

Greetings!

As you have heard, there is a proposed 216 unit Apartment Complex being planned for the Lake Murray Marina property. The Developer, Ben Arnold (731-4231 [www.arnoldfamilycorp.com](http://www.arnoldfamilycorp.com) ), is planning to build an upscale, gated development called "Marina Bay Apartments." Several members of the BDFCA Board did meet with Mr. Arnold in an informal setting. He wanted to meet one-on-one with me, and I wanted to include the whole Board. We actually agreed on his meeting with 3 of us. Speculation abounds as to the details of this development, so I wanted to let you know more about it. We have received many questions as to where it all stands now.

The plans (preliminary artist's renderings) that Mr. Arnold showed us were quite nice. To be fair, he describes these apartments as upscale. The complex will be gated with tasteful landscaping. The buildings will be four stories with stone siding. There will be a pool and putting green for the residents outside the "clubhouse/office" main building. Parking for the residents will be within the gates. The current boat storage facilities will be removed, as will the current boat parking lot. The Marina operation will remain with boat slips, boat rentals, etc. The restaurant is to be rebuilt to be more upscale with catering facilities as well. The current number of car parking spots for Marina patrons will be slightly increased. He assured us that all zoning codes will be exceeded in regards to building, water quality, and other infrastructure. He also plans to do this in one 13 month phase, not to spread it out over several years. Yet, they still are proposed *to be apartments*.

However any project to be put on the Marina property brings along with it significant impacts to the overall Ballentine/Marina Rd community. These range from increased traffic (during construction and when finished), the ecological impact on Lake Murray quality, and to the character of the Community as a whole. Roughly 8 years ago, several 14 story condo towers were proposed. The Community and BDFCA opposed this development. It definitely did not fit our single dwelling neighborhood. Roughly 5 years ago, Mr. Arnold came back with a proposal for a low-rise, 3 story (within code) upscale condominium development. The BDFCA's position at this time was that the Condos were more in character with our single-dwelling community due to their homeowners' direct investment. Unfortunately, for Mr. Arnold, the housing market "crashed" and he was unable to complete the project without pre-sales. It is our assertion that the currently proposed apartments would not be in character with our community due to the transient nature of the apartment business. We told Mr. Arnold that he would get much more support from the Community if he were putting in another Condominium development.

We first heard of the Marina Bay proposal, when the Department of Housing and Urban Development placed a public notice in the State Newspaper. This notice, required by law, invited Public Comment on the effects of having this project next to wetlands (Lake Murray). Mr. Arnold is seeking FHA financing for his apartments, which is why the HUD had to be involved. Mr. Arnold did assure us he has no intention of any Section 8 involvement. Thankfully, many interested parties (including the BDFCA) expressed their concerns of the effect on Lake Murray's water quality with such a development being located right on the water. At present, HUD's next step is to issue a decision on the matter. It is possible that it could end here. I do not know if there is any recourse for either side after the decision is made. As of Friday, HUD said they are deliberating on the matter and hope to issue their decision soon. HUD repeatedly states they are concerned with environmental impact only. They are evidently receiving lots of comments about traffic, property value, and other impacts as well.

As far as the County's Planning and Development Services Department, the State Newspaper quoted Director Ana Almeida (576-2168 and [almeidaa@rcgov.us](mailto:almeidaa@rcgov.us) ) as saying that if the project remains within code that there may be no public hearings. Information and Meeting Requests Director Deborah Moore ( 576-2178 and [moorede@rcgov.us](mailto:moorede@rcgov.us) ) emailed that the staff is currently going through the application packet to see if the project will be on our September's Development Review Team agenda (DRT). Notices of the DRT meeting will be sent out to the neighbors that are within a 100 feet of the proposed project. The County website shows that the DRT is next scheduled to meet on September 9 at 1 pm at 2020 Hampton. There is a "subject to change" disclaimer. BDFCA has asked to be notified as well.

Our County Councilman, Bill Malinowski (932-7919 and [malinowskib@rcgov.us](mailto:malinowskib@rcgov.us) ), has been making inquiries for us as well. He was told that the apartments were approved 5 years ago, and that they are just now being built. I forwarded him some information that the approved project of five years ago was specifically condos. He is following up on that.

For brevity of this message, I did not go into the long term impacts at depth. I'm sure that through conversation with your neighbors, you have come to some of your own conclusions. However, if you wish to contact us, we can elaborate more. If you have any relevant information, we would love to hear from you.

Our next regularly-scheduled General Meeting of the Ballentine-Dutch Fork Civic Association is at 6:30 pm on Monday September 13. It is open to the public. We have invited Mr. Arnold and his Team to attend and address the Membership. We are awaiting his RSVP.

So that's where it now stands. We will send out more information as it becomes available. If you want to become involved and ask questions or express your concerns, I invite you to contact the people listed above. I am soliciting your involvement as well and invite you to contact us with questions and comments.

Thank you,  
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