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HOUSE BILL NO. 1296

Offered January 24, 2000

A BILL to amend and reenact §§ 55-79.80:2 and 55-513 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Property Owners' Association Act; enforcement of rules.

Patrons—Hall, Almand, Cantor, Diamonstein, Drake, Stump and Williams; Senator: Mims

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That §§ 55-79.80:2 and 55-513 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 55-79.80:2. Assessment of charges for violations; suspension of services for failure to pay assessments; hearing.

A. The unit owners' association shall have the power, to the extent the condominium instruments or rules duly adopted pursuant thereto expressly so provide, to (i) suspend a unit owner's right to use facilities or services, including utility services, provided directly through the unit owners' association for nonpayment of assessments which are more than sixty days past due, to the extent that access to the unit through the common elements is not precluded and provided that such suspension shall not endanger the health, safety, or property of any unit owner, tenant, or occupant and (ii) assess charges against any unit owner for any violation of the condominium instruments or of the rules or regulations promulgated pursuant thereto for which such unit owner or his family members, tenants, guests or other invitees are responsible.

B. Before any such suspension or charges may be imposed, the unit owner shall be given an opportunity to be heard and to be represented by counsel before the executive organ or such other tribunal as the condominium instruments or rules duly adopted pursuant thereto specify. Notice of such hearing shall, at least fourteen days in advance thereof, be hand delivered or mailed by registered or certified United States mail, return receipt requested, to such unit owner at the address or addresses required for notices of meetings pursuant to § 55-79.75. The amount of any charges so assessed shall not exceed fifty dollars for a single offense, or ten dollars per diem for any offense of a continuing nature, and shall be treated as an assessment against such unit owner's condominium unit for the purpose of § 55-79.84. *After the date a lawsuit is filed challenging any such charges, no additional charges shall accrue. If the court rules in favor of the unit owners' association, it shall be entitled to collect such charges from the date the action was filed as well as all other charges assessed pursuant to this section against the unit owner prior to the action.*

C. This section shall not be construed to prohibit the grant, by the condominium instruments, of other powers and responsibilities to the unit owners' association or its executive organ.

§ 55-513. Adoption and enforcement of rules.

A. The board of directors of the association shall have the power to establish, adopt, and enforce rules and regulations with respect to use of the common areas and with respect to such other areas of responsibility assigned to the association by the declaration, except where expressly reserved by the declaration to the members. Rules and regulations may be adopted by resolution and shall be reasonably published or distributed throughout the development. A majority of votes cast, in person or by proxy, at a meeting convened in accordance with the provisions of the association's bylaws and called for that purpose, shall repeal or amend any rule or regulation adopted by the board of directors. Rules and regulations may be enforced by any method normally available to the owner of private property in Virginia, including, but not limited to, application for injunctive relief or damages, during which the court may award to the association court costs and reasonable attorneys' fees.

B. The board of directors of the association shall also have the power, to the extent the declaration or rules and regulations duly adopted pursuant thereto expressly so provide, to (i) suspend a member's right to use facilities or services, including utility services, provided directly through the association for nonpayment of assessments which are more than sixty days past due, to the extent that access to the lot through the common areas is not precluded and provided that such suspension shall not endanger the health, safety, or property of any owner, tenant, or occupant and (ii) assess charges against any member for any violation of the declaration or rules and regulations for which the member or his family members, tenants, guests, or other invitees are responsible. Before any such charges or suspension may be imposed, the member shall be given an opportunity to be heard and to be represented by counsel before the board of directors or other tribunal specified in the documents. Notice of a hearing shall be hand delivered or mailed by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the member at the address of record with the association at least fourteen days prior to the hearing. The amount of any

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60 charges so assessed shall not be limited to the expense or damage to the association caused by the
61 violation, but shall not exceed fifty dollars for a single offense or ten dollars per day for any offense of
62 a continuing nature and shall be treated as an assessment against the member's lot for the purposes of
63 § 55-516. *After the date a lawsuit is filed challenging any such charges, no additional charges shall*
64 *accrue. If the court rules in favor of the association, it shall be entitled to collect such charges from the*
65 *date the action was filed as well as all other charges assessed pursuant to this section against the lot*
66 *owner prior to the action.*