

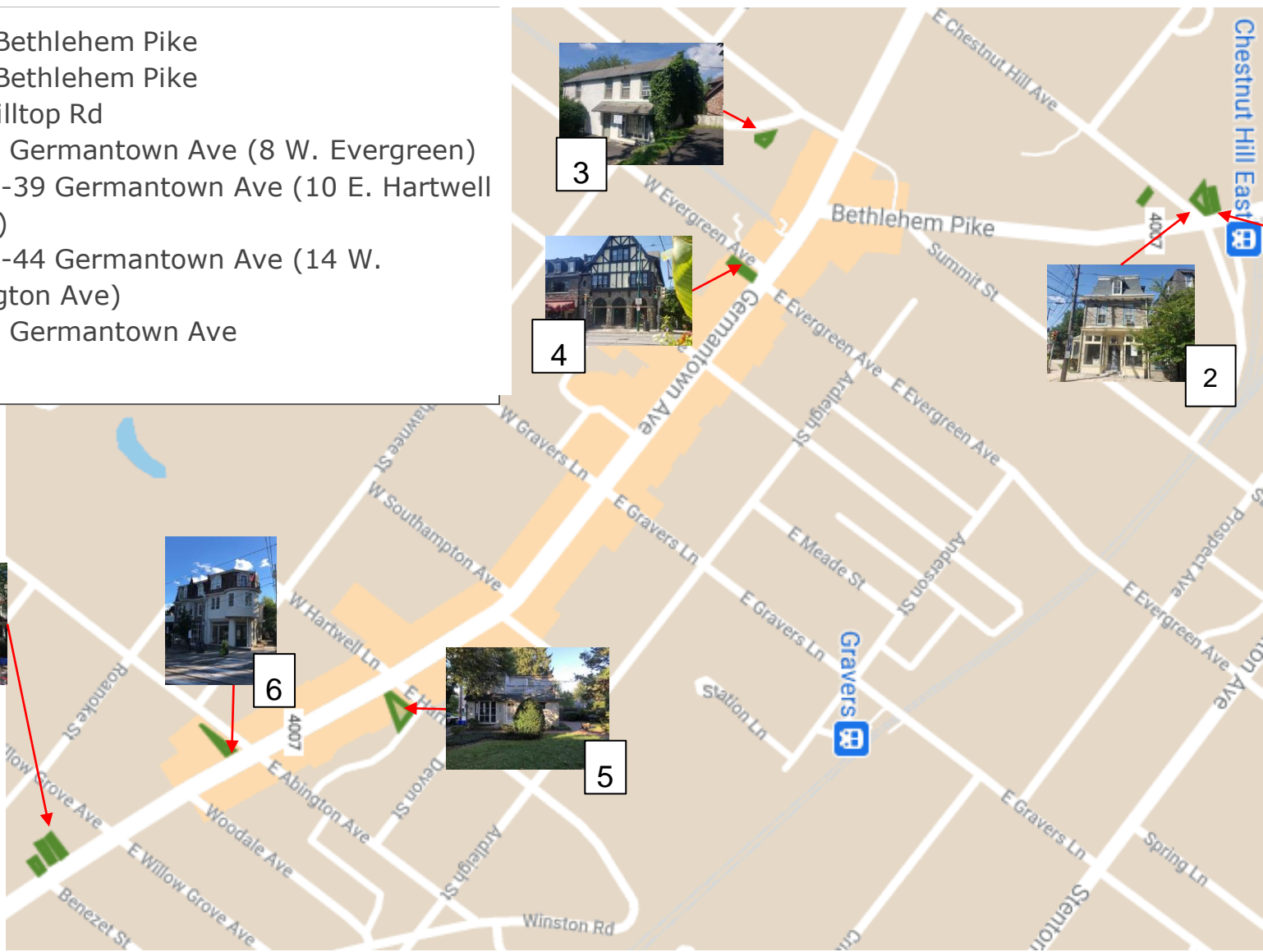
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Multi-Site Zoning Variance Overview



Architecture

1. 105 Bethlehem Pike
2. 101 Bethlehem Pike
3. 18 Hilltop Rd
4. 8532 Germantown Ave (8 W. Evergreen)
5. 8137-39 Germantown Ave (10 E. Hartwell Lane)
6. 8042-44 Germantown Ave (14 W. Abington Ave)
7. 7928 Germantown Ave



Property	Zoned	Current Use	Present # of Res Units	Proposed Use	# of Res Units After Variance
105 Bethlehem Pike	CMX-1	Mixed	3	Mixed	4
101 Bethlehem Pike	CMX-1	Mixed	1	Mixed	2
18 Hilltop Rd	CMX-1	Mixed	1	All Residential	2
8532 Germantown Ave	CMX-1	Mixed	2	Mixed	3
10 E Hartwell	CMX-1	Mixed	2	Mixed	3
8042 Germantown Ave	CMX-1	Mixed	5	Mixed	6
7928 Germantown Ave	CMX-1	Mixed	3	Mixed	4



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August 31, 2020

Kathie Meadows
Director of Business Development
Chestnut Hill Business District

Hello Kathie:

As a follow-up to our conversation of last week, I wanted to share with you some of the national retail trends that we have long tracked; many of these have come to a crescendo more rapidly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The downsizing both of individual store footprints and of the overall square footage devoted to retail and food uses are chief among these trends, and are likely to have a substantial impact on Chestnut Hill's main commercial street, Germantown Avenue. The United States has been greatly over-retailed primarily due to pressures of Wall Street and also requirements or incentives by cities for retail uses at the base of all mixed-use developments. Our country has nearly 25 square feet of retail per capita, in contrast to European countries that average less than 5 square feet. Today, retailers operating through multiple channels are nearly always more successful than those that rely solely on physical stores, and weathering the pandemic has certainly been less arduous for multi-channel operators. Many are maintaining or increasing their total sales while downsizing their physical footprints and numbers of locations.

There are two ways the CHBA could best support operators and help ensure a thriving district going forward:

1. Engage consultants (for one-on-one support or via group webinar sessions, or a combination of these) to help operators transition to multiple retail channels.
2. Request that the city revisit the zoning codes that currently require retail to line all of Germantown Avenue. They should identify the blocks where retail exists most successfully, fostering retail uses along these while lifting requirements on blocks that have been problematic to fill for the past few decades. Activation of commercial streets is important, and this goal can be fulfilled with residential stoops and entrances on blocks along the Avenue that have not been commercially viable. Residential uses bring activity and lights to the street for longer hours than retail and restaurants typically provide.

As part of the examination of first floor retail/office/service only use requirement, you should also request a review of the viability of shrinking deep retail spaces so that residential could qualify as a permitted use at the back of spaces. As mentioned previously, retail footprints are downsizing and it will be even more difficult to rent large deep spaces to current and future retail operators.

Deep spaces that are tough for retailers is a common issue in historic districts across the country. Residential reuse of inappropriate retail space is an excellent solution; again, these bring people and activity to the ground level.

Originality and authenticity from retailers and restaurateurs foster dynamic districts, making them a welcome option to homogenous, redundant shopping malls. Chestnut Hill has long offered an authentic main street experience for the greater Philadelphia area, and I have no doubt it will remain resilient and relevant going forward. Please contact me if there is any way in which I can help your efforts.

Best regards,

Midge McCauley