

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. **1**

Resolution No. 24 -2026

Introduced by: Christiana Rigby

SHORT TITLE: Charter Amendment – Howard County Board of Appeals

A RESOLUTION to amend the Howard County Charter to increase the number of members of the Howard County Board of Appeals from five to seven members; update the political party affiliation distribution of Board members; and submitting this amendment to the voters of Howard County for their adoption or rejection in accordance with Article X of the Howard County Charter and Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution.

Introduced and read first time _____, 2026.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Read for a second time at a public hearing on _____, 2026.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted____, Adopted with amendments____, Failed____, Withdrawn____, by the County Council on _____, 2026.

Certified By _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment

WHEREAS, the Howard County Charter establishes a Board of Appeals to hear and decide appeals, variances, special exceptions, and other matters as provided by law; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Appeals performs a quasi-judicial function that is essential to ensuring due process, fair hearings, and consistent application of County land use and zoning laws; and

WHEREAS, the current composition of the Board of Appeals consists of five members, which may limit scheduling flexibility and the timely resolution of cases when recusals, vacancies, or absences occur; and

WHEREAS, expanding the Board of Appeals to seven members would enhance the Board's capacity to hear cases efficiently, reduce delays, and ensure the consistent participation of a full panel; and

WHEREAS, increasing the number of Board of Appeals members would support continuity of operations and provide additional expertise and perspective in the review of appeals and applications; and

WHEREAS, the Howard County Council finds that amending the Charter to increase the membership of the Board of Appeals from five to seven members serves the public interest;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland this _____ day of _____, 2026 that Section 501(a) of the Howard County Charter is amended to read as follows:

Article V. – Board of Appeals

Section 501. – The County Board of Appeals

Section 501. – The County Board of Appeals

(a) *Appointment; term; compensation.* The County Board of Appeals shall consist of five

SEVEN registered voters and residents of the County appointed by the Council. Appointees shall

1 serve overlapping terms of five years from the first day of January of the year of their
2 appointments, or until their successors are appointed. Vacancies, except those at the expiration of
3 a term, shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment and for the unexpired term.
4 No member shall be reappointed after having served eight consecutive years immediately prior
5 to reappointment. No more than ~~[[three]]~~ FOUR members shall be registered with the same
6 political party. The members of the Board shall be paid at the rate of Twelve Hundred Dollars
7 (\$1,200.00) per year unless such compensation be changed as provided in [Section 501](#)(f) of this
8 article. Members of the Board shall receive reasonable and necessary expenses as may be
9 provided in the budget.

10
11 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,
12 Maryland, that at the next General Election to be held in Maryland, the proposed amendment to
13 the Howard County Charter shall be submitted to the voters of Howard County for their adoption
14 or rejection in accordance with the provisions of the Article X of the Howard County Charter and
15 Article XI-A of the Maryland Constitution, and if adopted by the majority of the voters, shall
16 stand adopted from and after the 30th day following the general election.

17
18 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,
19 Maryland, that this Resolution, having been approved by two-thirds of the members of the
20 Howard County Council, stands adopted this ____ day of _____, 2026 in accordance
21 with provisions of Article X of the Howard County Charter.