

Lennar Switches Gears at Seneca

Lennar has decided to replace the 'Coming Soon' sign with another at Seneca Meadows in Clarksburg. The new one says 'For Sale.'

In a switch from its previous plans, the builder decided to put its 208 lots at the Shawnee Lane project on the market and is now awaiting offers.

Split into 190 towns and 18 singles, the Seneca lots constitute one of the larger blocks of available attached units in the county. Lennar anticipates a sale with the lots fully recorded and with 68 of them base-paved.

In other words, Lennar is dangling lots in front of other builders that are largely ready to go. The buyer can settle and head to the permitting department in short order.

Among other jobs, the competition to the Seneca lots for that potential buyer will include the townhouse competition from Winchester at Cabin Branch, NVR and Craftmark's ongoing program at Clarksburg Village, and Miller & Smith in the Town Center. Pulte also has a newly signed deal to build 188 towns and two-over-two's at the coming 'Century' property in Germantown.

It was a \$16 million transaction in early 2014 that gave Lennar a position at Seneca Meadows. Seller Duffie Inc. retained the rights to the apartments and those are not part of the deal.

Fraser Forbes Real Estate Services has the listing.

Interest in G'burg's 'Fishman' Site

Long vacant, the 'Fishman' parcel in Olde Towne Gaithersburg has an interested suitor.

Ellisdale Construction out of Northern Virginia is in a study period with the City of Gaithersburg to acquire and develop the site at 315 E. Diamond Avenue.

The Fishman property was long ago a multi-tenant office building, but the City demolished it about five years ago and has been seeking developer interest since. Less than an acre, it drew the interest of Doug Jemal for a time, but his plan for another office building never came to fruition.

Ellisdale has been talking to the City for several months about a mixed-use project of apartments above retail. If it comes to fruition, it could provide a vital street-fronting retail project to the Gaithersburg Station Apartments on the opposite side of the street.



The currently vacant Fishman property

The Station, developed by Archstone, has a row of retail storefronts that have remained vacant since the apartment started leasing, in part because E. Diamond hasn't drawn the foot traffic retailers want. New apartments on Ellisdale could start to change that.

Elm Street, Nichols Win TH Site Plan Approvals

Two townhouse projects won approval in recent weeks at the Planning Board, both of them in the up-county.

First up was Elm Street Development's plan for 44 towns, plus two singles (one existing) on Mateny Hill Road in Germantown. Located off Dawson Farm Road, the property is part of the Clopper Village area, where Elm Street has long played a role.

Elm Street's plan sparked some opposition because, oddly enough, even though it's in Germantown, it qualifies as 'infill development.' The Board agreed that its plan for mostly townhouses on the two parcels zoned RT-12.5 and R-200 better fulfilled environmental considerations. It has not yet selected a builder.

And a few miles to the east, in another recently-approved plan, NVHomes is heading into the bucolic village of Sandy Spring. It's NV that will build out the 19 townhouse lots newly approved on Route 108 near Meeting House Road. Nichols Contracting, as Stabler 1848 LLC, is developing the site. Nichols won site plan approval at the Planning Board a fortnight ago, and hopes to be in the ground this summer, allowing NV to start sales in the fall.