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October 13, 2016

**VIA EMAIL and U.S. MAIL**

Ravindra M. Chhatre, P.E.  
Accident Investigator  
National Transportation Safety Board  
Office of Railroad, Pipeline and Hazardous  
Materials Investigations  
490 L'Enfant Plaza East, SW  
Washington, DC 20594

**Re: Flower Branch Apartments (Silver Spring, Maryland)**  
**DOI: August 10, 2016**  
**NTSB Case No: DCA16FP003**

Dear Mr. Chhatre:

This letter is in response to your request for information and documents, provided at the conclusion of Clark Melillo's interview by the NTSB investigative team on August 20, 2016. For reference, a copy of your handwritten list is attached.

I will address below each request set forth in your list. Further, as you and I discussed when we met a short time later, I am providing you with the documents both in hard copy and on disk, for your convenience. Enclosed with the hard copy of this letter are the paper copies of the documents, and the disk.

**1. Year of Construction and Plans for 8701, 8703**

In an email to you on August 22, 2016, Mr. Melillo provided you with the year of construction of Flower Branch Apartments (1955).

Kay Management and the owner of Flower Branch Apartments (Flower Branch Apartments, LLC) do not have the blueprints or construction drawings/plans. However, pursuant to your oral request to me when we met shortly after August 20, 2016, I am providing you with a floor plan of the ground (or terrace) level of 8701 and 8703 Arliss St.

**2. Repair History of appliance, water heater, Maintenance (Painting)**

The water heater present in the "storage/meter room" in 8701 Arliss St. was installed by Associates Plumbing, Inc. ("API"), on July 2, 2012. Provided are the documents relating to Kay

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Management's purchase of the water heater from API, API's installation, the permit (from WSSC), and a printout from Kay Management regarding work performed by API in 8701 and 8703 Arliss St. covering the time period August 1, 2013 to August 15, 2016.

Also provided is a Work Order Detail Report, detailing all maintenance, service, and repair work performed in 8701 and 8703 Arliss St., both in-house and by contractors, covering the time period August 1, 2015 to August 25, 2016 (90 pages).

Also provided is page 44 from the Work Order Detail Report, regarding replacement of the furnace in 8701 Arliss St., Apartment 202, with the corresponding invoice (January 29, 2016) from the contractor (TECO HVAC & Home Improvements, LLC) regarding that replacement work.

Also provided is a Kay Management printout detailing all painting and related work performed by Lopez Maintenance, Inc. at Flower Branch Apartments covering the time period between July 1, 2015 and August 10, 2016.

### **3. Contact Information for outfit who installed water heater**

Mr. Melillo provided you with the contact information for Chris Woodward of API, in his August 22, 2016 email to you; he also provided other contact information, for Dave Mandell of Alarm Systems Testing & Inspections, Inc. ("ASTI") and Janet Blondell of Maryland State Highway Administration. A copy of Mr. Melillo's August 22, 2016 email to you, with this information, is provided.

### **4. Violation Copy**

The May 9, 2016 Violation Notice from Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (Division of Fire Prevention and Code Compliance), regarding its inspection of Flower Branch Apartments on March 23, 2016, is provided.

### **5. SHA contact information (Wash. Gas Locate reg.)**

As noted, Mr. Melillo provided you with the contact information for Janet Blondell of Maryland State Highway Administration in his August 22, 2016 email.

I recall that you also requested a copy of the map identifying the locations where Maryland Transportation Authority's contractor for construction of the Metro Purple Line (Purple Line Transit Constructors) anticipated performing test borings on the Flower Branch property. Therefore, provided here is an email from Carla Julian of Purple Line Transit Constructors to Jim Teller of Kay Apartment Communities, discussing the anticipated geotech borings, and including the test borings map. The email is not dated, but my understanding is that it was sent in late July

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or early August 2016, before the August 10, 2016 incident. The test borings were conducted shortly before August 10, 2016, to the best recollection of Kay Management personnel.

**6. Maintenance folks training record**

Kay Management does not maintain records of the training that the members of its maintenance team at various communities, including Flower Branch Apartments, receive. As explained to you in the various interviews you and your team conducted, much of the training is “on-the-job training” (OJT).

However, provided are the Sign-In Sheets for the most recent safety meetings of Flower Branch staff, prior to the August 10, 2016 incident (June 9, 2016; March 17, 2016; and December 21, 2015).

**7. Package to tenants**

The “move-in package” (consisting of all documents provided to new residents, from the beginning of the application process to move-in day) is provided). These documents include the Rental Application, a page listing all application requirements, a floor plan applicable to the prospective resident’s specific search (for example, a two-bedroom floor plan, as provided here), a sheet listing the amenities at Flower Branch, a Flower Branch Site Plan, a “location map” showing Flower Branch’s location within the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, a laundry card (which the resident receives on move-in day), a temporary parking pass (to be used until a permanent pass issued (on move-in day), and the Move-In Check List.

**8. Gas Line repair work for 3 years**

The API documents referenced above constitute the documents that Kay Management has in this regard.

**9. Fire Safety Inspection data**

Provided is the Testing Record from ASTI, dated April 27, 2016.

**10. List of Employees**

The Flower Branch “Employee Telephone List” identifying all members of the “Office Staff” and “Service Team” is provided. You will note that this list also provides identities and contact numbers for contractors who perform work at Flower Branch Apartments, as well as contact information for Washington Gas, PEPCO, and the Montgomery County Police Department (non-emergency).

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**11. Documents, if any, of disgruntled tenants**

Kay Management does not have documentation listing possible "disgruntled tenants" at Flower Branch. However, the information provided to you in staff interviews concerning possible "disgruntled tenants" who vacated their apartment shortly before August 10, 2016 was a reference to the residents of 8703 Arliss St., Apartment # 11 (Luis Molina, Johnny Santana, and Hector Larios), who were the subject of complaints by neighbors; these individuals advised Flower Branch staff that they would vacate their apartment voluntarily, because they were purchasing a home, and they moved out on July 31, 2016.

**12. Gas detection Equipment – Make/Model/Calibration**

Provided is the Owner's Manual for the combustible gas detector in use at Flower Branch Apartments; the manufacturer is TIF.

**13. Inventory list in 8701 meter room**

Provided is the listing of items present in the "storage/meter room" as of August 10, 2016, to the best recollection of the Flower Branch Maintenance Technicians and Engineer.

I believe that this letter, and the documents provided, are fully responsive to your request for information and documents provided at the conclusion of Mr. Melillo's August 20, 2016 interview. If you have any questions, comments, or further requests, please let me know.

I anticipate providing you with a response, and documents, in satisfaction of your October 7, 2016 request to Mr. Melillo, within the next few days.

Very truly yours,

  
Mark D. Palmer  
MDP/bjr

Enclosures as stated (by U.S. Mail)

cc: Mr. Clark Melillo  
President  
Kay Apartment Communities

Aug 20, 2016 NTSB list

### Interview:

Manager, Asst Manager, Maintenance Tech,  
Maint. Supervisor(s) [Plumber a possibility]  
[FIC company a possibility]

### Documents:

- 1) Year of construction, Plans for 8701, 8703
- 2) Repair history of appliance, water heater, Maintenance (Painting)
- 3) Contact Infor. for outfit who installed ftc/water heat
- 4) Violation copy
- 5) STIA contact information (wash gas locate req.)
- 6) Maintenance folks training record.
- 7) Package to tenants.
- 8) Inventory list in 8701 in meter room.
- 9) Gas-Line repair work for 3 years
- 10) Gas detection equipment → Make/Model/calibration
- 11) Fire safety Inspection data
- 12) List of Employees
- 13) Incl. if any, disgr. tenant