

New Start on Saul; Aberdeen Home

With a permit in hand, Potomac Heritage Homes (PHH) is ready to start in on the first of a three-lot project in Kensington.

PHH had taken two adjacent and oversized lots in the R-90 zone and subdivided them into three on Saul Road. Two of the lots run 12,600 square feet and the third goes just over 23,000 feet. The first house will soon emerge, spec, with a price in the \$1.8 million range.

5801 Aberdeen Road is Annapolis come to Bethesda.

The Aberdeen Road LLC, headed by John Jacobs, is based in Annapolis and bought the corner lot at Aberdeen and Bradley for \$1.037 million. Jacobs' group has removed the old house, and what's coming will be a 7,000 square foot home on the half-acre lot, priced at \$2.795 million.

Brian Jacobs at Coldwell, likewise based in Annapolis, is handling the sales.

...Three blocks off Wisconsin Avenue, Park Bradley Homes will deliver 5,800 square feet of new house. As One Parkwood LLC, the builder paid \$850,000 for 4512 Highland Avenue recently. The lot runs 6,000 square feet in the Chevy Chase Heights subdivision.

...Axis LLC built its latest new Bethesda home on a sloping lot in Bannockburn. At 7429 Haddington, the house hit the market at just over \$3 million. Axis' Majid Padash had paid \$910,000 for the 20,000 foot lot in early 2018. Mandana Tavakoli at ReMax Realty has the listing.

Infill Bill Still Lacking Support

Builders are hoping that Councilmember Evan Glass' bill proposing two new taxes that they say will wallop infill housing is on its last legs.

The legislation, 34-19 in Council parlance, hasn't been brought to committee since it was yanked from a scheduled worksession a couple months back. Beyond Councilmember Will Jawando, it clearly hasn't found a foothold among the other Councilmembers, and rumors of its imminent demise at the Council are circulating.

The bill's two-fold proposal would subject teardowns to a school impact tax, and an affordable housing tax. Glass says it would raise millions a year for affordable housing, but builders say the approximately \$50,000 double whammy would clock the golden goose of Bethesda's teardown business and its steady creation of new tax revenue for the county.

The Council's recent vote, in late February, to oppose a pair of bills in Annapolis that would create potentially higher property tax rates on larger homes, may be the canary in the coal mine, to push the bird analogies to the limit. Even though owners of smaller homes might benefit from the bill's tiered-tax system, the Council voted to oppose the General Assembly legislation, concerned that it would be construed as anti-business. That's just the position builders have taken on Glass' bill at the Council.

Renovation Underway on Retail Corner

Six months out, the retail in the southwest corner of Route 355 and Shady Grove Road will look fully renovated.

That's roughly the schedule Promark Partners is on to complete a multi-million dollar overhaul that includes the approximately 14,000 square foot retail strip. The Rockville developer pulled permits last month and is underway on work now, including bumping the ceilings higher, from ten to 15 feet on the retail spaces, and refreshing the facades. Most of the leases were allowed to lapse to get to this point, but Promark has letters of intent for the renovated spaces. Promark also owns the office building next door at 16220 Frederick Road, and will likewise make improvements to it. That building is already 95 percent leased.

A Food Expansion

From a single cheese product, Mahi Foods has grown to distribute a wide range of specialty and Indian foods, up and down the east coast. The group has just doubled in size, from just under 5,100 square feet to 10,190 feet at 16598 – 16742 Oakmont Avenue, Gaithersburg.

Craig Kates at Edge Commercial Real Estate repped the tenant, while Nathan Bortnick and Ethan Bernardi at Transwestern repped landlord Willco Co.