

Circuit Court for Howard County
Case No. C-13-CV-24-000256

UNREPORTED
IN THE APPELLATE COURT
OF MARYLAND

No. 469

September Term, 2025

EGLIN JOLLY

v.

CHESTER BEASLEY, *et al.*

Nazarian,
Leahy,
Sharer, J. Frederick
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: June 22, 2026

*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

Eglin Jolly, appellant, filed a complaint for negligence and breach of contract against Chester Beasley and Wendell Prout, appellees, in the Circuit Court for Howard County. In the complaint, appellant alleged she had entered into a residential home improvement contract with appellees and that they had failed “to fulfill their contractual obligations” by not completing the project in a timely and satisfactory manner and by negligently installing her windows, door, and flooring. Following the close of appellant’s evidence at a bench trial, the court entered an order granting appellees’ motion for judgment and dismissing the complaint. Appellant raises three issues on appeal: (1) whether the trial court erred in “finding for the Appellees despite un rebutted evidence of breach of contract and property damage”; (2) whether the trial court erred in “excluding critical audio evidence”; and (3) whether the court denied her the “full and fair adjudication under Maryland Rules of Evidence and constitutional due process protections[.]” For the reasons that follow, we shall affirm.

Appellant first contends that the court erred in dismissing her case because she presented “un rebutted evidence of breach of contract and property damage[.]” In granting the motion for judgment, the court found that appellant had failed to meet her burden of proof because: (1) expert testimony was required to prove that appellees had breached the requisite standard of care in completing the renovations, and (2) appellant had failed to provide any evidence of damages. In her brief, appellant does not provide any factual background regarding the evidence that she presented at trial to support her claims. More importantly, appellant does not offer any specific arguments indicating why expert testimony was unnecessary to meet her burden of proof under the circumstances or what

evidence of damages that she asserts was presented. Rather, she only makes a series of conclusory assertions that “[t]he contract was not honored”; “[w]ork was incomplete [and] not permitted properly”; and “[n]egligent construction created safety hazards and financial losses.”

Although we are cognizant that appellant is a self-represented litigant, it is not this Court’s responsibility to “attempt to fashion coherent legal theories to support [her] [] claims” of error. *Konover Prop. Tr., Inc. v. WHE Assocs., Inc.*, 142 Md. App. 476, 494 (2002). Rather, it is her burden on appeal to demonstrate that the court committed error. Because appellant’s brief does not address the court’s reasons for granting appellees’ motion for judgment, we will not consider whether the court erred in granting that motion on appeal. *See Diallo v. State*, 413 Md. 678, 692-93 (2010) (noting that arguments that are “not presented with particularity will not be considered on appeal” (citation omitted)).

Appellant also contends that the court abused its discretion in excluding “critical audio evidence” because she “lacked a physical USB[.]” Although it is not entirely clear, appellant appears to be referring to a video that she sought to introduce at trial, which allegedly showed water entering one of her recently installed windows during a rainstorm. When appellant sought to have the video admitted, however, she was unable to show it to the court because she did not have a copy of the video downloaded on a USB drive. Appellant asserts that despite her not having the video available on a USB, the court should have allowed her to email it a copy of the video.

But even if the court abused its discretion in excluding the video, it “has long been the policy in this State that [appellate courts] will not reverse a lower court judgment if the

error is harmless.” *Barksdale v. Wilkowsky*, 419 Md. 649, 657 (2011) (quoting *Flores v. Bell*, 398 Md. 27, 33 (2007)). “The burden is on the complaining party to show prejudice as well as error.” *Flores*, 398 Md. at 33. Here, the video presumably would have corroborated appellant’s testimony that water had been penetrating one of the windows that was installed by appellees.¹ But the court ultimately dismissed the case because appellant had failed to produce expert testimony to show a breach of the standard of care or evidence from which it could have calculated damages. And the video that appellant sought to introduce was cumulative of her trial testimony and, thus, would not have affected that ruling. Consequently, any error in excluding the video does not require reversal.

Finally, appellant asserts that she was denied the opportunity for full adjudication of her claims because, as a self-represented litigant, she should not have been “penalized for minor procedural errors that do not affect the integrity of the proceedings.” But it is a well-established principle of Maryland law that *pro se* parties must adhere to procedural rules in the same manner as those represented by counsel. Indeed, this Court has stated that “[t]he principle of applying the rules equally to *pro se* litigants is so accepted that it is almost self-evident.” *Tretick v. Layman*, 95 Md. App. 62, 68 (1993); *see also Pickett v. Noba, Inc.*, 122 Md. App. 566, 568 (1998) (“While we recognize and sympathize with those whose economic means require self-representation, we also need to adhere to

¹ Appellant also introduced a photograph which allegedly showed the water damage.

procedural rules in order to maintain consistency in the judicial system.”). Consequently, we shall affirm the judgment of the circuit court.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT
COURT FOR HOWARD COUNTY
AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID
BY APPELLANT.**