

## **MWIA Minutes – 02/13/2018**

Notes taken by Danielle Shapiro

Meeting opened by President Lindsey White.

### Discussion of Request for Variances at 5710 Rusk Avenue

2-13 MWIA meeting

Holly Coleman, chair of the Zoning committee, introduces request for two variances for Rusk Avenue.

Owner of the house Brian Owens presents his request to the group. Doesn't want a parking pad in the back. Would like to keep it in the front. It is only 1 and 1/2 stories. We want to keep everyone up to date on what is going on, want to keep it in the character of the neighborhood. Opens the floor to questions

David Nemerson: What is the history of the house? Who subdivided it?

Brian: The previous owner subdivided it.

David: yours is the smaller of the two.

Neighbor: It was 3 lots originally. There was a house from 1911. Burned down in 2005. At one point the owners divided their lot and sold half of it. So when it went on the market last year there were 2 and 1/2 lots available. And the realtor was selling, 50 ft, 80 ft and a 1/2 of lot.

David: Why was this narrow lot created?

Neighbor: I tried to find out.

Another neighbor: was there another effort to subdivide differently?

Neighbor: The code today wouldn't allow you to divide a lot like that. Perhaps it was allowed? It was sitting in the center of 3 lots. It is hard to say what the layout of the lots are.

Brian: prior to purchasing, we reached out to city zoning. And he said it met the requirements.

Neighbor: I am concerned about the parking pad. I have lived there for 30 years. I was shocked when it was put up for sale as 2 lots. It was strange how they broke it up. It looks like the parking pad is on the front yard.

Brian: the houses on that block have a parking shared with both neighbors.

Neighbor: Can the pad be on the other side?

Brian: Yes, we can put it on the other side. There is an existing curb cut for cost saving, to have a permit to replace the old curb.

David: can you put in on the other side? Move it over from the neighbor's property line.

Brian: If we move it we will encroach on the other side.

Neighbor: The set back is 10 feet on both, they could put it on south side or north side, need a foot away from the boundary.

Another neighbor: the issue of the parking pad is taking out a tree. Another thing is that the strips you plan to park on are 15 feet but they need to be a minimum of 18 feet.

Brian: the lot is 50 feet; we want to keep it at 50 feet. We could move it to the north side.

Neighbor: Your lot is 50 feet, that is frontage. If there was 50 feet in the back of the house.

Brian: The code doesn't grant variances if there is a lot shape issue.

Neighbor: You mentioned there is an existing curb cut. Why is there a curb cut? Do most of the houses have off street parking?

Brian: Across the street and to the south of us, 3 dwellings north of us.

Neighbor: If you put the parking on the south side, you would have to take away that curb cut. You couldn't keep both. I am across the street. If you had it on the south side, it would face my curb cut that would be safer.

Brian: we want the parking where you guys want. It is a bigger expense. It would be 5k to prepare and cut.

Neighbor: from our perspective, I don't think you have to restore the curb cut. The neighborhood memory is that was put there at least 30 years ago, strangely they restored that curb cut.

Brian: we can look into it.

Neighbor: is the tree on your lot?

Brian: it is 5 feet, from the property line. We understand that is close. We gave required space 10 feet. We are concerned if we go further south we won't get anything done.

Neighbor: How close is the house tot he sidewalk?

Brian; the porch is 15 feet and the structure is 22 feet. The code requires 30 feet for established block, 13 feet.

Neighbor: What kind of tree is it? The tree is a willow oak about 6 years old.

Zoning member: What about screen to hide the car?

Brian: Yes, we can put some landscaping there.

Neighbor: Why didn't you choose the larger lot?

Brian: It was \$25k more.

Neighbor: It seems like your house design doesn't take advantage of the depth of the lot.

Brian: we wanted a large backyard. it matched the styles of the houses on the block. The bungalow design is prominent. It is 1400 sq. feet, not overly large.

Neighbor: We wish you could be further back.

Brian: if we go further back, we can't run sewage due to drop off.

Neighbor: the lot you bought does not have utilities. The one you didn't buy has utilities.

David Nemerson: there is plenty of street parking.

Evan: if everyone said no parking pad, would you do not pad.

Brian: Yes.

Evan: if everyone wrote a letter of support to not have a parking pad, MWIA wrote that.

Neighbor: no we don't want a parking pad next to our front yard. There maybe another car on the pad. The lot in question is in a bend in the road. We orient where we park, to leave a clear path. We are looking for the parking pad to not be on the street, is to diminish the impact to cars on the street. Rosemary across from their lot and Deb and Julie have expressed that it is difficult to drive out.

Lindsey: Your position is that you want a parking pad.

Neighbor: We don't want it in the front yard, and we don't want the tree coming down. Our interest is directly next to it. Our house was built when these codes were not in place. Their house is 15 feet from our house. It will be forward to our house and to add a house hard against our front yard, it feels like we are being hemmed in. The aspect we enjoyed for 15 years will be gone. We don't want to be a wrench in their works, but we only had the site plan and elevations in the past week. Right now our feeling is that this is too much of an imposition on us and that is why we are here. We met Brian and Heather a year ago, they are lovely people except that now we are confronted with the plan.

Brian: We are following all the rules.

Board member: The parking pad being on the side closest to their house, is the only difference?

Brian: there is an extra cost.

Board member: It would be an improvement to the neighborhood.

Jere: The parking pad is 15 feet deep, so it is intended to hold one car. Second car will go onto the street.

Brian: If we had to, we could put the driveway on that side of the house and put a pad there and park 8 cars there. We don't want the pad, we are putting one car there.

Lindsey: Do you have a position?

Mark: We wrote a letter in opposition to this board. Brian and I were talking about options and possibilities. They will build on this lot; we don't want a house next to us.

Board member: Why didn't you buy it?

Mark: He needs variances. We are not here to be the wrench in his works. the variance review is on the 20th, we don't have much more to do. We are in opposition to the variances. It does not work for us. We are more than willing to continue to work with Brian that will work. Doesn't feel like we live in a row house.

Neighbor: Did you get permission from the property owner to plant the tree. If push comes to shove, we think that it was our property, dating to 2003.

Brian: The lot was listed for less than 2 months before. We hired a survey firm, if you look at the bend on the site plan, it is 50 feet from bend.

Jere: If you were to make a house 2 feet narrower you would still be 10 feet from their property line, you could put the driveway along the back.

Brian: if we shrunk the house 2 feet and could put a driveway down the side into the back of the house. We could pay thousands of dollars to redesign the house.

Scott: Can you move it to the other side?

Neighbor: Does it set a precedence?

Lindsey: recommendation from zoning will be forthcoming.

Other news from Lindsey:

\*1700 South Road Sale, of St. John's Church and the parish has gone through. It was sold to Blue Ocean Realty.

\* Impact funds to MW have been cut, now there is less than \$630k available. Five presidents meant to discuss this month. A \$106k grant fund is available to five communities for home safety.

\* Marijuana dispensary set to open on Falls Road. Lot is zoned for this type of business.

David Nemerson: Parks and Recs. Committee

\*Kelly Avenue pot holes are being filled today.

\*Parks and Rec. committed to completing our project

\*Luckman Park cleanups continue and the park is looking good.

Louise Cornell – Public Safety

There will be a Citizen's Police Academy from March 6-May 22. You need to register and will get a certificate at the end. Very worthwhile. Slots money. Neighborhood initiative grants program. I wrote an article about it. You need to be a 501c3. A process administered through healthy neighborhoods. Regarding crime in the city, discussed where to go.

\*Norm started a patrol. The sign up is at the pediatric hospital.

Julie Tong, Traffic

The last time we had a meeting in December. Kwame Rose from DOT was there. There was a lot of discussion about speeding. the DOT liaison, his supervisor will become our new point person.

\*Updates. With the crossing guards near the school, we asked for an additional crossing guard. There isn't one there but I have been assured that the supervisor will come out there.

\*There will be a camera on Smith Avenue to slow down the cars, in the 5700-5800 Block to slow down traffic.

\*DOT will stripe turn lanes on Lochlea Avenue.

\*DOT will look at a turn signal for cars turning left on Greely.

David Nemerson: Question about buses staging at Lochlea/Kelly.

Julie Tong: I spoke to incoming principal. Email me I try to forward it to DOT.

#### Lindsey White, Pimlico Revitalization Task Force

MWIA decided to take applications for the Pimlico Revitalization Committee. Phase 2 will come after the election. There are a lot of issues concerning the future of Pimlico. We have an excellent committee. Several people are here today. It has met twice.

\*They are getting ready in advance of the study.

\*Top issue with Delegate Rosenberg, we are in touch with him and doing our own independent research.

\*We have a sub committee of residents, people who are not part of MWIA.

\*Introduces Jim Jacobs, at April 11 meeting to talk about Pimlico as part of in reach efforts. Will invite Bill Cole. Want communication and ways to get feedback from the community.

Jim Jacobs: It is an opportunity to get feedback.

Evan Serpick: One of the things we talked about was having a page with the links to the Pimlico task force. To make them broadly available, so people can see the materials. Two-month comment period. The idea is that the next public meeting we can present what we learned. Bill Cole was really knowledgeable and helpful. Also going to reach out to the other neighborhoods, about what their communities are thinking.

#### General Discussion of other issues:

Louise Cornell: Are our streets being swept?

Lindsey: There is separate money for street cleaning.

Neighborhood: Was supposed to be funded by rain tax.

Shelley from Ytzy Schleifer's office: The mayor cut funding for street sweeping.

Mark: It happens occasionally, not regularly. Glad they don't ticket or tow.

Louise: Where is the storm water management going?

Lindsey: Falstaff and Cross Country has used their funding for street sweeping.

Evan Serpick: On Ceasefire, from Feb. 2-4 no murders over the course of the weekend. Continued for 12 days. Longest streak since 2014. I want to thank MWIA for providing a \$500 grant for the programming we did with Poly students. Had t-shirts to design.

Neighbor: Want to know what is going on Kelly avenue? Is that the bike trail? How does it connect to anything?

David Nemerson: Right now it goes from Cross Country or Kelly or the light rail, it will continue through the village and meet South and Newbury.

Neighborhood: Who is in charge of it? It is very large.

David: Kelly were wider than standard, now city street width. The width of the trail, and the 2 are disconnected.

Neighborhood: Intersection of Pimlico and Cross Country, who decided that it is the end of the trail. If you come there on a bike, it is a dangerous intersection. Why did they clear the trees?

Neighbor: What will the surface of the trail be?

David: Asphalt

**Attendance:** Louise Cornell, Holly Coleman, Jere Morrel, Scot Vanderpool, Deb Kleiner, Julie Tong, Lindsey White, David Nemerson, Eric Seaberg, Brian Hopkins, Chris Mincher (also in attendance: Shelley Zimmerman neighbors to 5710 Rusk Avenue included Mark Mordhorst, Kim Farmer, Rosemary Flickinger)

Absent: Susan Manning (sick), Gwendolyn Jackson, Sally Staugaitis, Robin Klein, Kimberly Brodie Hopkins, Josh Weiss (sick), Charlie Ravenna, Kristen Corneau