



CHESTNUT HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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CHCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, May 25, 2023, at 7:00pm

In Person at SCHA, 500 W. Willow Grove Ave. – Haber Room

In person: Laura Lucas, Beth Wright, Jennifer McHugh, Ross Pilling, Jeff Duncan, Cathy Brzozowski, Janel Baselice, David Caulk, Camille Peluso, Richard Bartholomew, Matt Rutt, Laurence McEwen, Kathi Clayton, Tim Breslin.

On zoom: Christina Reichert, John Landis, George Deming, Tony Banks

1. **President's Welcome.** April 2023 minutes – unanimously approved
2. **Physical Division**

184 E. Willow Grove: For the proposed use of four dwelling units in two separate principle existing structures on a parcel zoned RSA-3 for a single-dwelling unit.

Steve Masters (9th Ward) from Mt. Airy - brought in to represent direct or very near neighbors. Feels that almost all of the neighbors' concerns have been addressed. Key concern is to ensure that the property is well maintained and receives necessary maintenance. Acknowledged that occupant requires all four of the rentals to have the resources necessary to upkeep space. Ensures there will not be a quality-of-life issue. Not asking LUPZ to amend motion.

Originally 2 apartments with a contractor's office on first floor. Has been 4 apartments in the rear structure since at least the 90s. 1 unit in the front house. Property will be owner occupied. No increase in size of rear building in footprint. Each apartment will have on one site parking space. Front house, single occupancy.

Concerned neighbor Mr. Clark claimed to represent the 16 neighbors who signed a petition/letter of concern against the zoning variance (presented to the LUPZ at the beginning of the hearing process, and not presented to the CHCA board). Believes the CHCA is not representing or defending the community.

Larry McEwen makes the following motion: To support this application for a zoning variance to allow for four apartments in the rear structure and one living unit in the front house, with the following provisos:

1. The property will be owner occupied and/or managed by a local professional management company.
2. No increase in the footprint and building mass of the rear structure will be allowed.
3. The rear building can only be replaced in kind except by a casualty loss.
4. Each apartment will be limited to one on-site parking space.
5. The Owner will be responsible for paying reasonable trash fines incurred by neighbors for improper trash handling by the tenants.
6. The front house will be single family (occupancy).

Matt Rutt seconds the motion. **Motion passes unanimously.**

8129 Germantown: Variance for visitor accommodations at 2nd floor in same building with existing retail on 1st floor of existing structure in CMX1 zoning – Purchased 2019-2020. Apartment being used by out of town employees (not long term). 2nd floor apartment currently allows for long term tenants. Neighbors on opposing side of alley had concerns (Devon Street). LUPZ believed the concerns were addressed by owners. No neighbors attended follow up meeting.

Camille Peluso raised concern that there was no letter or statement from neighbors confirming resolution. Concern about viable long-term apartment vs. numerous and desperate tenants in and out. Needs clarity over the hardship that is allowing for this variance.

Beth Wright – Four-page document responding to the possibility of an apartment becoming an Air BnB. Asks to table the proposal until the document can be distributed to the board, as the City of Philadelphia and CHCA decide on its position regarding Air Bnb / short term rentals. Beth makes a motion to suspend. Jeff Duncan seconds the motion.

Devon Street neighbor Deb Abelow expresses concern that the property owner, Ms. Gibons, continues to change the details and dates regarding possible business-related tenants. Requests that there is a return to the recording of the previous LUPZ meeting to clarify and nail down details.

Jeff Duncan believes that the request for the Airbnb variance is in opposition to the new city regulations regarding short term rentals.

John Landis – Applicants have been remarkable with the clarity and forthcoming of their request. Members visited the site to check on the issues regarding parking and access. DRC and LUPZ have done their diligence. Variance does not establish a precedent, decisions on a case by case basis, analyzing benefits to applicant vs. the community impact. Particularly regarding rare cases.

Beth Wright moves to table the motion for further discussion. Roll call vote was held. 11 – Voted to continue with motion. 7 – to table the vote

Motion moves to a vote – Motion to was made to: Support of this unique application for a (use) variance to allow Visitor Accommodations. The provision that the variance will end with a change in ownership will be attached to the deed and recorded with the Office of the Prothonotary (284 City Hall).

Roll call vote. Yes – 11. No – 6. Abstain 1. The motion passes.

3. Governance – Beth Wright

- a. Review of Development Review Committee Charter (vote needed)
- b. Review of Land Use, Planning, and Zoning Committee Charter (vote needed)

Confident that the DRC and LUPZ charters are clearly represented in their current state.

Matt Rutt – Believes we should focus on the process, and then create a new charter after. Trusts that what needs to be patched is being patched. He said he believes the process is broken and there needs to overhaul it, which he acknowledges is in process.

Kathi Clayton – Everyone agrees that the development review process needs to be looked at. The three Chestnut Hill RCO executive directors and three board presidents put out a survey to the community in order to information about the what the community knows and doesn't know. Results will be used as a tool in the evaluation and updating of the process.

Facilitator will establish a conversation among all current RCOs– late summer, early fall. Goal is that by the end of the fall it is completed. Conservancy, CHCA and the CH Build. (9th Ward Republicans, Friends of the Wissahickon).

LUPZ and DRC – Motion to vote on charter. Beth Wright. Seconded by Larry McEwen. Laura Lucas amends motion to pass LUPZ and DRC charters simultaneously. Jeff Duncan seconds. All in favor. Unanimous. Motion passed.

Amendment to charter - “Following appropriate warnings from the chair, committee member may be removed by the president, at the recommendation of the chair, after three absences.”

Beth Wright makes motion. Jeff Duncan seconds. Unanimous passing of amendment.

4. Election

Seven openings on the board. Seven nominations. Will be voting on the bylaw changes. Need five people to act as judges for vote counting.

5. Social Division

a. June 7 – Garden Party – Kathi/Beth – 5 – 7pm – Party by Highland Station. 30 people signed up. Music, alcohol and non-alcoholic beverages.

b. Pastorius Park Concerts 2023 – help needed – terrific slate of bands – New form for volunteers going out. Full sponsorships. Stage set up on June 3rd.

c. Fall Frolic – Sponsors. Committee. Cathy Brzozowski on board.

6. June Board Meeting/Annual Membership Meeting – June 22nd – Chestnut Hill Presbyterian on Germantown Avenue. Regular board meeting prior to the annual membership meeting.

7. Membership –

Great month. Spring For the Arts event successful.

April 25 thru May 25 - 25 new members. 77 renewals.