

March 13, 2024

Metropolitan Condominium Home Owners Discrimination Complaint

The Metropolitan Condominium Association is lodging a complaint against the Stormwater Management Office of the City of Alexandria for discriminatory and inequitable distribution of flood grants in favor of single family homeowners over condominium and multifamily homeowners. We expect the City to treat condominium owners fairly by providing equal access to flood mitigation grants equivalent to that which single family home owners received for access to flood mitigation grants, which is up to \$5,000 per owner.

Unequal Access to Flood Mitigation Grants

For years, the Metropolitan Condominium owners have requested equal access to the city's flood mitigation grant program—which is financed by residents' stormwater fees. Although City Council approved \$25,000 grants for condominiums in addition to the \$5,000 grant for individuals in 2023, Mr. Jesse Maines, Chief of the Stormwater Manager Division and Ms. Felicia Montoney, management analyst, have arbitrarily denied our right to even apply for individual grants by "reclassifying" the private property of individual owners in our garage as "common areas," which does not accord with the Virginia Condominium Act.

The Stormwater Management decision on grant allocation is arbitrary, inequitable, and biased against condominiums. The October 17, 2023 legislation text indicates that individual condominium owners are eligible for the \$5,000 matching reimbursement grant. There is no written language or previous commission meeting discussions indicating that flood mitigation by condominium owners was required only to their respective units and paid for solely by individual owners. We have suffered individually and collectively as an association and expect equitable distribution of city grants that are funded by our stormwater fees.

Metropolitan Condominium Flood Mitigation Projects.

While awaiting the City's capital projects on the Hooffs Run Culvert to mitigate the flooding in the upper King Street area, the Metropolitan Condominium Association of eight owners installed a flood gate at the garage entrance, increased the capacity of our garage pumps, and elevated electrical systems in the garage. All these efforts cost us nearly **\$300,000**, which depleted our reserves and delayed preventative maintenance on the building.

Engineers have not yet assessed whether our building has suffered structural damage from the repeated flooding, which inundated our garage with more than six feet of water. Our eight owners' monthly condominium fees and very large special assessments directly paid for the nearly \$300,000 flood gate and other flood mitigation projects to protect both our common areas as well as our private property at 1707 Prince Street. We only received \$25,000 in flood grants for our flood mitigation. Whereas eight single family homes are eligible for \$40,000 or \$5,000 each. This is an inequitable distribution of residents' stormwater fees preferencing one category of homeowner over others.

All Alexandria residents should receive equal consideration for city grants based on the amount invested in flood mitigation **not based on the structure in which a homeowner lives**, which discriminates against multifamily homeowners, many of whom cannot afford single family

homes in Alexandria. We respectfully request equal access to city grants for condominium owners.

Sincerely,

The Metropolitan Condominium Association
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