

Zoning Committee Report For January 12, 2010

1. 2100 Hamilton Street - This 8 - 10 story project proposed for the area across from the police station and in back of the Rodin, has begun to advertise for pre sales. There is a display in the lobby of the Kimmel Center. I contacted the developer, PRA Developments, who expressed the opinion that they did not need any variances (possibly true since they are under 125 feet) and no approvals by any of the Commissions (probably not true since they may have expired). Laura Spina of The Philadelphia City Planning Commission advised Rob Stuart that all their approvals had expired and that they were required to reapply for all of them anew, including a permit from L&I, and approvals from the Art and Fairmount Park Commissions (at least). They do not plan on making another presentation to LSNA. We should put this item on our agenda for our February meeting and decide whether we want to actively get involved in opposing their requests for renewed approvals and/or advising the approving authorities that they are not even seeking renewed approvals. I will also contact Neil Sklaroff the attorney for 2200 Parkway (Barnes Tower) for his position on this.

2. 1500 Spring Garden Street - Thompson Reuters received the variance for the sign they requested. However, they agreed to meet and discuss with us the format and materials for the proposed sign anyway. This is the best result we could have ever expected and we surely would not have obtained this had we opposed them at the hearing before the ZBA where they were supported by the Spring Garden Street Civic Association.

3. PAFA - They obtained the ordinance they requested to close the first 200 feet of Cherry Street from North Broad Street to Carlisle Street with a letter of non opposition from LSNA.

4. 1822 Callowhill Street - Robert Moon owns this property. He will open a sit down Asian restaurant there in either February or early March. He already has all the approvals he needs to do this. However, he also wants to have a take out sushi business as part of this operation. For this he will require a variance. He told me that the take out would be much less than 15% of his business and probably much less than 10%. He and his wife will make a presentation to LSNA about this at our February meeting.

5. The Franklin Institute - They will present to LSNA, probably in March, about their plans to build an addition on the Race Street side of the building. In advance of this they will notify/flyer all potentially affected near neighbors, including the Atria, probably in February. This project would appear to have the twin benefits of getting rid of a bit of an eyesore along Race Street and significantly improving the neighborhood at this location.

6. 1900 Spring Garden Street - I have been in touch with the developers (the Federmans) and told them that our committee (David Searles, Lori Westler and me) would meet with them regarding Zone 6 parking outside their businesses as soon as my wife was out of the hospital and settled. Joe Federman was very gracious and told me to take whatever time we needed.

7. 1700 to 1800 Vine Street - The Mormans have not yet acquired this property from Mr. Klein through the Redevelopment Authority and so are still not ready to present to us. But they assured

us that they will do so in due course.

8. Mode 7 - The developer made a presentation to us at our November meeting. They do not require any approvals and the construction of a model facing 22nd Street is under way. They have agreed to continue to discuss matters with us and Andy Toy, Bob Melvin and I will take advantage of this opportunity.

9. The Barnes - They have made some minor modifications in their bus drop off area and proposed parking lot. I believe that Sam Little may be able to supply you with some details.

10. Ordinance Proposed By Councilman Clarke Re ZBA - As discussed at our last meeting, there has been a problem getting a quorum for ZBA proceedings recently, essentially due to illness. Councilman Clarke introduced legislation to remedy this problem by reducing the number of sitting ZBA members and the number necessary for a quorum. For reasons previously stated, we believe that a better solution would be to expand the number of sitting members and not reduce the number necessary for a quorum. LSNA approved so advising Councilman Clarke of this through our Crosstown Coalition. However, as you will see from the attached newspaper article this week, the Councilman seems not to have adopted our suggestion.

Ed Panek
Zoning Chair, 1/12/10

Heard in the Hall



Zoning board hole filled — eventually

Mayor Nutter has acted to solve the mini-crisis over quorums at the Zoning Board of Adjustment by appointing former School Reform Commission member Martin G. Bednarek to the six-member board.

Bednarek will fill the opening created when chairwoman Susan Jaffe stepped down in December. Jaffe had been on medical leave since the summer. During that time, the board postponed between 20 and 30 hearings, sometimes because it did not have the four members needed for an official hearing. The mayor appoints five members; the sixth is the commissioner of the Department of Licenses and Inspections or the commissioner's designee.

In November, several weeks after City Council criticized the board for failing to do its job and slowing development in a recession, the board ran into the same problem again. A bill to reduce the number of members to five and require a quorum of only three passed out of a Council committee and is poised for final passage as early as February.

The bill's sponsor, Councilman Darrell L. Clarke, said Friday that he was not yet convinced that the board's structure did not need some tweaking — which would require voter approval in a referendum — and was awaiting recommendations from the Planning Commission.

Bednarek, chief executive officer at the Washington Savings Association, served on the SRC from 2003 to early 2009. Ironically, Bednarek is out with an injury, and can't start for several months.

Nutter has asked Gary Jastrzab, deputy executive director of the Planning Commission, to serve in the interim. The board's new chairwoman is Lynette Brown-Sow, with Carol Tinari replacing Brown-Sow as vice chair.

— Jeff Shields