

June 10, 2024

Mrs. Kathleen Byrne, Hearing Examiner  
Office of Zoning & Administrative Hearings  
Montgomery County Government, Maryland.  
100 Maryland Ave, Rockville, MD 20850.

**Subject: Local Map Amendment H149 - Glenmont Forest Apt Rezoning - Community Concerns Access via Erskine Ave.**

Dear Mrs. Byrne,

On November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, an application for a local map amendment to the zoning ordinance was submitted by Glenmont Forest Investors LP, c/o Grady Management, Inc. In this application a reclassification of the property located in the I3-63 Election District of Montgomery County and known as the "Americana Glenmont" Subdivision & "Americana Glenmont Apartments" Subdivision consisting of approximately 34.87 acres from the R=30 Zone to the CRF-I. 75 (C-0.25, R-1.5, H-75) Zone. The proposed new development involved a significant increase in units (from 485 to 2275) including commercial areas and townhouses. While this project represents a major development for the Glenmont area, it was reviewed and submitted recently for approval to the Planning Board of Montgomery County. **We want to express several major concerns related to pendant issues in the proposed development, and unanswered questions by community members.**

It is our understanding that this rezoning request has been filed under the land use device known as a "floating zone," designed to offer landowners greater flexibility in land use. According to the Guide to Maryland Zoning Decision, floating zone requests **require careful consideration with safeguards to ensure compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and to assess their public interest.**

As residents of the defined neighborhood, **we emphasize that any detrimental effects on the surrounding area must be carefully evaluated to determine compatibility.** After a thorough analysis of the community concerns and documentation found on MOCO OZAH's link<sup>1,2</sup>, **we, residents, conclude that the proposed development will be detrimental to the involved communities (located at Erskine Ave., Glenallan Ave, and Wallace Ave. and surrounding areas) if Erskine Avenue becomes an open public road.** This conclusion is based on several key factors, including potential impacts on traffic, environmental concerns, strain on local infrastructure, and community well-being.

**Traffic Congestion:** One of the primary concerns raised during the MOCO planning board was the anticipated increase in traffic congestion. The Glenmont area is already experiencing significant traffic issues during peak hours. The addition of a large development will exacerbate these problems, leading to longer commute times, increased road wear, and higher accident rates. The proposed mitigation measures, such as traffic lights and road expansions, are insufficient to address the scale of the problem. In the review by MOCO transportation, it was mentioned the potential delays in the whole transit network (see attachment D of the Glenmont Forest Final Review<sup>3</sup> but **no mitigation measures were proposed**

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OZAH/Hearings/H149.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OZAH/Resources/Files/pdf/2024/Hearings/H149/Exhibit%2013%20Map%20of%20the%20Glenmont%20Neighborhood.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/H149-F20240450-Glenmont-Forest-Report-FINAL.pdf>

because “it was going to be revised in a later stage.” Additionally, during the meeting with developers and affected communities, it was confirmed that the option of keeping Erskine and Wallace Avenue -as it has been for decades - would not affect the new development. MOCO transportation still has plans for connecting Erskine Ave with Wallace Ave, however, the proposed development and MOCO reviewers were silent on this topic.

We noticed, however, that previous to the MOCO planning board meeting on May 30th, a revised review document was included in which the second access road opening via Randolph included a note as “**Proposed access may not be allowed**” (see figure 9. Vehicle circulation for the proposed development)<sup>4</sup>. These news last-minute changes raised red flags for safety knowing the challenges in transportation (for cars and pedestrians) in this hot spot of the Georgia axis with Randolph Ave (see MOCO Planning Crash Map<sup>5</sup>; pedestrian safety<sup>6,7</sup>).

As community members, **we would like to express our concerns about the limited information on the impact of this high-density development on pedestrian safety.** There is an elementary school <sup>8</sup> just a block away from Erskine/Wallace/Glenallan Ave and this proposed development, and we are still surprised that the MOCO public school system did not raise safety issues for their students on the impact of this new development. For example, there are different terrain levels between Randolph Ave (higher ground) and Glenallan Ave and also between the proposed development and Erskine Avenue (lover ground) (see Figures 1, 2, and 3).

Figure 1 Erskine Avenue and Glenallan Avenue intersection



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<sup>4</sup> Idem 3

<sup>5</sup> <https://mcplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=3bec8ba90fca4cc182cc042ed38af0e7>

<sup>6</sup> <https://cnsmaryland.org/pedestrian-accidents-pile-up-on-maryland-roads/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/pedestrian-struck-killed-near-glenmont-metro-station-alberto-alexander-duque/79/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/glenallanes/>

Figure 2. The sidewalk on one side of Glenallan Avenue.



Figure 3. Drainage system between Erskine Avenue and Wallace Avenue.



Erskine Avenue (a MOCO non-maintained, no outlet road) intersects and crosses with Glenallan Avenue as an easement for homeowners. **There are major safety challenges in this intersection/cross.** Previous attempts by residents requesting pedestrian crossings and sidewalks in a section of Glenallan Avenue to MOCO failed due to major concerns on transit safety (Randolph Avenue a 55 MPH with a right turn to Glenallan Avenue (25 MPH) in a sloped (inclined) road towards to Brookside Gardens. Different options proposed by the residents were denied in the past which raised new red flags. Additionally, a drainage system recently completed by MOCO (see annex GLENALLAN AVE DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT WSSC GRID: 216NW02, TAX MAP: JQ123) between Erskine Ave and Wallace Avenue increases the safety issues for all types of transit. Regarding the bike access proposed, it did not consider

the inclination of Glenallan Avenue towards Brookside Gardens and the safety issues involved. We consider that all of the above are major concerns that should be addressed before moving forward with the development.

**Environmental Impact:** The proposed development poses several environmental risks. The construction phase will involve significant land clearing, leading to habitat destruction and increased runoff, which can impact local waterways. Additionally, the long-term increase in population density will contribute to higher levels of pollution and waste, putting further strain on the local ecosystem. The environmental impact assessment provided by the developers does not adequately address these concerns or propose sufficient remediation strategies. 105 big-size trees are proposed to be replaced with new ones. During the work conducted in this drained system mentioned above, several trees were also removed without replacement. The neighborhood is losing its canopy and character due to development projects that do not assess the long-term impact.

**Strain on Local Infrastructure:** Glenmont's current infrastructure, including schools, healthcare facilities, and public services, is not equipped to manage the influx of new residents that the development would bring. Schools are already at capacity, and local healthcare facilities report long wait times and limited availability. The proposed development does not include sufficient plans for expanding these critical services, which will lead to a decline in the quality of life for both current and new residents.

**Community Well-being:** The overwhelming sentiment from community members during the planning board and local meetings was one of concern for the preservation of the community's character and well-being. The proposed high-density development is not in keeping with the existing residential nature of Glenmont, which is characterized by single-family homes and green spaces, if Erskine Avenue will be open as a public road. The development threatens to disrupt the social fabric of the community, increase noise pollution, and reduce the availability of recreational spaces that are essential for the well-being of residents.


As residents, the projected new development with a fivefold increase in population density will have profound and far-reaching consequences on our community's quality of life: impacting traffic congestion, environmental degradation, strain on public services, and the disruption of community well-being. The detrimental effects of the proposed development will impact decreasing property value in the neighborhood, and this should be avoided at any cost. It is evident that the proposed development has not been carefully considered in terms of these impacts, and thus, **we strongly advocate for the postponement of this project until a thorough review is conducted, and most pendant issues are cleared in conjunction with the involved communities.**

In conclusion, **this development proposal must be postponed until a more detailed and granular review addresses all the above-mentioned concerns and Erskine Avenue continues as it has been for the last 60 years maintaining the neighborhood character.**

Sincerely,

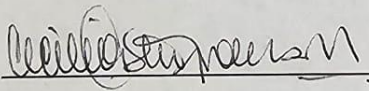
Signed by Resident's Name and address

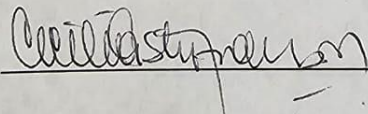
Name(s): Leopoldo Villegas  
Address: 2008 Glenallan Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20902

Signature(s): 

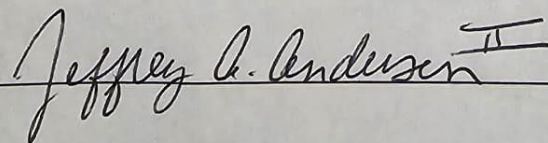
Name(s): Bradley Larson  
Address: 2006 Wallace Ave Silver Spring MD 20902

Signature(s): 

Name(s):  M. CECILIA CASTRO DE ANDERSON  
Address: 2009 ERSKINE AVENUE - SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

Signature(s): 

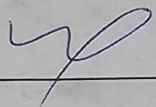
Name(s): JEFFREY A. ANDERSON  
Address: 2009 ERSKINE AVE., SILVER SPRING, MD 20902

Signature(s): 

(LV)

Name(s): Etienne Marcoux

Address: 2005 Erskine Ave, Silver Spring 20902

Signature(s): 

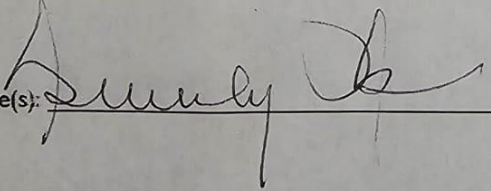
Name(s): Lindsay Roe

Address: 2005 Erskine Ave. Silver Spring, MD 20902

Signature(s): 

Name(s): Beverly OBrien

Address: 2012 Glen Allan AVE.

Signature(s): 

Name(s):

Address:

Signature(s):

(LW)