

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of April 18, 2023

The DRC meeting was held via Zoom

Members Present

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| ✓ Larry McEwen, Co-chair | ✓ Sam Filippi, Business Association |
| ✓ John Landis, Co-chair | , Parking Foundation |
| ✓ Chris Linn, LUPZC | , Streetscape Committee |
| ✓ Steve Gendler, LUPZC | ✓ Larry McEwen, VP Physical |
| ✓ Patricia Cove, HDAC | Kathi Clayton, President CHCA (ex-officio) |

Others Attending

Michael Bowman, attorney for 8129 Germantown

Sean Gibbon, owner 8129 Germantown

Cheryl Massaro, neighbor 8129 Germantown

Candace Le Claire, neighbor 8129 Germantown

Deb Abelow, 8129 Germantown

Andrew Keats, owner 184 E Willow Grove Ave

Henry Clinton, attorney 184 E Willow Grove Ave

Amy Clark, neighbor 184 E Willow Grove Ave

Sarah Katz, neighbor 184 E Willow Grove Ave

John Clark, neighbor 184 E Willow Grove Ave

Craig Schelter, LUPZC

Lori Salgonicoff, CH Conservancy

Celeste Hardester, Development Review Facilitator

Anne McNiff, Director CHCA

Melissa Nash, recorder

The meeting was opened by Larry McEwen, co-chair, at 7:04 pm. Committee members introduced themselves. The process was briefly explained. There are two action items on the agenda.

8129 Germantown Avenue

• Presentation: Michael Bowman, attorney, and Sean Gibbons, property owner, presented the proposal. The first floor of the building is an existing business, Home Works Well. This business is an umbrella business for other related businesses that understand that remote working is the future of work. The second floor is a two-bedroom apartment. Home Works Well wants to use the apartment to accommodate employees from remote places to stay during in-person visits. There would be no long term rentals. They would also like to use the apartment for short term rentals in-between business visits. This requires a variance to be used in this way in this zoning district. There is no plan to change the building on the interior or the exterior. The apartment has about 1000 sq ft. Precedents for short term stay venues include 7916 Ardleigh and the Chestnut Hill Hotel just a couple of blocks away.

•Committee Questions/Comments: John Landis asked about the short term permit. This would qualify as short term, which is less than 30 days. How long would employees stay in the apartment? They stay for usually 4 days. They anticipate other renters to stay similar number of days. There will be a management company. Steve Gendler asked if both bedrooms would be used. Both would be used for a single tenant. It was also asked how money would be charged. The management company would manage this. One employee at a time would occupy the apartment. The zoning is CMX-1, which allows the apartment, but not short term rentals. The use priority would be the employees. Celeste Hardester noted that Airbnb type rentals are not allowed in CMX-1. J Landis asked about parking. There is a garage off the alley behind the building.

•Neighbor Comments: Deb Abelow, a neighbor whose property backs up to the alley stated that the garage are filled with junk and cannot be used for parking. It was noted that in order to obtain the use license, a variance is needed. D Abelow asked how many days per year the unit would be rented. This is not yet known as the company is still developing. S Gibbons noted that the business would be impacted by bad users in the apartment. Larry McEwen asked about how the apartment would be accessed. There is a separate entrance off the avenue. D Abelow noted that it is not realistic to say the garage will be used for parking as the alley is often filled with cars parked in front of the garage. Candace Le Claire, another Devon Street neighbor, noted that there are often 20-25 cars behind the building. It is a very busy alley. This will also take business away from the hotel. M Bowman stated that the garages have been cleaned out. L McEwen asked about Airbnb screening. The garage has 2 bays and is entered from a driveway off the alley. It was asked if the apartment could be entered from the rear. It can. Cheryl Massaro noted that many people park in front of the garage doors.

•Committee Action: It was noted that there should be more information about the garage access and alley traffic. Committee members should see the alley and garage. Patricia Cove asked the proposal to be seen by HDAC as it is a contributing property. It could have an effect on the business district. The meeting of the HDAC is 6:30 on May 4. LUPZC would also like to review the proposal. That meeting is on May 4 at 8 PM. A site plan showing the garage and alley is needed as well as additional photos of that area. J Landis stated that there is no concern for the basic proposal; the concern is about the use will affect the area. D Abelow noted that this is not a minor change.

184 E. Willow Grove

•Presentation: Owner Andrew Keats and attorney Henry Clinton presented the proposal. H Clinton described the property, which is non-conforming and needs to be legalized. The property has a house on W Willow Grove Avenue In the rear a building that predates zoning contains 4 apartments and a garage. A Keats stated that he moved into one of the rear apartments 4-1/2 years ago. This rear building was a barn, and then became two apartments on the upper level and business on the lower level. The lower level was converted into 2 apartments. The original tenant appeared to be mostly family. The renters are long term renters. A Keats found out that the apartments were not legal last year. Three apartments are 2 bedroom/1 bath. One is 1 bedroom/I bath. When the property owner needed to sell the property, A Keats bought it and wants to legalize it. The current use has existed for a long time and there are other multifamily places in the area. A Keats lives in one of the 2 bedroom units. The house is a single rental. The property is zoned RSA 3. The lot is 8209 sq ft. It is larger than is required. In summary, the property includes the house in the front, the rear building with 4 units and a garage and room for 4 parking spaces. The garage is used for storage. There is street parking. The street frontage of the lot is 24'-4" so is not sufficient for a car.

There is parking across the street along Winston Park. Trash is place in front of the front house. The rear building is on the property line.

- Committee Comments/Questions: It was asked if Elfant (rental management) did not know the apartments were not legal. P Cove asked how many units were in the front house. It is a single unit. The apartments in the rear do not fit into the code. It was also asked if the zoning would change. It would not. Why is the set-up not grandfathered? It seems to have the history. S Gendler noted that there is an easement to Winston Road. It seems to be for meter reading. It was suggested it could be used for trash.

- Neighbor Comments/Questions: Amy Clark, a neighbor, placed her concerns in a letter. The amount of trash is excessive. It goes over the street property line. Neighbors have received trash violations that do not belong to them. There is too much parking needed. At present there are 7 cars for the residents, but it could go to 10. She also had a concern that firetrucks could not access the rear. Sarah Katz, another neighbor, stated that rodents have increased and that there are squirrels in the main house. The property needs a plan for trash and maintenance. A Keats noted that he is trying to deal with trash and extra cars can park around the park. It was asked if onsite parking could be managed better. John Clark, a neighbor, stated that in the past the buildings were occupied by friends and family and was amore controlled environment. Since this occupancy has changed, the site has gone downhill. He noted that an older neighbor tried to legalize the property but dropped it. Neighbors also want no expansion. A Keats noted he has been working on the squirrels

- Committee Actions: The committee felt that it needs to see the property. J Landis suggested a walk around for the property. It was also suggested that A Keats meet with the neighbors to work on concerns before the next meeting. The property should be seen by HDAC at 6:30 and LUPZC at 8 PM on May 4. The committees will explore different times for the meetings. S Gendler suggested exploring the easement. A site plan with dimensions would be helpful. L McEwen stated that he could visit the property next Thursday at 6 pm. This works for everyone. It was noted that the 8129 alley could be viewed on Friday. Some of the parking problems are due to the Bocce Club.

Committee Business

- Reflection on two properties seen tonight: There was some general discussion of some of the issues that came up tonight.

- Updates: Chestnut Hill Village is cutting down large trees. It seems they should have a permit. The new pool area has not been done. The sign at the shopping center at the bottom of the hill was questioned. Does it fit the Chestnut Hill overlay?

- Minutes: The January minutes were approved with minor adjustments.

- Meet in Person: It was suggested that the committee meet in person. An alternate location for the hospital will be needed. Suggestions include the firehouse and the Meeting House (charges). The meetings could be hybrid. Meeting spaces should be explored.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 PM.