

# DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE

*Minutes of the Meeting of May 18, 2021*

The DRC meeting was held via Zoom

## Members Present

<u>✓</u> Larry McEwen, Co-chair	<u>✓</u> Sam Filippi, Business Assn.
<u>✓</u> John Landis, Co-Chair	<u>✓</u> Richard Snowden, TT&P
<u>✓</u> Steve Gendler, LUPZC	
<u>✓</u> Jean McCoubrey, LUPZC	<u>✓</u> Jan Albaum, Streetscape Committee
<u>✓</u> Patricia Cove, HDAC	<u>✓</u> Tony Banks, VP Physical (interim)
	<u>✓</u> Kathi Clayton, CHCA President

## Others Attending

Harry Cook, attorney for 540 W. Moreland and 215 E Evergreen

Ian Toner, architect for 540 W. Moreland

Diane Fiske, *Local* and *Inquirer*

Neighbors of 540 W. Moreland

Graciela Vargas and Richard Corkery, owners 215 E Evergreen

Jesse Carpino, 8224 Germantown Ave

Stanley Baum, owner 8224 Germantown Ave

Jennifer Tinterfass, attorney for 8224 Germantown

Other interested community members

Joyce Lenhardt, LUPZC

Anne McNiff, Director CHCA

Celeste Hardester, Development Review Facilitator

Melissa Nash, recorder

The meeting was opened by Larry McEwen, co-chair, at 7:02 pm. Approval of the agenda was the first order of business. The April 13 minutes were discussed; minor errors were noted. It was moved and seconded that the minutes be approved with the correction of the errors. The minutes were approved.

## **540 W Moreland**

•Presentation: Attorney Harry Cook presented the project. A variance is needed to create 2 lots from one. Lot B has a historic building on it and is a flag lot. Lot C would be a vacant lot after an existing garage is demolished. A variance is needed as the street frontage for lot B should be 75' but is only 15'. Lot B would be .25 AC and lot C would be .3 AC The house has a historic designation and needs to be restored. A bulk notification mailing was sent to 29 addresses. The ZBA hearing is August 4.

•Committee Comments: John Landis asked why they did not simply split the lot into 2 75' wide lots by right. L McEwen noted that for a flag lot the street frontage requirement can be met with 2/3 of the required frontage, which would be 50'. Ian Toner, the architect for this project, noted that many scenarios were considered; no scenario met all requirements. L McEwen felt that this could be done

with the 2/3 rule. Steve Gendler asked if a neighbor driveway with an easement could be used. This was not discussed. It was asked if there would be a garage for the historic property. It would not have a garage. Richard Snowden stated that he would want to see the plan for the new lot and a plan for the restoration for the historic house. The new building needs to be shown. This action does not respect the historic house. It was noted that there are no plans. The committee expressed that the lack of a plan is a problem. Patricia Cove asked if the new lot would have only one structure. H Cook noted that there is no plan for the lot. P Cove noted the next meetings are on June 3; committees will want these questions addressed.

•Neighbor Comments: Walt Summers, a neighbor, began the neighbor comments but due to technical difficulties, Don Ratchford, another neighbor, took over. Neighbors have retained a lawyer. Five points were made. First, flag lots are not desirable. Property can be split without a variance. Second, this does not promote the protection of streetscape with large older houses with large front yards. Third, multi-family housing is not appropriate for this location and should be built near transit. Fourth, building would have a negative effect on sewer, needing a distance sewer connection of a septic system. Fifth, there is no documentation of a hardship. Notices have not yet been received. The current garage is on both lots. The historic building has been left to deteriorate for two plus years. Some windows were installed this week. L McEwen asked about the sewer on Moreland. There is none near. H Cook asked if he could get a copy of the neighbor statement. Judy Bergman, a neighbor at 516, expressed concern about the historic house. She is also concerned about the view of the older house, the plans for the new lot and the demolition of the garage, which she believes might have been a stable. She is opposed to a flag lot and an easement for access. Michelle Connors of 541 W Moreland stated that the prior meeting regarding this site included a plan to turn the historic building into 4 condos and to build an 8 unit building of the remainder of the site, Eric Roland of 525 stated the property should be single family only. D Ratchford reiterated that no hardship has been shown. H Cook noted that there is no vision for lot C but the full lot needs to be split or with an easement have a variance to have 2 houses on one lot and probably an HOA. The garage is not a historical building. They will look into the 2/3 rule. The hardship is that if the historical building were not historical, it could be demolished and the lot could be split as of right. Ellen Goodwin of 530 Toner noted that if the split is done and the new building built, the view of the older house will be lost. The old house should be made beautiful. Charles Block of 539 W Moreland echoed the tragedy of losing the view of the old building. Lori Salgonicoff stated the complex of buildings is recognized by the Historic Commission. The buildings were connected both above ground and below ground. Open space is a character of these properties. An additional building would disrupt the streetscape. Walt Summers asked that the size of septic field for new needs to be considered.

•Committee Action: the project should move to the HDAC and LUPZC meetings on June 3 at 6:30 and 8:00, respectively. A graphic is needed to show the setbacks of other houses on the street. A comprehensive plan with a design for the front house and restoration of the old are needed. L McEwen expressed surprise that the City did not ask for an indication of use for the new lot. It was suggested that widening the flag was necessary. Fifteen feet is a tunnel. Please copy Celeste Hardester on correspondence.

### **215 E Evergreen Ave**

•Presentation: Harry Cook introduced the owners of 215 E Evergreen. The request for a variance is to legalize two existing buildings on one lot. No 2 family residences are allowed in RSA3. The rear

of the property is accessed by an alley that runs from 201 to behind 215. The alley can be used for parking. The converted garage is at least 10 years old. It was residence when the current owners purchased the house. The unit has 494 sq ft. It needs to be legalized and brought up to code before it is rented. L McEwen asked about neighboring house numbers and properties. Neighbor mailings have been sent out. In addition, a petition signed by the neighbors is available. It was asked how this need for a variance came about. G Vargas stated that they wanted to legalize the unit so they brought it to the City. They would agree to long term rentals only. J McCoubrey asked about the connection of the driveway, property line and alley. The easement cannot be blocked. R Snowden asked if they planned to spin-off the second building as a separate residence. That cannot be done as the property is too small. This could be added to the provisos. R Snowden objects to the possibility of expansion. Jan Albaum asked if the unit had been used as a rental before. It has been since at least 2007. The current owners lived in it while the main house was being refurbished. Kathy May, a neighbor, stated support and noted there is plenty of parking and asked that there not be a mountain made of a molehill. She supports the variance. P Cove asked if the HDAC needed to see it. Shirley Hansen of the HDAC stated she has no opposition but the issue of setting a precedent should be on the agenda. Natalie Applewhite, a neighbor, said there were no issues with the alley parking.

- Committee Action: The project should be seen by the HDAC and LUPZC on June 3 at 6:30 and 8:00, respectively. Then it should come back to the DRC in June. Documents presented were sufficient. Conditions for approval will be noted in the letter to ZBA.

### **8224 Germantown**

- Presentation: Jennifer Tinterfass explained that the house currently belongs to Stanley Baum, the grandfather of Jesse Carpino. The Carpinos wish to demolish the house and build a 3 story house for themselves. The property is zoned RSA 3 and is 3976 sq ft in area. J Carpino described the specifics of the project. He and his family would like to create a new dwelling and live in it. The house shares a driveway with the Cat Clinic. The stone wall on the KnitWit side will be retained. The property was made a two-family dwelling. The footprint of the current house will be retained. Parking will be improved. Landscape will be enhanced. The lot width is 23', minimum required width is 25' and there is no side yard. The new house would have an English basement that would be a rental unit. The first floor would be the main living floor with the second and third floors for bedrooms and baths. There would be a mansard roof. There will be high floor to ceiling heights. The overall height of the structure would be lower than what is allowed by code. Elevations were shown and described. The exterior would be white masonry, a decorative railing on the porch planters and an existing stone wall. The scale and the character reflect the neighborhood.

- Committee Comments: J McCoubrey asked to see the site plan. L McEwen asked about the relation of the building and the property line. S Gendler asked if the existing foundations were going to be used. This is not yet known. S Gendler noted that the LUPZC will ask why the existing building is not being used and suggested that a streetscape view be shown. J McCoubrey asked about lot coverage. Maximum coverage is 2250 sq ft. The design is 900 sq ft. P Cove stated the importance of preserving the character of the Historic District. This house is included in the register as significant. It was built in 1885-1889 as part of the Detweiller family complex. This also included the Cat Clinic, possibly the oldest structure in Chestnut Hill. The materials are significant. Sustainability is also an important issue. Its loss would be a loss of history. The CH Conservancy would like the owners to consider rehab. The Conservancy can assist in this endeavor with example

and advice. R Snowden noted that the blacksmith's shop is also a neighboring property. He stated this is one of the most historic groups in Chestnut Hill. This is a ground zero for the Conservancy. J Album asked about parking; the parking would be for the owners and the tenant. Two spaces are shown. J McCoubrey asked about the shared easement. J Carpino noted that there is a casual agreement. There is an actual easement recorded. J Tinterfass stated that the easement agreement can be updated. L McEwen asked about changes in the site plan. The old and the proposed are similar.

- Committee Action: L McEwen noted that this is a preliminary presentation and may not be ready for the next round of committees. A McNiff noted that there is no refusal so it should not go to the LUPZC. The floor plans were re-shown. Access to the basement is a change. Windows would be accommodated as possible. Unit will be fully sprinklered. Currently the first and second floors are separate living unit. Current square footage is 1584; the new building would have 2900 including the basement. The current basement is not usable. The stone wall is not a retaining wall. A shed may be built at the back of the site. R Snowden asked about the hardship. J Carpino stated that currently the house is not appropriate for a growing family. J McCoubrey noted that there will be a demand for proof of other options considered. Property currently belongs to J Carpino's grandfather, Stanley Baum, who purchased the property in mid 1980s. It is rented to two tenants. J Landis asked who designed the new building. There was an architect. An extra effort needs to be taken with the current building. J Carpino will try this. L McEwen asked that communication be made through Anne McNiff, Celeste Hardester or Lori Salgonicoff. L Salgonicoff suggested getting advice and not disrupting the streetscape. The front of the building is an important starting point. Committees will be asked about efforts to preserve the building. L McEwen noted adding on to the existing would increase coverage. R Snowden noted that some buildings cannot be expanded. It is sellable in this market. Removing historic structures removes history.

### **Committee Reports/Updates**

- New Fire Station: P Cove brought up an issue of exterior lighting at the new station. There have been calls from neighbors. Questions about the lighting included the light levels and how long the lights are on. The parking situation for the fire station seems to be OK. A McNiff will check the agreement with the fire station to see if lighting is mentioned.

- Parking Foundation Lighting: L McEwen stated that a new LED fixture was installed in the Foundation's Turquoise lot. The quality of light was much improved. He encouraged the Parking Foundation to do more.

### **Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 PM.