

# LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting of September 7, 2017

## Members Present

✓ Brad Flamm, Chair	✓ Larry McEwen
____ Cynthia Brey, Chair	____ Ned Mitinger
✓ Steve Gendler	✓ Andrew Moroz
____ Larry Goldfarb	✓ Aga Vinson
✓ John Landis	
✓ Joyce Lenhardt	____ Laura Lucas, Pres, CHCA (ex-officio)
✓ Jean McCoubrey	✓ Joyce Lenhardt, VP Physical

## Others Attending:

John Romano  
Patricia Cove  
Lori Salganicoff  
Celeste Hardester, Development Review Facilitator  
Others from Chestnut Hill Conservancy  
Melissa Nash, recorder

Joyce Lenhardt opened the meeting at 8:09 pm as acting chair until Brad Flamm arrived. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss the District Plan and the Subcommittee reports on locations for development. The first public meeting for the district plan will be held in December. District RCOs will serve as representatives. There will also be reps from council people and reps from advocacy groups.

## **Chestnut Hill Properties: Vulnerability to Market Based Redevelopment**

•Presentation: The presentation was made by John Landis. The study has a 2 pronged strategy: to shore up/protect the historic elements of Chestnut Hill and to revitalize middle Germantown Avenue. The goal is to save critical resources. The study looked at the potential subdivision of larger lots. This could place larger houses in danger. The study analyzed the ratio of actual lot size to minimal lot size without regard to the existing house's location on the lot. The data was also analyzed based on the house on the lot, looking at how easily the lot could be subdivided. The study also looked at the locations of historically significant structures and steep slopes, which may limit subdivision. The study also analyzed house sales and included factors of building size, lot size, age, sales prices and other factors. It appeared that large houses sell at a premium. For new development, the methodology should look at the ratio of improvement to land. There are desirable ratios of building to land value. J Landis suggested that his students look at the high-risk properties in more depth.

•Committee/Audience Discussion: It was suggested that the focus should be on difficult properties and the Germantown Avenue corridor. There was a question of which tools should be used. Celeste Hardester was asked how the Roxborough overlay works. There are lots of challenges. It was noted that the ZBA could not be relied upon to enforce design.

## **Reports**

•Previous Studies: Jean McCoubrey named studies including the Green Book 1982, Germantown Avenue Guidelines, Conservation Plan, The Germantown Avenue Study by Drexel University 1998, Parking Study 2004, Retail Market Study 2005, Streetscape Study by Cope Linder 2005, Mobilize to Thrive 2009, Phase 2 of Mobilize to Thrive 2009, Street Tree Planting 2014, Chestnut Hill Streetscape 2015. Lori Sagalnicoff added the Project Watershed and the Chestnut Hill Historic District Nomination Inventory 1985 (being updated). J Lenhardt added the Open Space Preservation for RIA.

•Germantown Avenue Development Sites: Larry McEwen presented a PowerPoint of the site along the Avenue that could be potential redevelopment sites. These sites include places near gateways, train stations and near parking. Commercial continuity is important as is using backs of commercial as additional fronts. Some sites include the apartments across from Staples, the gas station, the drycleaners in the former gas station, the now closed daycare center and the Verizon building. Discussion followed. John Romano added Laurel Hill and Stage Crafters as examples of interior fronts on parking lots. The PP showed the rear of the Greene Street addition as another blank face and lost potential for lot improvement. The rear of TD Bank is another example of a missed potential. He included pictures of how Beaufort, SC uses backs of new fronts. Patricia Cove suggested including 10% of budgets should be spent in amenities. L McEwen also reported on a parking meeting developing a map of Germantown Avenue plus 3 blocks on either side. Patterns of parking were studied. Parking was classified as residential, shopper, employees, and commuters.

•Water Tower Recreation Center: work will be done to create a master plan. The next task force meeting is September 13 6:30 to 8:30 with the Collaborative. J McCoubrey asked for a volunteer to attend in her place as she is unable to attend.

•Other Discussion Points: The creation of pocket parks as well as entrances to Chestnut Hill should be investigated. The signage overlay needs to be discussed. An inventory of signs and awnings should be made. There should be a side by side comparison of what would be allowed by an overlay and what is allowed by code. It was asked if overlays could have more than one purpose. They can. Cresheim Trail was also briefly discussed.

## **Adjournment**

•The meeting was adjourned at 10:15PM. Lori Salganicoff handed out flyers for the Conservancy's October 6 Night of Lights Event on the Avenue. All are invited.