

Developer Unveils Proposal for Six-Story Apartment Complex on Arlington Road

Building would replace block of single-family homes near Bethesda Elementary

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VIA ZOM LIVING

A developer is readying plans to build a six-story apartment community that spans an entire block on Arlington Road across from the Bethesda Elementary School fields.

Residents in the Edgemoor neighborhood got a preliminary look on Wednesday at the proposal by ZOM Living, the Florida-based company that has assembled eight properties for the project.

Wednesday's meeting came as ZOM is preparing to seek its first round of planning board approvals to redevelop the group of single-family homes that lie between Moorland and Edgemoor lanes.

Chris Love, ZOM's development manager, said he couldn't provide an estimated square footage or dwelling count for the complex this early in the process, but his company will ask for permission to build up to 235 units. The building will feature a mix of studios and one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, and the façade design will separate the structure visually into two sections, Love said.

Tenants will have access to a rooftop pool surrounded by greenery, a fitness center and a wireless lounge with a café, he said.

As part of the project, ZOM intends to widen sidewalks, create a walking path connecting Moorland and Edgemoor lanes, plant trees and arrange seating areas along the street.





Preliminary images of proposed apartments for Arlington Road in Bethesda. Credit: ZOM Living.

The building can reach a maximum height of 60 feet, the new cap established in May with the passage of the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan.

ZOM had lobbied to raise the height cap to 75 feet, sparking opposition from residents in the Edgemoor Citizens Association. However, the County Council denied the request and limited properties along Arlington Road to 60 feet. The decision created a transition zone that separated taller buildings near the Bethesda Metro station from neighborhoods of single-family homes, according to county legislative analyst Marlene Michaelson.

David Barnes, Edgemoor Citizens Association's vice president, said he doesn't have any lingering problems with the apartment project and appreciates ZOM's willingness to work through the community concerns about architecture, parking and landscaping.

"They seemed to understand that people want attractive sidewalks and pedestrian passages and they don't want oppressively rigid buildings that look like [Works Progress Administration] construction or brutalism," he said.

The eight single-family homes slated for redevelopment serve as professional offices and residences. Barnes said they "could use some sprucing up."

County law states that developers must have held a community meeting within 90 days of the submission, but Love couldn't provide a more exact timeline. He said getting through the development approval process typically takes between 18 months and two years.

Love said the Bethesda development would be ZOM's first apartment project in Montgomery County.