

To the Office of Zoning and Administration Hearings:

I am writing to comment on the LMA H-149 Glenmont Forest Investors, LLC matter.

Overall, I understand why people would want to live in this area. It's nice, walkable, diverse, and metro accessible; however, I want to emphasize a few things that I think are important to preserving the character of the area. One, this area is economically diverse. It's a place where we can live as a family of two middle incomes and our neighbors include both those that can afford million dollar homes and those that can afford rent on a small apartment. I know that the 15% affordable housing is built into the proposal; however, that 15% does not seem like enough to replace the housing for all of the people who will lose their homes over this project and will not be able to afford the new development. Is it possible to set aside more than 15% of units as affordable units or at least at the affordability level currently available at the existing apartments? Limited housing is an issue in this area, but limited affordable housing is an issue that is at least, if not more, pressing. This proposal will drastically ramp up the housing and bring the density up to levels not appropriate to this area but will make the affordable housing situation more dire.

I'm also concerned about the additional solid, impermeable surfaces that will be added to this area by the proposed development. Runoff already occurs in this area with the lower density that exists, and the people living on Erskine have all had to make property modifications to account for water intrusion over time. Creating additional impermeable surfaces will only exacerbate this situation, opening up the opportunity for property damage and harm to the environment through additional runoff to the local stream. There is an engineering report that will be filed by another neighbor that shows that the modifications to the site that are being proposed have water issues that are not resolved by the proposal and do not take to heart the best interest of the surrounding neighborhood. That report is specific for one property, but the issues it brings up do not inspire confidence that the proposal as it stands has done the research necessary to move forward with construction.

This proposal will also necessitate the removal of a number of healthy mature trees on the complex property, which will add to the runoff issues as well as running counter to the aims of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, especially the shade tree program.

Based on the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection website, "In Montgomery County, we like to say: "Trees are the answer!" I don't think that the current proposal for Glenmont Forest is in line with that for either the building proposal or when it comes to the extension of Erskine Avenue. Montgomery County has a stated dedication to shade trees; however this project is proposing to cut down many dozens of healthy, living trees. A promise to plant new trees to replace these mature trees is not sufficient in response. As stated by William Moomaw of Tufts University "The most effective thing that we can do is to allow trees that are already planted, that are already growing, to continue growing to reach their full ecological potential, to store carbon, and develop a forest that has its full complement of environmental services." In order to make a decision that will have such a negative impact on the environment, it seems that it would need to be balanced by a really significant good for people, and I do not think that the opening up and widening of Erskine Avenue meets that threshold. In fact, I believe that opening Erskine to traffic may cause more headache than benefit.

I do not agree that the opening of Erskine Avenue is necessary or advisable. Adjoining Erskine to the proposed apartment complex would not provide a significant benefit for the residents but will be detrimental to the local environment and has the potential to contribute to hazardous traffic situations.

As someone who lives on Erskine, I truly do not understand what will be achieved by using this road as an exit from the proposed apartment complex. The complex already has exits onto Randolph and Georgia, which are the roads necessary to get almost anywhere in this area. The only reason to use Erskine would be to access Brookside Gardens and Nature Center, and I do not see the utility in building a road (and taking out dozens of mature shade trees) in order for the complex residents to take several fewer seconds to get to the nature center. It seems most sensible to concentrate efforts on making the passage from the apartment complex to the major streets more efficient rather than routing people from the complex through a secondary street, just to get back onto Randolph or Georgia, which already have direct access using currently developed roads. In addition, there adding both car and foot traffic to this road would be very dangerous because there is no sidewalk on the Erskine side of Glenallen, so you would be inviting a large number of people each day to cross the street unprotected while adding hundreds of cars to that intersection. This is especially alarming because that intersection directly leads to the elementary school.

With traffic patterns as they currently are, there is congestion on Glenallen in the mornings with residents of the local Glenallen neighborhood getting to Randolph. Having traffic routed to have hundreds of people every day making a left turn from Erskine onto Glenallen to get to Randolph seems like it would add frustration to the people who the road is being built for as well as the people who are already residents of all of the roads adjoining Glenallen and not only those living on Erskine. The Randolph intersection is very close to the Erskine intersection with Glenallen. It does not take long for the line to get onto Randolph to back up beyond the Erskine intersection. This intersection has a significant opportunity for creating traffic problems and/or hazardous accidents as cars turn right off of Randolph and left onto Glenallen towards Randolph.

The only thing that makes sense to me in this situation is to create a small biking/walking path from the boundary of the apartment buildings to the current Erskine Avenue and make that a walking and biking path instead of a road (obviously preserving driving access to current residents). This would not create hazardous traffic situations with lots of left turns at the Erskine/Glenallen/Randolph intersection, but it would give residents of the apartment buildings easier access to the Brookside amenities. This plan could reduce the number of trees removed to zero, or very close to it. Having Erskine as a walking/biking-only path could also make the new apartment complex a more walkable community, which is attractive for residents and could have a positive impact on businesses nearby, giving people a motivation to stay in the neighborhood rather than drive further towards downtown Wheaton.

I hope that you will consider my thoughts, and I appreciate the opportunity to offer feedback.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lindsay Roe", written in a cursive style.

Lindsay Roe