on "The Basic of Volunteer Association Management." Dr. Fishbein promised that the CCOC will continue to expand on these two programs in the future. He also noted that Mr. Dubin's association with the CCOC has not ended, since his daughter, Rachel Browder, has been appointed as a volunteer panel chair to assist the CCOC in resolving disputes.

Also newly appointed to the CCOC is Gianna Rahmani, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, a professional property manager with Tidewater Companies.

Securing the Future of the CCOC

(Continued from page 7)

The Commission's Education Committee is preparing the narrative for the basic course that is slated to debut online in January, 2016. One format being considered by the Committee is that used by the Maryland Attorney General for its online course on the Open Meetings Act. For those wishing to acquire additional guidance on good governance practices, the Commission is expected to offer an optional advanced course as well.

The Montgomery County CCOC is committed to meeting the needs of common ownership communities in enlightened, innovative and engaging ways. We invite the public to learn more about our alternative dispute resolution services. Our passion is the promotion of good governance. Our promise is fairness, openness and integrity.

Rand H. Fishbein, Ph.D., CCOC Chairperson