

*when published, adopted, and recorded in a book kept for this purpose in the office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Harford County, shall have the force and effect of laws lawfully adopted under authority of the General Assembly of Maryland.*

*442. Special Assessments—Private Roads*

*(a) The County Commissioners of Harford County may construct and improve roads and drainage incident to said construction or improvement on or along private roads, after the approval of a petition of the majority of the property owners whose property abuts on the road to be constructed or improved requesting that said roads be taken into the county roads system. In the exercise of the powers granted by this section, the County Commissioners by proper ordinance, passed in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of Article 25 of the Annotated Code of Maryland (1957 Edition, as amended from time to time), may adopt all necessary rules and conditions for the acceptance, construction, and maintenance of such roads and/or other authorized improvements by the county. Such ordinance may also provide for annual benefit assessments to be levied against the abutting properties for the purpose of reimbursing the county for the cost of such improvements and the time and manner of payment, except that the time of payment may not exceed ten years. Annual benefit assessments shall be a first lien upon the property against which they are assessed, until paid, subject only to prior State and county taxes; and if any property is sold for State and county taxes, and there remains a surplus over the amount of the taxes due, the County Commissioners upon proper petition to the Circuit Court may be allowed the payment of their lien.*

*(b) For the purpose of giving notice to the general public as to existing liens and charges against any property for benefit assessments, the County Commissioners shall keep a public record of all names of property owners and the locations of said property, and the amount of said benefit charges among the Land Records of Harford County under the supervision of the Clerk of the Circuit Court; and the recordation with said Clerk of said benefit assessments shall be legal notice of such liens.*

*(c) The County Commissioners, on or before the beginning of the fiscal year, shall certify its benefit assessments hereunder to the Treasurer of Harford County for collection from the property owners affected; and the Treasurer shall add the benefit assessments to the State and county property tax bills for collection by October 1 in each year without interest or discount; and upon failure of payment of the benefit assessments, they may be deducted from any surplus in the hands of the Treasurer after a sale for non-payment of State and county property taxes under proper order of the Circuit Court. In the alternative, the lien created in favor of the annual benefit assessments may be enforced by bill in equity or by action in personam.*

*(d) Before the powers granted by this section to the County Commissioners shall be exercised, there shall first be a petition of property owners as hereinbefore provided, requesting improvements; public hearing upon the petition after ten days' notice in a newspaper regularly published in Harford County; approval of the peti-*