



## **GCAAR 2017 Legislative & Regulatory Accomplishments**

### **Foreclosed Property Registration Penalty**

GCAAR continued their work from 2016 to encourage Council support. GCAAR testified in support of the legislation, which imposes a civil penalty for the failure to register a property that is purchased by foreclosure. The bill is a practical and reasonable way to address concerns in the housing community while maintaining fair protections for property owners. Bill 38-16 was enacted unanimously, signed by the County Executive, and went into effect on July 24, 2017.

### **Vacant Property Registration**

GCAAR continued their work from 2016 to encourage Council support. GCAAR testified in support of the legislation, which would require the Department of Housing and Community Affairs establish and maintain a registry of unmaintained vacant properties. It also put in place financial penalties for owners of vacant properties that decline to register their properties and/or refuse to maintain them. Bill 39-16 was enacted unanimously, signed by the County Executive, and went into effect on August 11, 2017.

### **Small Business Assistance Program**

GCAAR supported businesses affected by County construction projects by encouraging the Council to expand the scope of their Small Business Assistance Program legislation. We believe that expanding the list of eligible businesses and qualifying areas would be practical extension, but that any program growth should be weighed against the financial burden the County's continued growth could cause.

### **Short Term Rental Day Limit Extended**

With GCAAR's amendments, the county's new regulations on short term rentals will properly benefit homeowners. At GCAAR's request, due to concerns regarding enforcement the "off-premises" clause, Council VP Riemer clarified that an owner leaving the premises for a short period of time does not count the day against the "off-premises" cap. Councilmember Katz took GCAAR's recommended increase and installed a 120 day cap to "off-premises" rental days, and the bill was amended. Bill 2-16 and ZTA 17-03 passed the Council 9-0. The legislation goes into effect on July 1, 2018, to allow HHS time to create and confirm notification, registration, and licensing procedures.

**Recordation Tax Rates**

GCAAR forcefully opposed the raising of recordation taxes in 2016, and despite its passage, succeeded in getting the Council to modify its proposal with many of GCAAR's amendments. In 2017 a bill was introduced to lower the Recordation Tax Premium. After a few committee hearings on this bill the Finance Department introduced new recordation tax levels for the Council to consider. GCAAR has requested the information used by the Finance Department to ensure that the decisions made alleviate much of the burden that was placed on our industry in 2016.

The request included data on the recordation taxes due at different price points, a breakdown of commercial and residential transactions in the County greater than \$500,000, and the possible tax rates if the proposed reduction in the premium tax rates only goes up to \$750,000. GCAAR will continue to push for this information in 2018, and keep our members updated on our progress to rollback the Council's 2016 decision.